New York State 4-H Livestock Teams Excel

ITHACA, N.Y. — 15 New York State 4-H teens and their coaches and chaperones represented New York’s 4-H Livestock program at the North American International Livestock Exposition (NAILE) and the National 4-H Poultry & Egg Conference in Louisville, KY in November 2015. These youth representatives were selected based on their performance at state level competitions held annually at the New York State Fair in Syracuse.

Future animal industry leaders must understand economic, social, environmental and biological science concepts. Youth who participate in these state and national 4-H opportunities are well on their way to becoming industry leaders as they demonstrate increased knowledge of industry issues. In addition, knowledge gained in specific subjects prepares youth for a variety of careers. These students, in particular, demonstrated expertise in time and resource management as well as animal and other life science skills. National competitive team events give 4-Hers a chance to practice communication and critical thinking skills and provide opportunities to apply skills to real-world situations, both of which are essential abilities needed in advanced education and workforce environments.

The 4-H Livestock Skillathon Contest, held November 16, 2015, provided an opportunity for youth to develop their livestock production and life skills by demonstrating the breadth of their knowledge and understanding of animal science and sustainable livestock management practices. Events included retail meat cut and forage evaluation, livestock equipment identification, livestock breed identification and livestock feeding, breeding and performance evaluation. Team quality assurance and marketing exercises demonstrated math and science problem solving skills as well as ethical decision making competency. 71 students were represented at this contest from 19 states. New York has participated in this national competition at NAILE since 2002. This year, New York’s team placed 7th in quality assurance. Livestock Skillathon Team members included: Melissa Keller (Genesee), Rachel Rouland (Wayne), Megan Wilmot (Otsego), and Molly Watson (Otsego). They were coached by MacKenzie Waro (Otsego).
The 4-H Livestock Judging Contest, held November 17, 2015, required participants to understand concepts of beef, sheep, swine and meat goat conformation and provide sets of oral reasons for defending decisions to place one animal over another. Team members also engaged in management problem solving tasks. New York was among 130 students from 34 state teams in this competition at NAILE. Livestock Judging Team members included: Branden Decker (Chautauqua), Michelle Parsels (Steuben), Zachary Wratten (Oneida), and Chase Gerhardt (Erie). They were coached by Sarah Hardy (Oneida) and Dale Gowanlock (Erie).

The National 4-H Poultry and Egg Conference - held November 18-19, 2015 in Louisville, Kentucky involved 120 competitors from 19 different states in various Poultry contests. Within the Avian Bowl competition each competitor scored individually and then cumulatively for a team score. Poultry Judging contests teach participants to make decisions using reasoning skills, and to communicate decisions. Individuals also learn to use USDA grading criteria to determine quality of ready-to-cook poultry products. These youth experts displayed comprehensive subject matter knowledge of several species of poultry, food safety, physiology, and product nutrition. In the cooking contests, Camille Ledoux (Lewis) was named winner of the National 4-H Chicken Barbecue Contest, receiving a plaque, a gold pin and $250. Richard Lawson (Ontario) placed 3rd in the Turkey Barbecue Contest and Marlie Lukach (Tioga) was 3rd in the Egg Preparation event. In the Avian Bowl competition, Madeline Chairvolotti (Clinton), and Grace Nicol (Ontario) placed 5th among 9 teams, receiving a bronze pin and $25 each. Poultry Judging contestants Ethan Jacobson and Kevin Lewis (Orange) were among 16 state teams. Travelling coaches were Michele Ledoux (Lewis), Lucy Joyce (Orange), and Rachel Moody (Orange).

The 4-H program is often credited by 4-H alumni as a supportive environment where youth become better prepared for academics, professional careers and becoming productive members of society. With caring adults mentoring them along the way, delegates also learn to lead, build their communities, connect with Cornell University, and make life-long friends. The Cornell Department of Animal Science partners with the NYS 4-H Youth Development program to facilitate and accomplish this work.

Related Web sites:
•  [http://nys4h.cce.cornell.edu](http://nys4h.cce.cornell.edu)  Cornell Cooperative Extension enables people to improve their lives and communities through partnerships that put experience and research knowledge to work.
•  [http://ansci.cals.cornell.edu](http://ansci.cals.cornell.edu)  The Cornell Department of Animal Science partners with the NYS 4-H Youth Development program on animal-related projects and events.
•  [www.livestockexpo.org](http://www.livestockexpo.org)  North American International Livestock Expo
•  [http://national4hpoultryandegg.psu.edu](http://national4hpoultryandegg.psu.edu)  National 4-H Poultry & Egg Conference

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