



Michigan 4-H/FFA Livestock Judging Contest July 17, 2014

Audience

140 contestants competed in the 2014 Michigan 4-H/FFA Livestock Judging Contest for youth ages 8 to 21 consisting of 81 females and 59 males. Five separate divisions exist consisting of 4-H, FFA, and Michigan Livestock Expo (MLE) Individuals. Within the 4-H division, 54 4-H members competed in the Junior 4-H Division consisting of contestants ages 8-13. 43 4-H members competed in the Senior 4-H Division consisting of members ages 14-18. 4-H members were also allowed to compete against FFA members in the FFA Division and 33 took advantage of the opportunity. In the other three divisions, 58 youth completed in the High School FFA and 16 youth competed in the Junior High FFA and 3 youth competed in the MLE Individual Division ages 19-21. No youth were turned away from competing in the contest.

Funding

Each contestant paid \$12 to participate in the state livestock judging contest. Registration also took place the day of the contest at a rate of \$20 per person. Officials and volunteers donated their time to help teach youth about livestock and evaluation.

Objectives

This youth contest is designed to:

- Educate youth on Michigan's current issues and trends in livestock production within the Midwest.
- Develop problem solving and critical thinking skills through evaluation of livestock.
- Enhance livestock evaluation and selection skills.
- Improve communication and decision making skills.

Description

Participants had 7 contact hours with 11 MSU faculty along with 39 industry leaders and other volunteer resource people.

Contestants judged eight classes including Boer Does, Chianina Heifers, Market Steers, Simmental Heifers, Crossbred Market Hogs, Commercial Gilts, Market Lambs and Performance Hampshire Ewes. These classes included two led classes and one class where youth handled the animals. Each contestant then answered one set of ten questions about the steer class. The junior participants then answered three sets of questions or gave three sets of oral reasons to defend their placing on a designated class within each specie. All senior and MLE participants communicated one set of oral reasons for each of the three species.

Participants had the opportunity to score up to 600 points during the day long event. Once all contestants had concluded their reasons, the officials described each class in detail and announced the proper placing

of the class. At that point, contestants were able to calculate their own score based on the information presented. Additionally, CANR Associate Dean Dr. Kelly Millenbah, Dr. David Hawkins and other university and industry representative spoke to the contestants and coaches before beginning the awards program.

Official results were given for the top 10 individuals in the 4-H Junior and Senior division for oral reasons as well as overall including placings, questions and reasons. The top overall teams in each division were also announced for the divisions. The senior 4-H Division overall top 15 was also announced as well as the Dr. David Hawkins High Team Overall was awarded to the senior 4-H team.

Prizes were awarded to the champion teams, champion individuals in reasons and overall as well as recognizing numerous other contestants. The top ten individuals in each division received the *Youth Livestock Judging Manual* as part of their award.

A special thank you to all of the contest and award sponsors including: Family Farm and Home, Michigan Cattlemen's Association, Michigan Pork Producers Association, Michigan Sheep Breeders Association, Michigan Youth Livestock Scholarship Fund, MSU College of Agriculture & Natural Resources, MSU Department of Animal Science, MSU Extension and Steve and Nancy Thelen.

Impacts

General Contest Impacts:

- 40% growth in the contest from 2013 to 2014
- 78.6% of participants competed in oral reasons to defend their placing on three of the eight classes.
- 99.3% of the cards were turned in correctly to allow students to receive a score and therefore feedback on their placing, reasons or questions.

Post contest Coaches Survey Results:

- 100% of the responding coaches agreed or strongly agreed that as a result of the contest, contestants increased their ability to explain and defend their opinion.
- 100% of the responding coaches agreed or strongly agreed that as a result of the contest, my confidence in engaging youth in experiential, inquiry based science learning has increased.
- 63.6% of the respondents strongly agreed that the contest has an educational impact on their contestant.

Contact Information

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