



For Immediate Release
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Youth Compete in Livestock Judging Contest

The State Fair of Texas® provides countless opportunities for youth to experience agriculture and gain experience with livestock. One of the many is the Youth 4-H/FFA Livestock Judging Contest. Each year, students throughout Texas come together to participate in this contest and practice for the state livestock judging contest that takes place in April. For many students this was their first year to participate in the livestock judging contest at the fair, but for several other veterans, like Taylor Rector from Paradise FFA who has been livestock judging since 6th grade, the fair is a place that they love to come compete at every year. This year the livestock judging contest was held on Sunday, October 11, 2009.

The livestock judging contest offers students the opportunity to practice their skills and test their knowledge by judging classes of market cattle, swine and lambs. Professionals in the livestock judging field are also brought in to correctly place the classes and help students to learn more about the market livestock industry.

“Livestock judging has helped me learn what to look for and correct on my own animal projects,” said Cheyanne, 14, from Krum FFA.

Several students who competed in the livestock judging contest this weekend said they enjoy participating in the event because they like the competitive nature and challenging themselves.

“It’s a challenge, said Tennie, 16, from Hallesville FFA. “It’s also a chance to learn outside of school and work on your skills and I think that builds character” she said.

Participants compete with other students throughout Texas, but with each contest, students also compete with themselves to evaluate the livestock more

efficiently and get a higher score than in previous contests that they have participated in. After being an active member of a livestock judging team, many students said they are more confident in selecting and raising their own animal projects because they have become more familiar with the structure and muscling of different species.

“Livestock judging is a real world application for learning what will really work in the industry,” said Sean Williams, advisor of Blue Ridge FFA.

However, livestock judging is about more than just learning what makes a prime market animal. Students agreed that being part of a livestock judging team has not only taught them more about how to properly raise an animal for market, but also how to work with a team while being a leader, and make an informed decision that you can defend with what you have learned.

“It’s learning about livestock, while also teaching them the skills to make and defend their decisions,” said the advisor of Krum FFA, Ryan Pieniasek.

Along with its character building attributes, students said they also enjoy being part of a livestock judging team because they get to be involved in an activity that they are passionate about, meet new people and travel around Texas.

The livestock judging contest continues to grow every year; this year the contest had 362 students and 117 teams who competed. First place junior division team went to Mason County 4-H and the junior division individual with the highest overall score was Gabe Jennings from Mason County. First place senior division team went to Guadalupe County 4-H and the senior division individual with the highest overall score was Jessica Epps from Williamson County.

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