



NJAS 2022

the **BIGGEST** show ON DIRT

MEATING DEMAND

Carcass contest sets records for quality

by Jera Pipkin, American Angus Association

Quality has been the market signal for many years. Cattlemen have capitalized on carcass merit, making strides in marbling but still faced one challenge — yield grade.

That may not be the case anymore, says Paul Dykstra, director of supply management and analysis for *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB). This year's National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) carcass contest wrote a new story.

Junior members are accomplishing the quality and yield combination, Dykstra says.

"We mirrored the commercial sector signals and when the contest was over, the most successful carcasses were very high value to the packer," he explains.

A process unique to the NJAS, exhibitors led the steers onto a truck to be harvested instead of leading them around the show ring. The steers were then evaluated, graded and their carcass data was reported.

This year, 42 entries from 11 states competed for the title, the largest contest to date.

In past years, there have been few Prime carcasses. Dykstra noted this feat secured their spot at the top of the competition in the past.

"The highlight in this set of steers is the fact 21% of the carcasses were Prime, yield grade 2s," Dykstra says. "It's a fairly special set of cattle that

2022 NJAS Carcass Contest state group results

Rank	Team	Name	Prem. (\$/hd.)	State Avg.
1	KS 5	Claire Caldwell	\$323.31	
1	KS 5	William Caldwell	\$273.60	
1	KS 5	Creed Caldwell	\$198.38	\$265.10
2	KS 3	Corbin Russell	\$303.24	
2	KS 3	Kirwin Russell	\$219.25	
2	KS 3	Corbin Russell	\$216.50	\$246.33
3	MO	Ethan Vanderwert	\$292.98	
3	MO	Ethan Vanderwert	\$284.62	
3	MO	Alexis Koelling	\$150.30	\$242.63

2022 NJAS Carcass Contest Results

Rank	Name	State Group	Live wt. (lb.)	Dressing %	HCW (lb.)	Fat (in.)	REA (sq. in.)
1	Ty Mogck		1,330	63.5%	845	0.28	14.2
2	Claire Caldwell	KS 5	1,360	61.0%	829	0.44	13.9
3	Corbin Russell	KS 3	1,300	61.4%	798	0.20	13.8
4	Kelsey Vandeberghe		1,305	62.2%	812	0.68	14.5
5	Ty Mogck		1,205	64.7%	780	0.40	14.1
6	Ethan Vanderwert	MO	1,265	60.9%	771	0.32	12.3
7	Aubree McCurry	KS 2	1,210	63.4%	767	0.44	13.1
8	Ethan Vanderwert	MO	1,255	59.7%	749	0.40	13.1
9	Alexis Vandeberghe	ND 2	1,280	58.5%	749	0.40	12.8
10	Aubree McCurry	KS 1	1,225	59.8%	733	0.40	12.8

NATIONAL JUNIOR ANGUS SHOW



Ty Mogck (left), Olivet, S.D., won grand champion carcass steer; and Claire Caldwell, Parker, Kan., won reserve grand champion carcass steer.



Kelsey Vandenberghe (left), Cleveland, N.D., won grand champion bred-and-owned carcass steer; and Alexis Vandenberghe, Cleveland, N.D., won reserve grand champion bred-and-owned carcass steer.



Kansas 5 won first place state carcass group. Pictured are Creed Caldwell (left), Parker; and Claire Caldwell, Parker.

QG	YG	CAB*	Grid prem. (\$/cwt.)	Carcass prem. (\$/hd.)
PR+	2.3	Yes	\$39.00	\$329.55
PR-	2.8	Yes	\$39.00	\$323.31
PR+	2.1	Yes	\$38.00	\$303.24
PR-	3.1	Yes	\$37.00	\$300.44
PR-	2.4	Yes	\$38.00	\$296.40
PR	2.7	Yes	\$38.00	\$292.98
PR-	2.8	Yes	\$38.00	\$291.46
PR-	2.6	Yes	\$38.00	\$284.62
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PR-	2.6	Yes	\$38.00	\$278.54

can hit such a lofty marbling achievement while remaining this lean in terms of their finish.”

Carcass winners

The grand champion carcass steer was exhibited by Ty Mogck of Olivet, S.D. His steer graded Prime with a yield grade of 2.3. The steer had a 14.2-square-inch (sq. in.) ribeye area and a hot-carcass weight of 845 pounds (lb.), allowing the steer to qualify for the CAB brand. Mogck received a \$39-per-hundredweight (cwt.) grid premium, \$9 per cwt. higher than the 2021 champion.

“The quality of the cattle was just exceptional and unexpected,” Dykstra says. “It

made for a very tight competition towards the top of the list.”

Claire Caldwell of Parker, Kan., took home reserve champion carcass steer honors. Her steer graded Prime with a yield grade of 2.8. The steer had a 13.9 sq. in. ribeye area and 829 lb. hot-carcass weight. Caldwell’s steer qualified for CAB, and she was awarded a \$39-cwt.-grid premium. The difference between the champion and reserve steers was a mere \$6 total per head.

“The exhibitors were not going in naïve,” Dykstra notes. “They selected steers that could get this job done, and they were handsomely rewarded in terms of the carcass premiums.”

The champion bred-and-owned carcass steer was exhibited by Kelsey Vandenberghe of Cleveland, N.D. Her

Continued on page 76



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steer graded Prime with a yield grade of 3.1. The steer had a 14.5-sq.-in. ribeye area and an 812-lb. hot-carcass weight, earning the CAB designation. Vandenberghe received a \$37-per-cwt. grid premium.

Alexis Vandenberghe of Cleveland, N.D., presented the reserve champion bred-and-owned carcass steer. Her steer graded Prime with a yield grade of 2.7. The steer also qualified for CAB, exhibiting a 12.8-sq.-in. ribeye area with a 749-lb. hot-carcass weight and receiving a \$38-per-cwt. grid premium.

“We have junior exhibitors from several states that brought one, maybe two steers, to a carcass competition that has put on display what Angus genetics can do,” Dykstra says.

NJAA members also competed in the contest as state groups — three steers were grouped together by at

least two exhibitors.

The champion state group went to Kansas 5, averaging a \$265.10 carcass premium per head. Team members included Claire, William and Creed Caldwell, all of Parker.

The reserve state group was also from Kansas. Kansas 3 averaged a \$246.33 carcass premium per head. Corbin and Kirwin

Russell of Paxico exhibited the winning carcasses.

The contest, however, goes beyond just the champions.

“I think this year’s contest is just a testament to what can be done with genetics,” Dykstra says. “If we do feed cattle fewer days into a leaner total carcass competition, they can still hit the marbling goals that we have as an industry.”

While Prime percentages were nearly a three-fold

increase above industry average, Select remained at a minimum — three total carcasses. 62% also reached CAB, a nearly three-fold increase above average.

“Average would be a very low bar at this point to compare to,” Dykstra says. “The kids had to manage the cattle to get them to that end point. They did so well this year, but that has to go hand in hand with the genetic component.”

The future of the carcass contest is bright, he says, a reflection of how cattlemen continue to meet market signals.

“It’s clearly going to take a Prime, yield grade 2 carcass, at the very least, to be in the hunt for the top rewards,” Dykstra says.

Taking home next year’s trophy, he says, will take focusing in on genetics and management to reach the level of success.

“It’s great our juniors are representing the industry demand in a very positive manner,” Dykstra concludes. **AJ**

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