K-State meat animal evaluation team rolls to third straight national title

Junior from Iola wins individual championship

MANHATTAN, Kan. – A Kansas State University judging team that tests its skill on factors that impact the production of meat from livestock has rolled to its third consecutive national championship.

The meat animal evaluation team was crowned champions at the 2023 Collegiate Meat Animal Evaluation Contest in Canyon, Texas, posting team-winning scores in six divisions.

Brody Nemecek, a K-State junior from Iola, Kansas, was also named the overall champion, leading a 1-4 sweep by K-State in the individual competition.

“Many of the students who compete in this contest have already demonstrated excellence in animal and/or meat evaluation, (but) this is an opportunity for them to pull together their knowledge, education and past training to make this a true capstone experience,” said Mike Day, head of K-State’s Department of Animal Sciences and Industry.

Day noted that in addition to the team’s third win in a row, it’s the sixth national title for K-State in the past seven years.

The three-day competition includes live market animal carcass predictions and pricing, breeding animal evaluation and meat judging competition.

K-State posted top scores in breeding, beef, communications, market, swine and sheep divisions; and was third as a team in the meats division. Nemecek’s individual win was keyed by a first place finish in breeding, second in sheep, fourth in swine and ninth in market.
Ellie Kidwell (Walhonding, Ohio), Luke Harker (Hope, Indiana) and Jade Parrish (Parrish, Florida) finished second, third and fourth overall, respectively. Weston Schrader of Wells, Kansas, was sixth overall. Kidwell was the national runner-up in market and swine, while Harker was first overall in swine.

Other top finishers by K-State’s team include Chesney Effing of Highmore, South Dakota (first in beef); Trevor Johnson of Centerville, South Dakota (first in market); and Sarah Kalman of Chico, Calif. (second in beef).

Third place finishers include Effing (meats), Harker (breeding), Schrader (beef), and Katrina Tucker of Hopkins, Michigan (sheep). Fourteen members of K-State’s team placed in the top 10 in at least one category.

The team is coached by K-State meat science associate professor Travis O’Quinn, and animal science instructor Chris Mullinix, who coached K-State’s livestock judging team to the collegiate national championship in 2020. Assistant coaches are Erin Beyer and Macie Weigand.

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The Kansas State University Animal Sciences and Industry department serves students, livestock producers and the animal and food industries through teaching, research and education. The K-State ASI department prepares students for careers in the animal and food industries. The curriculum includes the study of nutrition, reproduction, genetics, behavior, meat science, food science with production, management, and agribusiness skills. For more about the K-State’s ASI department visit asi.ksu.edu.

K-State Research and Extension is a short name for the Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service, a program designed to generate and distribute useful knowledge for the well-being of Kansans. Supported by county, state, federal and private funds, the program has county Extension offices, experiment fields, area Extension offices and regional research centers statewide. Its headquarters is on the K-State campus, Manhattan.

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