



Mark Tracy, 4-H Club president and member of the senior division of the 4-H Livestock Judging Team, presents his reasons to coach Chet Hughes, Lancaster livestock agent.

Livestock Team

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national title. Chet Hughes, Lancaster livestock agent, and Greg Musser, coach, have accompanied the 4-H'ers to Louisville for the event. The Lancaster team is comprised of Mark Tracy, 15, Elizabethtown; Peter Hoffines, 16, Marietta; Wendall Landis, 15, Manheim; and Dwain Livengood, 18, Lancaster.

The temperature began to fall as the team members headed inside, studying their notes and organizing their thoughts. During late in the afternoon of this practice session, the livestock team examined several classes of Santa Gertrudis cattle.

Team members also looked over a scorecard highlighting navel and sheath measurements of the cattle; they took more notes; and as the sun fell and temperatures sank, they were busy imprinting the classes in their mind in preparation for a test of their reasoning abilities before livestock coach Chet Hughes.

"I think the most difficult thing for the kids is to be able to see the animals and take the proper notes," said Hughes.

Remember placings

According to Hughes, the team is instructed to look for individual characteristics on the animals they judge, try to picture that animal in the mind, and remember the placings and the reasons behind the placings during the presentations.

At NAILE, each member of the team will judge 10 classes of any of various breeds of livestock. Each class is about 15 minutes long. They will judge each class by type with performance data. Afterward, they will present the reasons to a set of judges.

During their reasonings, team members will not be permitted to read from notes.

Every class is worth 50 points, and every set of reasons 50 points. Hughes said the judges are looking at accuracy of placings in the classes. Next, judges will be concerned about the reasonings — and the reasonings have to be accurate.



Members of the 4-H Livestock Judging Team prepare for nationals. The Lancaster Co. team placed first in the state and practiced on the farm owned by Jim Quanbeck, far right. From left, Chet Hughes, team coach; Mark Tracy, Wendall Landis, Peter Hoffines, and Dwain Livengood.

down, like the 'white-navel heifer,' and then you'll never forget. You visualize her in your mind, what she looks like. So when you're giving your reasons, you can recall what she looks like."

Lot of practice

"It takes an awful lot of practice to get to that point, where you can just stand up and talk about it," he said.

Although the number of classes doesn't exceed the eastern nationals, the competition, according to Hughes, will be "grueling."

"I've been to judging contests and it seems like it's a little more difficult," said Tracy. "Everybody's on top of every state, so it's a little more closer in competition."

The senior division team won the statewide contest in July this year at the state 4-H Days at Penn State. Tracy said that contest was easier and more clear-cut. But now, he is up against more stiff competition from states with a great deal of talent, and preparing for it has been arduous.

Expand knowledge

"The more I expand my knowledge of what I'm supposed to do, the more I know what I'm supposed to say," said Tracy. "You feel more confident, but still, you're more nervous of what's going to be coming up."

The group practiced at the farm of Jim Quanbeck, who operates a 43-acre cattle farm near Columbia. There, Quanbeck raises 17 head of purebred Santa Gertrudis, a cross between Shorthorns and Brahmans (13/16 Shorthorn/3/16 Brahman) first bred at the King Ranch in Kingsville Texas in 1942. The cattle are noted for their durability in hot or cold weather, fast gain, good health, and calving ease.

"It's a good meat animal," said

Quanbeck.

Quanbeck explained to the members the breed history and importance of the cattle. "The animal is more suited to the environment in Texas," he told the group. "They have good heat tolerance, although they're also good in cold weather. They gain fast and they are quite easy calving."

Turn out good carcass

In addition, according to Quanbeck, the cattle turn out a select to a low-choice carcass. Quanbeck said he is only one of two breeders of Santa Gertrudis in the county.

"But we think we're positioned pretty good in today's market because of lot of people are look-

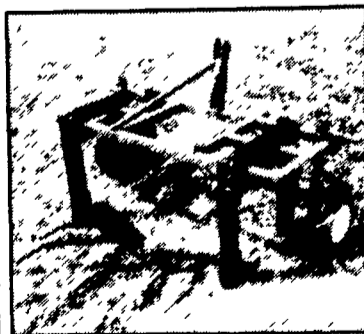
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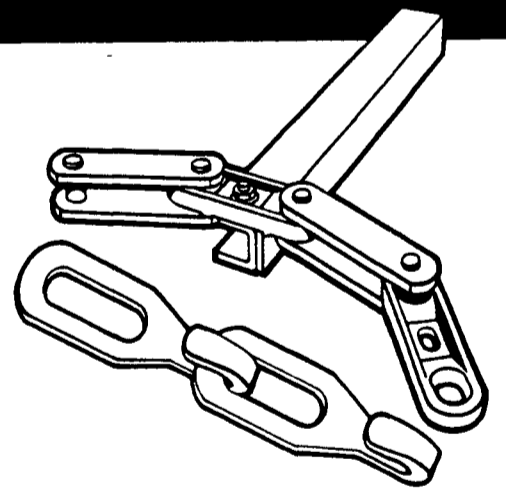
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