

Michigan 4-H members and alumni earn high marks at World Dairy Expo dairy cattle judging contest

Melissa Elischer - January 7, 2020

Three teams from Michigan competed at the 2019 World Dairy Expo, representing Michigan 4-H and Michigan State University.



The Michigan 4-H team (from left): Coach Sarah Black, Caleb Whittmore, Kaylee Kriser, Kassidy Thelen, Mikayla Bowen and coach Joe Domecq. Photo by Agri-Graphics.

Every October, Madison, Wisconsin is the center of the dairy universe for a week when farmers, students, cow enthusiasts and many others descend on the city for World Dairy Expo, an international event where anyone and everyone is welcomed to support, celebrate and learn something new about dairy farming. In addition to seeing some of the best cattle in the world, enjoying a delicious dairy treat, learning about the newest innovations in dairy and agricultural science and seeing friends from near and far, there are academic contests for young people to showcase their talents. The dairy cattle judging contest is one such event.

For nearly 100 years, 4-H members and four-year college students have been placing classes and giving reasons from the floor of the coliseum. The post-secondary contest, aimed at junior college and technical program students, has been part of the Expo lineup for 30 years.

In 2019, three teams represented Michigan, one in each of the three divisions mentioned above. On the Michigan 4-H team were Mikayla Bowen from Hillsdale County, Kaylee Kriser from Branch County, Kassidy Thelen from Clinton County and Caleb Whittmore from Ingham County. Twenty-one 4-H teams from across the country competed and this was the first national contest for all four team members. The team took home seventh in Ayrshire, 10th in Holstein and 13th in Brown Swiss.

Out of 21 teams from around the country, Michigan 4-H placed 11th overall and 12th in reasons. Kriser placed third in the Ayrshire breed and Bowen was eighth high individual overall in the contest.



The MSU IAT team (from left): Coach Sarah Black, Caitie Theisen, Grace Platte, Jessie Nash, coach Sarah Michalek and coach Joe Domecq. Photo by Agri-Graphics.

The Michigan State University (MSU) Institute of Agricultural Technology (IAT) dairy management and agricultural industries competed in the post-secondary contest with team members Jessie Nash, Grace Platte and Caitie Theisen. Fifteen teams were vying for top honors at the contest. The MSU IAT team placed third in Holsteins, fifth in Red and White, seventh in reasons and ninth overall. Individually, Nash was fifth in Guernsey and Platte was second in Holstein.



MSU collegiate team (from left): Coach Sarah Black, Austin Haywoof, Leta Larsen, Allison Schafer, Lauren Heberling, Maddy Meyer, Cameron Cook, coach Sarah Michalek and coach Joe Domecq. Photo by Agri-Graphics.

Cameron Cook, Lauren Heberling, Maddy Meyer and Allison Schafer represented MSU in the intercollegiate contest against 16 other teams. Cook, Heberling and Schafer are students in agribusiness management and Meyer is an animal science major. The team tied for first place in reasons, took home first place in Brown Swiss, second in Guernsey, second in Milking Shorthorn, fourth in Holstein and fifth place overall.

Cook was second in Holsteins, third in reasons, seventh in Brown Swiss and 12th overall. Heberling placed sixth in Guernsey, seventh in Holstein, eighth in Milking Shorthorn and 20th overall. Meyer was eighth in Brown Swiss. Schafer placed third in Milking Shorthorn, fourth in Red and White, ninth in Jersey and 19th overall.

By placing in the top 25 individuals for this contest, Cook, Heberling and Schafer have earned the title of being an All American Dairy Judging Student.

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