



**STATE OF MISSISSIPPI  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE**

ANDY GIPSON  
COMMISSIONER

# **PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 1, 2023**

**Contact: Paige Manning, Director of Marketing and Public Relations**  
**(601) 359-1163 / cell: (662) 312-5897**  
[Paige@mdac.ms.gov](mailto:Paige@mdac.ms.gov)

**Hannah East, Marketing Specialist**  
**(601) 359-1179**  
[HannahE@mdac.ms.gov](mailto:HannahE@mdac.ms.gov)

**Rankin County Youth Recognized at Annual Dixie National Sale of Junior Champions**  
***State Representative Showing with Rankin County Youth Wins Dixie National Legislative Showdown***

**STATE FAIRGROUNDS, Miss.** – This year, 1,257 4-H and FFA members across Mississippi participated in the Dixie National Junior Round-Up Livestock Shows, showing 2,153 head of livestock. These students competed for the opportunity to participate in the 54th annual Sale of Junior Champions. The Sale of Junior Champions, one of the highlight events of the Dixie National Livestock Show and Rodeo, is a livestock auction where livestock exhibitors winning Champion and Reserve Champion in the Junior Round-Up Market Divisions sell their animals and scholarships are awarded.

“One of the most coveted honors for Mississippi’s youth livestock exhibitors is participating in the Sale of Junior Champions. The hard work and dedication that it takes to compete surpasses that required for a number of other youth activities. These youth are our future leaders. The skills and lessons learned will not just impact their generation; it will impact future generations to come,” said Mississippi Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson. “I am so proud of all the students from across our great state who worked hard all year to raise these animals and participate in the 2023 Dixie National livestock shows. Congratulations to all of our winners and scholarship recipients.”

During the Sale of Junior Champions, several student members of the Rankin County 4-H, Pelahatchie FFA and Puckett FFA organizations were recognized for their achievements. Landry and Layton Varner, Champions of both the Lightweight and Heavyweight Goat Shows, as well as Paxton and Mallary Lemoine, Reserve Grand Champions of the Light Mediumweight Goat Show, participated in the sale. Paxton and Mallary Lemoine were also recognized as supreme exhibitors. In addition, Cole Hammons and Maddie Grace Walters were awarded scholarships.

The final Sale of Champions featured a record 48 champion market animals, including eight steers, 16 hogs, 12 goats, 10 lambs and for the first time, two hair sheep. The preliminary total sale was \$456,285. The Sale of Champions Promotion Committee raised \$61,500 in scholarships, including numerous \$1,500 scholarships for high school senior exhibitors. This year, scholarships were awarded to 39 student participants of the Dixie National Junior Round-Up Livestock Shows.

In addition, state Representative Tom Miles joined Layton Varner, student member of the Rankin County 4-H, for the 2023 Dixie National Legislative Livestock Showdown. This unique show is an annual competition of skill and showmanship between Mississippi legislators, who team up with the junior livestock exhibitors from their respective districts. The legislators are divided into two groups between the representatives and senators, with a winner being determined for each group, as well as an overall champion. This year, Rep. Miles was the winner of the House of Representatives Showdown and the overall winner of the 2023 Legislative Livestock Showdown. State Senator Tyler McCaughn was the winner of the Senate Showdown.

###

**Photos attached.**



**State Representative Tom Miles joined Layton Varner, student member of the Rankin County 4-H, for the 2023 Dixie National Legislative Livestock Showdown. Over 30 legislators participated in this unique show, with Sen. McCaughn winning the Senate Showdown.**





**2023 Dixie National Sale of Junior Champions Champion Lightweight Goat**  
**Exhibited by Layton & Landry Varner, Rankin 4-H.**



**2023 Dixie National Sale of Junior Champions Champion Heavyweight Goat**  
**Exhibited by Landry & Layton Varner, Rankin 4-H.**





**2023 Dixie National Sale of Junior Champions Res Grand Champion/Champ Light Mediumweight Goat Exhibited by Paxton & Mallary Lemoine, Rankin 4-H/Puckett FFA.**



**2023 Dixie National Sale of Junior Champions Supreme Exhibitors.**  
**L-R: Katy Kendall and Hannah Hayes Ware, Montgomery 4-H; Paxton and Mallary Lemoine, Rankin 4-H/Puckett FFA; Chase Boone, Smith 4-H/Raleigh FFA; Delayne Hughes, Forrest 4-H; Carl Taylor, Prentiss 4-H; Not Pictured: Cloe Caroline Strohm, Hinds 4-H; Jadyn Sanford, Covington 4-H.**





**2023 Dixie National Sale of Junior Champions Scholarship Recipients.**

**L-R: Front row, Layla Bramlitt, Calhoun 4-H; Addison Lindsey, Scott 4-H/Pelahatchie FFA; Ann Cole Hammons, Rankin 4-H; Sadie Morris, South Panola FFA/Panola 4-H; Caroline Chapman, Tippah 4-H/Pine Grove FFA; Maddie Grace Walters, Rankin 4-H/Pelahatchie FFA; Ann Rileigh Holder, Jones 4-H; Emma Grace Koger, Humphreys 4-H; Ferrell-Alleyn Stonecypher, Humphreys 4-H; Kylie Graves, Lincoln 4-H; Jaylynn Cloy, Lincoln 4-H; Madelyn Lewis, Hinds 4-H. Back row, Aiden Harper, Jasper 4-H; Preston Aust, Humphreys 4-H; Colton Howell, Holmes 4-H; Joseph Nelson, Walthall 4-H; Collin Culpepper, Jones 4-H/S. Jones FFA; J.J. Hill, Stringer FFA/Jasper 4-H; Grant Goree, Lincoln 4-H; Jon Tyler Wells, Scott 4-H/Pisgah FFA; Will Manning, Union 4-H; Calden Ratliff, Stone 4-H/Stone Co. FFA; Conner Shelton, Calhoun 4-H/Bruce FFA; Jensyn Cain, Calhoun 4-H; Dru Prisock, Oktibbeha 4-H.**