## **Jackson County 4-H Range Champions**

BROOKINGS, S.D. - The Jackson County 4-H Range Team received top honors for their performance in the National 4-H Range Judging Competition held in the Oklahoma City area May 5-7, 2015. Out of more than 700 contestants, this South Dakota team placed first.

The Jackson County 4-H Range Team individual placings are as follows: Lindsey VanderMay was named the National Champion; Emily Knutson placing third, Shaina Solon placing fifth and Jackie Thayer placing sixth. The team was coached by Brandy Knutson.

The Newell FFA Range Judging Team placed eleventh in the FFA Range division. Team members include; Callie Kukuchka, Emma Rogers, Megan

Thornhill, Bailey Bauer. This team was coached by Jodie Severson and Tyler Swan. The National Land and

Range Judging contest sponsored by Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts. The Concho Cheyenne and Arapaho Agency hosted the Range and Land judging event.

FFA and 4-H participat-ing teams qualify for the national event by placing among the top five teams at contests held in their home states. The first two days of the three day event offered contestants opportunities to visit nearby practice sites to get acquainted with Oklahoma soils and plants with information available from range and soil experts. The actual contest site remains a secret until contest

day, so no one has an unfair advantage. Contestants and coaches gather on contest morning to find out the official contest location.

The event ended Thursday night with an awards banquet in the Great Hall of the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum. National championship trophies were awarded to team and individual winners in each category of the competition which include; land judging, range judging, and homesite evaluation. Each category included FFA and 4-H divisions.

More South Dakota Teams Place in National Contest

South Dakota land judging teams received recognition on the awards stage including: in 4-H land judging division - sixth place went to the McCook County 4-H team. Team members include; Kayla Mentele, Michelle Moore, Kally Pulse, Kailey Roesler. The team was coached by Terry Rieckman and Alicia Reif.

The McCook Central FFA land team placed ninth in the FFA Division. Team members include; Ryker Seamer, Colin Sabers, Trustyn Wolf, Mercedes Peterson. The team was coached by Terry Rieckman and Alicia Reif. Other participating South

Dakota range and land teams included: Wessingtion Springs FFA, Clark FFA, Eastern South Dakota 4-H, Jones County FFA, DeSmet FFA, Highmore FFA and Viborg-Hurley FFA.

"These opportunities to expose students to the study of range management provide students with skills and understanding of a valuable natural resource that drives the economies of rural America in the west," said Dave Ollila, SDSU Extension Sheep Field Specialist, who provided technical support for all the South Dakota Range teams. "Many students will pursue careers which require the knowledge of soils and range resource management."

Lance Howe, USDA-NRCS Soil Scientist based in Redfield also provided technical support to South Dakota Land teams

In addition to practicing and competing in the range and land judging contest, the FFA and 4-H members were able to take in some of the local attractions Oklahoma

Students toured Braum's Dairy and Processing facili-

had to offer.

ties where more than 10,000 cows are milked twice a day and all the milk is processed on site to be delivered to 270 stores within 300 miles of their farm. Other tours included; the Oklahoma City Zoo, Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum, Lazy E Ranch and the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum.

Sponsors for this unique educational opportunity include: South Dakota Section - Society of Range Management, South Dakota Livestock Industry Trust Fund and the South Dakota

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#### 1310

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