

MICHIGAN FARMER

Kristen Burkhardt receives Sandra Place Memorial Award and Jacob Armstrong is top scoring individual in oral reasons.

Aug 18, 2014

Youth from Livingston and Branch counties were the top winners in the junior division of the state's dairy cattle judging contest at this year's Michigan 4-H and Youth Dairy Days, an annual dairy youth activity held in conjunction with the Michigan Dairy Expo. This year's expo, the 18th annual, took place July 21-25 at the Michigan State University (MSU) Pavilion for Agriculture and Livestock Education in East Lansing.

Kristen Burkhardt of Fowlerville was the top ranking individual overall in the junior division of this year's dairy cattle judging contest. As the high individual overall in the junior division, she received the Sandra Place Memorial Award. Burkhardt is the second youth to receive the award, which is presented in memory of Sandy Place, a lifelong dairy farmer and avid 4-H and youth leader and supporter from Perry.

Jacob Armstrong of Coldwater was the first place junior division contestant in the oral reasons portion of the dairy cattle judging contest.

Youth are eligible to compete in one of three age divisions in the dairy cattle judging contest: novice, junior or senior. Participants in the junior category – for young people ages 11 to 14 – evaluated the conformation of eight classes of dairy animals (four animals in each class) and presented one set of oral reasons. Evaluation scores were tallied according to how closely the contestant's placing matched the judges' official placing. In the oral reasons presentation, which is comparable to making an oral defense case in court, judges assign individual scores to each contestant based on how well the young person can justify his reasons for placing the cows in the order he did. Contestants can earn a total of 50 points in both the evaluation and oral reasons parts of the contest for each class. They also complete a written quiz.

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Rounding out the top 10 individuals overall in the junior division of the dairy cattle judging contest were:

2. Chelsea Barnes, Zeeland (Ottawa County)
3. Brittany Dreyer, Zeeland (Ottawa County)
4. Jessica Nash, Elsie (Clinton County)
5. Miriam Cook, Pewamo (Clinton County)
6. Ian Black, Eagle (Clinton County)
7. Dakota Dershem, St. Johns (Clinton County)
8. Evelyn Fuhrman, Perry (Shiawassee County)
9. Timothy Hirsch, Caledonia (Kent County)
10. Katie Wilson, Blanchard (Isabella County)

Ottawa tops in teams

In the team category, the team from Ottawa County placed first overall and in oral reasons. Team members were: Gerrit Baker, Byron Center; Chelsea Barnes and Brittany Dreyer, Zeeland; and Israel Noble, Grandville.

Clinton County Team A placed second overall. Team members were: Ian Black, Eagle; Miriam Cook, Pewamo; Amanda Hicks and Cheyenne Hicks, St. Johns. Kent/Livingston County Team B finished in third place overall: Kristen Burkhardt, Fowlerville; Keegan Nugent, Clarksville; Nikki Nugent, Lowell; and Jessica Parrish, Caledonia. Thirteen teams competed in this year's junior contest.

Rounding out the top 10 individuals in the oral reasons contest in the junior division, in chronological order, were:

2. Jake Nugent, Lowell (Kent County)
3. Jessica Parrish, Caledonia (Kent County)

4. Miles Wixom, Bloomingdale (Allegan County)
5. Brittany Dreyer, Zeeland (Ottawa County)
6. Chelsea Barnes, Zeeland (Ottawa County)
7. Evelyn Fuhrman, Perry (Shiawassee County)
8. Ashton Geurink, Allendale (Ottawa County)
9. Kathryn Hull, North Adams (Hillsdale County)
10. Amanda Hicks, St. Johns (Clinton County)

The second place team in oral reasons was the joint team from Allegan and Isabella counties. Team members were: Julia Doughty, Remus; Caitie Theisen, Mt. Pleasant; Katie Wilson, Blanchard; and Miles Wixom, Bloomingdale.

Twelve youth received perfect scores on the quiz identifying anatomical cow parts: Ian Black, Miriam Cook, Amanda Hicks, and Jessica and Josie Nash, of Clinton County; Kathryn Hull, of Hillsdale County; Brittany Dreyer and Israel Noble, of Ottawa County; Evelyn Fuhrman and Grace Sayles, of Shiawassee County; and Dakota Dershem, of Clinton County.

As the youth-centered portion of the Michigan Dairy Expo, the largest annual dairy event in the state, Michigan 4-H and Youth Dairy Days offers young people interested in the dairy industry opportunities to compete for premiums, ribbons and scholarships in various educational activities, including dairy quiz bowls, dairy management contests, dairy cattle judging competitions and the Dairy Days youth show. This year, more than 200 youth from around the state participated in one or more of the educational competitions, and winners may go on to represent Michigan in national competitions.

Awards and other recognition during Michigan 4-H and Youth Dairy Days, along with other dairy youth and judging program activities conducted throughout the year, are made possible through the generous support of numerous businesses, organizations and individuals. These include: ABS Global, the Branch County Dairy Organization, the Clinton County 4-H Dairy Council, the Clinton County 4-H Dairy Leaders, Cole Riverview Farms,

Country Fresh, Dairy Farmers of America, the District 1 and District VI Holstein associations, Drs. Joe and Denise Domecq, GreenStone Farm Credit Services, Hillsdale County Dairy Leaders, the Huron County Holstein Association, Ira Krupp, Land O'Lakes Purina Feeds, the Michigan Dairy Memorial Foundation, the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Michigan Farm Bureau, the Michigan Holstein Association, the Michigan Jersey Cattle Club, the Michigan Milk Producers Association, the Michigan Purebred Dairy Cattle Association, the MSU Dairy Club, the MSU Dairy Judging Team, the MSU Department of Animal Science, MOO-ville Creamery, NorthStar Cooperative, the Osceola County 4-H Dairy Boosters, the Ottawa County 4-H Dairy Committee, Rodney Pennock, Purina Animal Nutrition, the Shiawassee County 4-H Dairy Association, the United Dairy Industry of Michigan, United Producers, and VanBeek Natural Science.

For more information about the Michigan 4-H dairy youth program, contact Melissa Elischer at 517-432-4306. For more information about the Michigan dairy cattle judging program or the Michigan Dairy Expo, contact Domecq at 517-353-7855.

The 2015 Michigan Dairy Expo is scheduled for July 20-24 at MSU.