

New Jersey 4-H'ers Attend National Congress

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J. — For 79 years, National 4-H Congress has hosted youth from the United States and its territories in a youth leadership development conference, this year taking place in Atlanta, Georgia, November 28 through December 2.

The program combined a variety of sessions, seminars, discussion groups, and a service learning experience for the delegates. The nation's most outstanding community leaders, speakers, and educators presented current and timely information, providing the youth, ages 14-19, with a quality, educational and cross-cultural experience designed to address the needs and issues of youth.

Twenty-three 4-H teens from New Jersey participated including the following from Hunterdon County. Lindsay Dehartchuck, Alexandria Township, and Mary Hefferner, Raritan Township.

The theme, "Growing Into the Future," focused on environmental awareness. Awesome educational programs were developed for the conference including a variety of fun and exciting recreational and networking opportunities. A cultural evening was added this year where youth were engaged in a variety of forms of the arts. The delegates were exposed to many venues in the city including the Centennial Olympic Park, The World of Coca-Cola, CNN Center, the Carter Presidential Library, and the Martin Luther King Center.

Each year a community service project is planned and last year's collection of dimes for Habitat for Humanity International was tremendously successful. The collection for Habitat once again was included this year, collecting over \$10,000. This year, in cooperation with the local Habitat for Humanity Chapter, they began the process of building the "Clover House," which will always be known as the "House that 4-H Built!"



New Jersey 4-H'ers and agents who attended the National 4-H Congress, back row from left, Tara Pawchak, Morris County; Bev Hahn, Morris County; Marilu Randolph, Hunterdon County; Lillian Shupe, Hunterdon County; Dan Mundy, Hunterdon County; Shelly Damiano, Atlantic County; Judy Knehr, Ocean County; and Macy Compton, State 4-H program coordinator, New Brunswick. From left front are Karen Cito, Hunterdon County; T.C. Buchanan, Hunterdon County; Karen Mansue and Barbara Teymant, both representing Ocean County.

State Team Competes In 4-H National Wildlife Contest

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — From the green, tree-covered hills of Pennsylvania, four 4-H youth journeyed to New Mexico to compete recently in the 2003 4-H National Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Contest in the hot, flat Chihuahuan Desert.

To win a spot on the Keystone State team, the youth placed among the top four at the state contest held last spring. This year, three of the four team members were from McKean County: Lisa Dunkerton, Sunny Frey and Bethany Kibble are all members of the 4-H Sewing Suzies, Junior Outdoorsmen and McKean County Council. The fourth team member was senior Katie Brunecz of Warren County. Ann Dunkerton of McKean County

and Pam Snook of Clinton County were the team coaches who accompanied the girls.

As Pennsylvania was experiencing a summer of torrential rains, the girls learned about management of livestock and wildlife where there is little or no rainfall. Contestants individually judged the suitability of habitat for wildlife species through on-site evaluation and aerial photographs. As teams, they wrote urban and rural wildlife management plans for nine different wildlife species.

The Pennsylvania team placed 10th overall, with a strong showing in its rural management plan. Alabama's team placed first, followed by Virginia and Georgia. Following the contest, partici-

pants enjoyed a trip to White Sands National Monument and a gondola ride/hike on Sierra Blanca (11,400 feet above sea level) near Ruidoso, N.M.

The national contest is sponsored by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, International Paper, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and the National Rifle Association. The Pennsylvania Game Commission paid travel costs for the Pennsylvania team and the Pennsylvania Outdoor Writers Association also contributed to defray team members' expenses.

Adams County 4-Her At Egg Conference

Summer Chronister, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Mike Chronister, Dillsburg, represented Adams County and Pennsylvania at the National 4-H Poultry and Egg Conference in Louisville, Ky. Summer is one of five 4-H members from Pennsylvania who were selected to attend the 2003 Conference.

Summer is a member of the York Springs 4-H Club, Adams County 4-H Beef Club, and Adams County 4-H Senate. She currently is President of her local 4-H club. Summer was a camp counselor, County 4-H Ambassador, and involved on several committees in Senate.



The Maryland 4-H Dairy Quiz Bowl placed second overall in the 4-H Invitational Dairy Bowl Competition at the North American International Livestock Exposition, Nov. 8. Shown here (from left) are the team members and their coach: Amanda Kilby, Cecil County; Caitlyn Trout, Frederick County; Davis Schwartzbeck, Carroll County; Jonathan Saunders, Carroll County; and April Hall, coach, Cecil County.



Jeff Ishee

Va. Farm Bureau Awards PBS Host

HARRISONBURG, Va. — WVPT Virginia Public Television's host Jeff Ishee has received the Virginia Farm Bureau's Journalism Award for most comprehensive agricultural coverage in Virginia.

More than 700 people from across the commonwealth of Virginia, including leaders in farming and agriculture and elected officials, recently attended the award ceremony in Williamsburg.

Ishee is the host and producer of "Virginia Farming," WVPT's weekly television program dedicated to the agriculture industry in Virginia. The program is produced by WVPT and broadcast on WVPT, Virginia's Public Television and WBRA Blue Ridge Public Television, reaching more than 60 Virginia counties.

Ishee is also Farm Director for WWSA radio in Harrisonburg and hosts "On the Farm Radio," a syndicated radio show for listeners in Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and North Carolina. In addition, he produces and broadcasts the "Agribusiness" news segment for WWSA. His Website is www.onthefarmradio.com.

4-H Programs Preparing New Beef Producers

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — Pennsylvania's answer to the widely asked question, "Where's the beef?" can be found in Penn State Cooperative Extension 4-H livestock clubs, which teach youth skills needed to become beef producers. More than 1,700 young people participated in such clubs last year.

Participants, who are all between the ages of 8 and 18, raise cattle from calves and learn about everything from feeding, diets, veterinary care and birthing to grooming and showing animals at fairs.

"There is no better way to prepare for becoming a beef producer than taking part in the 4-H programs," says Bob Mikesell, 4-H livestock program specialist. "The youngsters are exposed to every aspect of the business."

4-H beef cattle programs provide kids with different experiences tailored to their circumstances. "You don't have to live on a farm to participate," says Mikesell, "but you do need access to farm facilities. Some projects require more resources than others, but none are backyard projects."

Phil Hoy, cooperative extension youth program coordinator, notes that although 4-H offers many different types of projects to enhance the lives of both rural and urban youth, animal projects remain tremendously popular.

"Raising beef cattle takes a higher initial investment and a bigger commitment of time and resources than some other animal projects because more space and more farm facilities are needed," he says, "but the returns — in terms of education and career preparation — are also significant."

The Market Steer Project program boasts the most participants — 1,468 last year — among 4-H beef programs. Youths purchase calves in mid- to late-fall and feed, care for and groom the steers in preparation for showing and selling them at county fairs and round-ups the following summer.

Penn State's detailed, step-by-step reference guide for the 4-H Market Steer Project leads first-time participants through selecting a project animal, caring for the steer and keeping it healthy, grooming it and showing it.

"This project mirrors the commercial beef industry fairly closely," says Mikesell. "What the industry does with hundreds or thousands of head of cattle, a 4-H'er does with one, two or three."

In the Breeding Beef Project, youths select heifer calves and raise them to breeding age. Then they have the heifers bred and oversee the birth of a new calf. "They start their own little beef herd," says Mikesell.

"Kids in the heifer project can show at beef breed exhibitions, as well as local fairs and state sponsored shows," he adds. "They also learn about reproductive health programs, calving management and artificial insemination."

The third 4-H beef program, the Dairy Beef Feeder Calf Project, offers a way for kids growing up on or around dairy farms to experience beef production by using bull calves. More than 200 youngsters took part last year.

"Pennsylvania's dairy industry produces many bull calves, few of which are needed for breeding purposes," explains Mikesell. "Most dairy bull calves are destined for veal or beef production."

As a result, 4-H youths can buy week-old dairy bull calves at a lower price than they could purchase 500 to 600 pound beef calves. "The kids teach the calves to eat grain and have them castrated into steers," says Mikesell. "Dairy-type steers are not eligible for certified beef programs such as Certified Angus Beef, and they have to be fed a very concentrated diet to make them suitable for slaughter, but when fed correctly, dairy steers can produce acceptable-quality beef."

For more information about 4-H, contact your Penn State Cooperative Extension county office, or visit pa4H.cas.psu.edu on the World Wide Web.