



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

ANDY GIPSON
COMMISSIONER

PRESS RELEASE

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

STATE FAIRGROUNDS, Miss. – This year, 1,225 4-H and FFA members across Mississippi participated in the Dixie National Junior Round-Up Livestock Shows, showing 2,084 head of livestock. These students competed for the opportunity to participate in the 55th annual Sale of Junior Champions. The Sale of Junior Champions, one of the highlight events of the Dixie National Livestock Show and Rodeo, is an auction where livestock exhibitors winning Champion and Reserve Champion in the Junior Round-Up Market Divisions sell their animals and scholarships are awarded.

“As the state’s number one economic driver as well as our largest industry and largest employer, agriculture is key to solving Mississippi’s workforce development challenges and getting more young people involved in work opportunities. I strongly believe our ag and youth livestock programs through 4-H and FFA are key. These programs are the best youth and workforce development programs in the state,” said Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson. “The Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce recognizes the hard work and dedication of these young people. They are our future leaders. Thousands participated in the Dixie National Junior Round-Up Livestock shows, and at the Sale of Junior Champions, we celebrated the best of the best. I am proud of all the students from across our great state who worked hard all year to raise these animals and show at Dixie National. Congratulations to our 2024 winners and scholarship recipients.”

During the Sale of Junior Champions, several student members of the Rankin County 4-H and Puckett FFA organizations were recognized for their achievements. Landry and Layton Varner, Grand Champions of the Mississippi Bred Light Heavyweight Market Goat Show, Reserve Champions of the Mediumweight Market Goat Show and Reserve Grand Champions of the Division 3 Market Hair Sheep Show, as well as Paxton and Mallery Lemoine, Champions of the Lightweight Market Goat Show, all participated in the sale.

The final Sale of Champions featured a record 53 champion market animals, including eight steers, 17 hogs, 12 goats, 12 lambs and four hair sheep. The preliminary sale total was \$484,010. The Sale of Champions Promotion Committee raised \$61,500 in scholarships, totaling almost \$1.2 million in scholarship money since 1993. This year, scholarships were awarded to 39 student participants of the Dixie National Junior Round-Up Livestock Shows.

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Photos attached.



MS Bred Grand Champion/MS Bred Champ Light Heavyweight Market Goat. Exhibited by Landry & Layton Varner, Rankin 4-H.



Reserve Champion Mediumweight Market Goat. Exhibited by Landry & Layton Varner, Rankin 4-H.



Res Grand Champion/Champ Division 3 Market Hair Sheep. Exhibited by Landry & Layton Varner, Rankin 4-H.



Champion Lightweight Market Goat. Exhibited by Paxton & Mallary Lemoine, Rankin 4-H/Puckett FFA.