

## RELEVANCE

Livestock judging is a highly competitive experience that enhances independent decision-making abilities while challenging participants to process information quickly and be able to defend a position or decision. The ultimate goal in judging livestock is to compare and contrast the four animals in a given class against one another, and then compare them to what is considered the “ideal” animal. Livestock judging allows personal growth and development as it requires a student to think critically. It can teach youth valuable time management skills, responsibility, and how to be competitive while demonstrating honesty, integrity, and respect. Livestock judging instills these valuable life skills, but also provides opportunities for learning about selection and obtaining general knowledge about the livestock industry, as well as interacting with current industry leaders which may prove beneficial throughout the one’s 4-H career and into adulthood.

## RESPONSE

In response to the interest of livestock judging in Willacy County, county extension agent and 4-H coordinator Georgina Macias hosted a series of monthly livestock judging practices starting in November and ending in June.

**Eight** monthly 4-H practices covered an introduction and vocabulary lesson to teach students proper terminology, parts of the animal when evaluating both breeding and market animals, and decision-making strategies to prepare members to make decisions in a timely matter. Members were required to evaluate livestock during practices and answer questions and discuss collaboratively on their decision making. Once members became comfortable judging both breeding and market animals two practices were held focused solely on oral reasons.

Members competed at practice contests including the Willacy County Livestock Judging Contest, Cameron County Livestock Judging Contest, Rio Grande Valley Livestock Show Judging Contest, and San Antonio Invitational Livestock Judging Contest.

After competing at the District 12 4-H contest the senior team that qualified for state had two additional practices going over oral reasons, and breeding animal selection.

### TARGET AUDIENCE

- This program was targeted towards the 44 registered youth in the Willacy 4-H club.

### PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATORS

- Partners and collaborators include Mitch, Logan, and Lauren Thomas of Thomas Charolais Inc., Livestockjudging.com, the Willacy County Livestock Show and fair and 4-H adult volunteers

## VALUE STATEMENT

4-H motto: To make the best, better!

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension’s 4-H Youth Development Program teaches participants leadership skills and character traits. Participating youth become mentors, role models, and leaders in their schools and communities

**75 %**

Increase in project area participation from the previous 4-H year

**16**

**Youth competed at county, district, and state levels**



# Evaluation Strategy

The evaluation strategy used was adjusted livestock judging score data from the first contest at the Willacy County livestock show Judging contest in January compared to the same individuals who competed at the District 12 4-H Livestock Judging Contest in April.

10 individuals out of the 16 total who competed at the Willacy County livestock judging contest also competed at the District 12 4-H Livestock Judging contest.

## RESULTS

- Out of a maximum of 250 points 10 members averaged 183.7 points or **73.4%** at the Willacy County Livestock Judging Contest in January.
- Out of a maximum of 400 points the same 10 members averaged 370.5 points or **92.6%** at the District 12 4-H Livestock Judging Contest in April.
- The 10 members had a **26% increase** in their scores from January to April
- 100% of members had an increase in knowledge gained about livestock breeds, vocabulary, and market and breeding animal evaluation.
- Participation at the district contest increased from 4 members in 2021, to 16 members in 2022, a **75% increase in participation.**
- At the District 12 4-H Contest the Senior Team placed 2<sup>nd</sup> and qualified for the state contest at Texas 4-H roundup in June, and the Intermediate team placed 1<sup>st</sup> overall



## Summary

Participation would not have been possible without the work of parent volunteers taking members to and from practices and contests. Thank you to Rob and Ana Garcia for giving their time to support our youth. A special thank you to the Thomas Family for hosting and leading livestock judging practices throughout the year. Thank you to the Willacy County Housing authority and the Willacy County Livestock Show and Fair to use their space to host practices and contests.

**"I have seen my child come out of their comfort zone and be able to expand their passion for showing livestock, to evaluating livestock too." -Willacy 4-H parent**

## Future Programming

Future programming ideas include

- Live animal evaluation practices
- Judging camps and clinics
- Expand to livestock skillathon contests



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