



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

ANDY GIPSON
COMMISSIONER

PRESS RELEASE

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Itawamba County Youth Recognized at 2026 Dixie National Sale of Junior Champions

STATE FAIRGROUNDS, Miss. – This year, 1,152 4-H and FFA members from across Mississippi participated in the Dixie National Junior Round-Up Livestock Shows, exhibiting 1,759 head of livestock. These students competed for the opportunity to participate in the 57th 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 continue to be one of the strongest leadership and workforce development programs in Mississippi,” said Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson. “You don’t have to look far to find the next generation of leaders in our state — just walk through the Livestock Barns and see them in action. These students understand commitment, perseverance and the value of seeing a job through. Each year, the Sale of Junior Champions is made possible through the outstanding partnership and hard work of Mississippi State University’s Extension Service, who works with our Fairgrounds staff to organize and manage these livestock shows during the annual Dixie National Livestock Show and Rodeo. We are grateful for their continued dedication and investment in Mississippi’s youth, and I congratulate all of this year’s participants in the Sale of Junior Champions.”

During the Sale of Junior Champions, three student members of the Itawamba County 4-H and Tremont FFA were recognized for their achievements. Rylie Holley was recognized as a 2026 premier exhibitor, and Lynden Whitehead and Teddy Haffey were both awarded scholarships.

The 2026 Dixie National Sale of Junior Champions marked a significant milestone as the second highest grossing sale ever. Total sales over this unique event’s 57-year history surpassed \$10.6 million this year. In addition, two records were broken at this year’s sale, including the highest price ever paid for a Market Lamb at \$13,500 and the highest price ever paid for a Market Goat at \$25,000.

The final Sale of Junior Champions featured 40 champion market animals, including pigs, sheep, cattle and goats. The 2026 sale total was \$578,050, breaking last year’s record of \$484,010. In addition, scholarships totaling \$85,000 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.



2026 Premier Exhibitors L-R: Gracyn Foster, Jasper 4-H/West Jones FFA; Annalyn Cates, Lamar 4-H; Aubrianna Hutcheson, Union 4-H; Jenna Graves, Tippah 4-H; Julian Chavez, Lincoln 4-H; and Rylie Holley, Itawamba 4-H/Tremont FFA.



2026 Scholarship Recipients L-R: Front row, Ava Jacobs, Prentiss 4-H/Wheeler FFA; Hanna Hood, Holmes 4-H; Neely Jordan, Leflore 4-H; Jadyn Collier, Winston 4-H/Nanih Waiya FFA; Alena O'Conner, Panola 4-H; Emma Neth, Panola 4-H/South Panola FFA; Autumn Hayes, Brooklyn FFA; Karley Watkins, Nanih Waiya FFA; Katelyn Clark, Newton 4-H; Katharine Spacht, Stone 4-H/FFA; Kasey Pigg, Hinds 4-H; Lynden Whitehead, Itawamba 4-H/Tremont FFA; and Morgan White, Oktibbeha 4-H. Back row, Teddy Haffey, Itawamba 4-H; Auston Hughes, Yalobusha 4-H; Hunter Banes, Rankin 4-H/Puckett FFA; Will Ross, Rankin 4-H; Roxie Roberson, Union 4-H; Jimmy Wayne Wilson, Rankin 4-H; Jordan Brooks, Holmes 4-H; John Michael Donahoo, Humphreys 4-H; Cole Mozingo, Forrest 4-H/Brooklyn FFA; Chloe Tucker, Stone 4-H/FFA; Anna Windham, Jones 4-H/NE Jones FFA; and Rylee White, Covington 4-H.