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R N E R - *News from the SD Section of the Society for Range Management*
National Land, Homesite, and Range Judging Contest by Dave Ollila

After 2 years of cancellations, a record attendance of more than 1000 FFA and 4-H members competed in the National Land, Homesite, and Range Judging contest according to the Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts, the contest's principal sponsor. The Cheyenne-Arapaho Agency north of El Reno, OK hosted the Range and Land judging event on May 5th.

The FFA and 4-H participating teams qualified for the national event by placing among the top five teams at contests held in their home states. The first two days of the three day event offered contestants opportunities to visit nearby practice sites to get acquainted with Oklahoma soils and plants with information available from range and soil experts. The actual contest site remains a secret until contest day, so no one has an unfair advantage. Contestants and coaches gather on contest morning to find out the official contest location.

The event ended Thursday night with an awards banquet in the Great Hall of the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum. National championship trophies were awarded to team and individual winners in each category of the competition including land judging, range judging, and homesite evaluation. Each category included FFA and 4-H divisions.

In the Range Judging 4-H Competition, the Butte-Lawrence-Jackson 4-H Range team brought home the National Championship! Individually, 8 points separated the top 3 scores, Farynn Knutson – Kadoka was recognized as the National Champion individual followed by Morgan Mackaben – Belle Fourche placing 2nd, Tate Ollila – Newell 3rd, and Bennett Gordon – St. Onge -8th. The team is coached by Brandy Knutson and Dave Ollila.



2022 National 4-H Range Judging Champions Butte-Lawrence-Jackson 4-H Range Team

Pictured-(l to r) Bill Jordan-President- Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts presenting, Bennet Gordorn-8th place Ind, Morgan Mackaben- Reserve Champion Ind., Farynn Knutson- Natl. Champion Ind, Tate Ollila-3rd place Ind, Brandy Knutson-Coach,Dave Ollila-Coach

Reserve Champions turned out to be another South Dakota team - Wessington Springs 4-H Range Team was comprised of Kristie Munsen- 5th, Quinten Christensen- 11th, Kaden Wolter- 12th and Austin Schimke- 14th. The Wessington Springs 4-H Range Team is coached by Mr. Craig Shryock.



2022 National 4-H Range Judging Reserve Champions Wessington Springs 4-H Range Team

Pictured-(l to r) Bill Jordan-President- Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts presenting, Kristie Munsen- 5th, Quinten Christensen-11th, Kaden Wolter-12th and Austin Schimke-14th, The Wessington Springs 4-H Range Team is coached by Mr. Craig Shryock.

The Kadoka FFA Range Judging Team placed 8th in the FFA Range division, team members included Tyler Ring, Emily Zickrick, Maxwell Zickrick and Madison Brown. The team was coached by FFA Advisor, Mr. Brandy Knutson. Other South Dakota teams participating included Hitchcock-Tulare FFA and Webster FFA

The McCook County 4-H Homesite Judging team captured a national championship as well. Team members included Ella Stiefvater- 2nd, Grace Diogiovanni- 5th, Jonathon Schock- 17th and Mason Pulse- 19th. The McCook County team was coached by Mr. Terry Rieckman. Wessington Springs 4-H Homesite Team received 4th place honors. Team members included Cheyenne Burg- 8th, Braydin Labore- 16th, Blake Larson-18th, Carter Gaikowski- 27th and coached by Mr. Lance Howe and Mr. Craig Shryock.

The Willow Lake FFA Land team placed a very admirable 8th out of 100 teams in the National Land Judging Contest. Team members included Jack Bratand, Maddie Urke, Emma Peterson and Wyatt Anderson. The Willow Lake FFA Land Team is coached by Mr. Dan Tonak. Other SD

Land judging teams included Hitchcock-Tulare FFA, West Central FFA, Philip FFA and Tripp County 4-H.

Also attending to provide technical assistance included: Dr. Sandy Smart, SDSU Extension Ag and Natural Resource Program Leader, Mr. Tyler Swan – USDA-NRCS Soil Conservationist, and Mr. Lance Howe – USDA-NRCS Regional Soil Scientist. The Land, Range and Homesite evaluation opportunities offered in South Dakota are coordinated by members of the South Dakota Section of the Society for Range Management (SRM). The state sponsored events are supported with technical assistance from personnel within the USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service, USDA Forest Service, USDI-Bureau of Land Management, US Fish & Wildlife, SD Game, Fish and Parks, SDSU Extension, area ranchers and other range and soil professionals. Financial sponsors for this unique national educational opportunity include: South Dakota Section of the Society for Range Management, South Dakota Soil Health Coalition, South Dakota Grassland Coalition, South Dakota Stockgrowers Association and the South Dakota FFA Foundation.