



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

ANDY GIPSON
COMMISSIONER

PRESS RELEASE

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Smith County Youth Recognized at Annual Dixie National Sale of Junior Champions
Total Sales Over Event's 56-year History Surpasses \$10 Million This Year

STATE FAIRGROUNDS, Miss. – This year, 1,269 4-H and FFA members from across Mississippi participated in the Dixie National Junior Round-Up Livestock Shows, exhibiting 1,941 head of livestock. These students competed for the opportunity to participate in the 56th 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 prizewinning animals and where scholarships are awarded.

“Our 4-H and FFA livestock shows are the best workforce and leadership development program in the State of Mississippi,” said Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson. “When it comes to workforce development, we don’t have to reinvent the wheel. To find hard workers that are committed to developing their education and their careers and lives here in Mississippi, just come to the livestock shows, and especially the Sale of Junior Champions. These students know the value of hard work, and just as important, they are not deterred by hard work. The Sale of Champions would not be possible without the support of our partners, Mississippi State University Extension Service and Mississippi FFA, who conduct and manage the livestock shows. I appreciate their dedication and their investment in our young people. Congratulations to everyone on another record year!”

During the Sale of Junior Champions, several student members of the Smith County 4-H, Raleigh FFA and Mize FFA were recognized for their achievements. Aimry Blackwell, Reserve Grand Champion of the Mississippi Bred American Steer Show and Champion of the Chester Hog Show; Cooper Bell, Reserve Champion of the Mississippi Bred Berkshire-Other Breeds Hog Show; Hadley and Addison Slocum, Grand Champions of the Division 4 Market Goat Show; Luke and Will Sullivan, Grand Champions of the Mississippi Bred Berkshire-Other Breeds Hog Show, Champions of the Duroc Hog Show and Reserve Champions of the Yorkshire Hog Show; Macie and Makynzee Harris, Champions of the Mississippi Bred Lightweight European Steer Show; and Sadie Shoemaker, Reserve Champion of the Mississippi Bred Lightweight European Steer Show, all participated in this year’s sale. In addition, Hayes Thornton was awarded a scholarship.

The 2025 Dixie National Sale of Junior Champions marked a significant milestone as total sales over the event's 56-year history passed \$10 million. Kelly Tucker, chairwoman of the Dixie National Sale of Junior Champions Promotion Committee, emphasized the impact that livestock shows have on the youth. "Participating in the livestock shows and projects teaches our young people essential skills such as how to think critically to solve problems, to work as a team, to communicate effectively, to make ethical decisions and how to win and lose with respect. Youth are vital to our state and country's future and supporting them at the Sale of Champions helps them to achieve their goals and aspirations," said Tucker.

The final Sale of Junior Champions featured 49 champion market animals, including pigs, sheep, cattle and goats. The 2025 sale total was \$591,287, breaking last year's record of \$484,010. In addition, scholarships were awarded to 41 Mississippi 4-H and FFA youth participants of the Dixie National Junior Round-Up Livestock Shows.

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Photos attached.



MS Bred Reserve Grand Champion/Champ American/MS Bred Champ American Steer. Exhibited by Aimry Blackwell, Smith 4-H/Raleigh FFA.



Champion Chester Hog. Exhibited by Aimry Blackwell, Smith 4-H/Raleigh FFA.



**Reserve Champion Berkshire-Other Breeds/MS Bred Res Champ Berkshire-Other Breeds Hog.
Exhibited by Cooper Bell, Smith 4-H.**



Grand Champion/Champ Division 4 Market Goat. Exhibited by Hadley & Addison Slocum, Smith 4-H.



MS Bred Grand Champion Hog/Champ Berkshire-Other Breeds/MS Bred Champ Berkshire-Other Breeds Hog. Exhibited by Luke & Will Sullivan, Smith 4-H.



Champion Duroc Hog. Exhibited by Luke & Will Sullivan, Smith 4-H.



Reserve Champion Yorkshire Hog. Exhibited by Luke & Will Sullivan, Smith 4-H.



Champion Lightweight European/MS Bred Champ Lightweight European Steer. Exhibited by Macie & Makynzee Harris, Smith 4-H.



Reserve Champion Lightweight European/MS Bred Reserve Champ Lightweight European Steer. Exhibited by Sadie Shoemaker, Smith 4-H.



2025 Scholarship Recipients L-R: Front row, Lindsey Hogue, Yazoo 4-H; Scarlett Kirkland, Jasper 4-H; Kaleigh Robinson, Lincoln 4-H/Enterprise FFA; Stormy Thompson, Calhoun 4-H; Keeley Horton, Jasper 4-H; Alana Whitehead, Nanih Waiya FFA; Emmy Tolar, Marion 4-H; Mattie Gibson, Stone 4-H; Riley Lewis, Stone 4-H/FFA; Gracyn Foster, Jasper 4-H/West Jones FFA; Mille O’Neal, Leflore 4-H; Reagan Lord, Hinds 4-H; and Madilyn Ard, Lincoln 4-H. Back row, Lee Taylor, Prentiss 4-H/New Site FFA; Copelen Ratliff, Stone 4-H/FFA; Ethan McCreary, Lee 4-H/New Site FFA; Samuel McDaniel, Lincoln 4-H; Hayes Thornton, Smith 4-H/Mize FFA; James Farr, Hinds 4-H; Lauren Bryant, Tippah 4-H/Walnut FFA; Haley Grace Welch, Simpson 4-H/Simpson Vo-Tech; Raylee Jones, Mantachie FFA; Laney Carter, Humphreys 4-H; Tripp McGee, Jones 4-H; and Emma Grace Massey, Forrest 4-H.