



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

ANDY GIPSON
COMMISSIONER

PRESS RELEASE

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Simpson County Youth Recognized at Annual Dixie National Sale of Junior Champions

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, two student members of the Simpson County 4-H and Simpson County Technical Center FFA organizations were recognized for their achievements. Will Smith, Champion of the Hereford Hog Show, participated in the sale. In addition, Ayden Wolken was recognized as a premier exhibitor.

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.

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Photos attached.



**2023 Dixie National Sale of Junior Champions Champion Hereford Hog
Exhibited by Will Smith, Simpson 4-H/SCTC FFA.**



**2023 Dixie National Sale of Junior Champions Premier Exhibitors.
L-R: Chase Boone, Smith 4-H/Raleigh FFA; Leighton Horton, Tippah 4-H;
Lee Taylor, Prentiss 4-H/New Site FFA; Claire Necaice, Hancock 4-H;
Hope White, Jones 4-H/West Jones FFA;
and Ayden Wolken, Simpson 4-H/SCTC FFA.**