

Teams compete to be "best of the best"

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Paid by Andrew J. Watson
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ALEXANDRIA, VA. — Nearly 1,450 FFA members, making up 362 teams will compete in the nine National FFA Contests at the 53rd National FFA Convention November 12-14 in Kansas City, Missouri. These teams, from every state, will vie for being the "best of the best" in judging dairy cattle, milk quality and dairy foods, poultry, livestock, floriculture, nursery/landscape, farm

business management, meat evaluation and identification, or agricultural mechanics.

These nine contests are an outgrowth of vocational agriculture instruction and are designed for practical application of instruction in agricultural classes, shops, and laboratories. Each team, which started on the local level, earns the trip to Kansas City by winning the

top award in the state in their contest area.

Contests will take place throughout the Kansas City area. Livestock contests are held in conjunction with the American Royal Livestock Show. Other contests use facilities made available by Kansas City area schools and municipal government. Each contest is sponsored by businesses and organizations through their investment in the National FFA Foundation, Inc. This sponsorship provides for travel expenses of contestants and awards recognizing top teams and high individuals.

Vocational agriculture instructors and vo-ag/FFA students consider the contests to be very valuable, since mechanical skills and practical knowledge of agricultural products are tested. The competition also adds an element of incentive encouraging FFA members to further develop their knowledge and skills in the specific contest area.

Winning teams and high individuals will be announced at recognition

breakfasts on Friday morning, November 14. At that time the teams and individual participants are presented medals and trophies. The winners will be introduced to the convention audience during the Friday morning session of the convention.

The nine categories are:
AGRICULTURAL MECHANICS: The Agricultural Mechanics Contest requires participants to demonstrate skills in farm mechanics, agriculture power and machinery, electrical power and processing. The teams will be tested on gas welding and cutting, tool maintenance, agricultural machinery, small engine power, electric wiring and electric motors.

DAIRY CATTLE: Teams will evaluate nine classes of dairy heifers and cows. Oral reasons will be given by contestants for three of the classes. In each class, teams members will observe the animals for twelve minutes, and then be given an additional 12 minutes to prepare reasons for their placement choices.

FARM BUSINESS MANAGEMENT: The Farm Business Management Contest requires contestants to apply principles of agricultural economics, business management, and accounting to solving theoretical farm management problems. Problems are presented in the management of land, labor and capital in a variety of situations.

FLORICULTURE: The Floriculture Contest will test teams' knowledge of identifying plant specimens by technical and common names, placing a class of floral products, making a floral arrangement, planting flowers and taking a telephone order.

LIVESTOCK: One of the first national contests

organized, team members are required to judge six classes of market or breeding beef cattle, hogs, or sheep. Members will also grade one class of market hogs and one class of market cattle and two performance classes of hogs and cattle. Contestants are also required to give three sets of oral reasons.

MEATS: Team members will evaluate carcasses and wholesale and retail cuts of beef, veal, pork and lamb. The teams will be scored on their ability to identify the various retail cuts of meat as well.

MILK QUALITY AND DAIRY FOODS: Teams will be given samples of bulk milk and cheese to evaluate on the basis of appearance, flavor and odor. They will also be tested on their knowledge of milk production and marketing as well as cheese identification. USDA Standards are followed in the contest.

NURSERY/ LANDSCAPE: Contestants will demonstrate their abilities in plant identification, selection or nursery stock, general knowledge of nursery/landscape practices and landscape design.

POULTRY: Teams will evaluate two production classes of hens and a production class of pullets. In addition to evaluating live birds, contestants will grade and evaluate classes of ready-to-cook fryers, turkeys, and white-shell market eggs.

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