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RN E R - *News from the SD Section of the Society for Range Management*
2024 Rangeland and Soils Days by Emily Rohrer

The Codington County Conservation District, along with SDSU Extension, SD NRCS, and the SD Section of the Society for Range Management, hosted the 40th Annual Rangeland Days and 19th Annual Soils Days in Watertown June 12 and 13th. The event was held at the Codington Extension Building and used field sites belonging to the South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks, and Jim Dailey.

Over 120 students from age 8 to 18 attended the event, along with their parents and teachers. The weather barely cooperated, with rain and hail occurring in the morning – just before the students got out to the field. But the sunshine was plentiful and quickly dried out the grasses and soils.

The first day of the event, students that were part of the Rangeland Days event, learned plant identification skills, soils, ecological sites, and how to judge the range for beef and grouse habitat. Students that were part of the Soils Days event, learned all about judging soils and their capabilities – for different land uses and for homesites. After lunch, the ‘littles’ or New Rangers (ages 8-10) returned to the extension building to press plants that they had collected, and do other fun activities. The rest of the students were out in the field for the rest of the day, and returned to the extension building for supper and to listen to talks.

Students from all age groups took part in the Rangeland Days talks portion of the event. Topics varied from robotic grazing machines to holistic management. All the students did a great job informing on various range topics. Some students also put together displays that either complemented their talks, or another topic. A few students put together plant mount displays as well.

The following students took top honors for their talks and displays:

1st Place New Ranger Talk & Display – Harley Heber, Wessington Springs, SD

1st Place New Ranger Plant Mounts – Cora Larson, Langford, SD

1st Place Wrangler Talk – Haven Heber, Wessington Springs, SD

1st Place Wrangler Display – Kyle Gebhart, Meadow, SD

1st Place Wrangler Plant Mounts – Wyatt Lambert, Doland, SD

1st Place Scout Talk – Karlie Kammerer, Piedmont, SD

1st Place Go-Getter Talk – Adrik Schoon, White River, SD

1st Place Go-Getter Display - Johnathon Neuharth, Ft. Pierre, SD

The second day of the event was contest day! Students spent the morning judging the range and soils contest sites. While results were being tabulated, Ryan Forbes and Craig Veldkamp from the Brookings NRCS Field Support Office ran the rainfall simulator and wind simulator for all the students to take in. Afterwards, everyone had lunch and listened to the results.

Go-getter teams were divided into two categories: FFA Division and 4-H Division. Soils teams were also divided between FFA and 4-H. Top 4-H teams qualify for the National Land and Range Judging Competition in Oklahoma City the following May. Top judges for each category and division were:

1st Place New Ranger Judging – Mya Koenig, Fairfax, SD

1st Place Wrangler Judging – Jesse Schoon, White River, SD

1st Place Scout Judging – Lidia Dupraz, Aurora, SD

1st Place Go-Getter FFA Individual Judging – Dakota Boersma, Sunshine Bible Academy FFA

1st Place Go-Getter 4-H Individual Judging – Ridge Roduner, Jerauld County 4-H

1st Place Go-Getter FFA Team – Sunshine Bible Academy FFA (Coached by Jason Burma) - Dakota Boersma, Daraby Boersma, Tessa Hinman

1st Place Go-Getter 4-H Team – Jerauld County 4-H (Coached by Wade Christensen & Brady Duxbury) - Ridge Roduner, Hayes Christensen, Robert Hine, Landen Christensen

Soils Judging Results were as follows:

1st Place 4-H Soils individual – Brooks Foss, Corson County 4-H

1st Place FFA Soil Individual – Logan Nielsen, DeSmet FFA

1st Place 4-H Soil Judging Team – Kingsbury County 4-H (coached by Dave VanderWal) - Gavin Temme, Chase Temme, Breyton Johnson

Finally, participants that did all three competitions (talk, display, and judging) were in the running for the “Top Hand” award. The following were the top hand award winners for each age group:

New Ranger – Harley Heber, Wessington Springs

Wrangler – Jesse Schoon, White River, SD

Go-Getter – Adrik Schoon, White River, SD

A full list of results can be found on the SD SRM website: www.sdrangelands.com/judging-results.html

The 41st Annual Rangeland Days and 20th Annual Soils days is tentatively schedule for June 10 & 11, 2024 in Lemmon, SD.