



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

ANDY GIPSON
COMMISSIONER

PRESS RELEASE

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Rankin 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, six student members of the Rankin County 4-H, Puckett FFA and Florence FFA were recognized for their achievements. Paxton Lemoine, Reserve Grand Champion of the Division 2 Market Goat Show and Grand Champion of Division 2 Market Hair Sheep Show and Champion of the Division 1 Market Hair Sheep Show, and Landry Varner, Champion of the Division 1 Market Goat Show, both participated in this year’s sale. In addition, Lilla Quick was recognized as a 2026 supreme exhibitor and Hunter Banes, Will Ross and Jimmy Wayne Wilson were all 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.



Reserve Grand Champion/Champ Division 2 Market Goat. Exhibited by Paxton Lemoine, Rankin 4-H/Puckett FFA.



Grand Champion/Champion Division 2 Market Hair Sheep. Exhibited by Paxton Lemoine, Rankin 4-H/Puckett FFA.



Champion Division 1 Market Hair Sheep. Exhibited by Paxton Lemoine, Rankin 4-H/Puckett FFA.



Champion Division 1 Market Goat. Exhibited by Landry Varner, Rankin 4-H/Florence FFA.



2026 Supreme Exhibitors L-R: Mason Williams, Hinds 4-H; Will Sullivan, Smith 4-H/Mize FFA; Luke Sullivan, Smith 4-H/Mize FFA; Abby Gipson, Simpson 4-H; Anaston Stevens, New Site FFA/Prentiss 4-H; Carl Taylor, New Site FFA/Prentiss 4-H; Wyitt Hughes, Yalobusha 4-H; Harlee Wilson, Scott 4-H; Eli Perry, Yazoo 4-H; Brooks Saucier, Forrest 4-H; and Lilla Quick, Rankin 4-H.



2026 Scholarship Recipients L-R: Front row, Ava Jacobs, Prentiss 4-H/Wheeler FFA; Hanna Hood, Holmes 4-H; Neely Jordan, Leflore 4-H; Jady Collier, Winston 4-H/Nanah Waiya FFA; Alena O'Conner, Panola 4-H; Emma Neth, Panola 4-H/South Panola FFA; Autumn Hayes, Brooklyn FFA; Karley Watkins, Nanah 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.