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MINIX STOCKMAN CONTEST WINNERS EXHIBIT WELL-ROUNDED SKILLS

Stockman award recognizes three juniors' outstanding performances across three contests.

by Sarah Kocher, American Angus Association

Judge, meat scientist, nutritionist — cattlemen wear many hats, and the winners of the Minix Stockman Contest at the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) exhibit the diverse skills needed to succeed. The award factors juniors' performances in the judging contest, quiz bowl, written exam and skill-a-thon. The top contestants from each of the three age divisions with the highest combined scores were recognized at the 2023 NJAS, hosted July 1-8.

"The Stockman Contest is a unique avenue for junior members to not only test their knowledge, but also see how well-rounded they are," says Caitlyn Brandt, director of events and junior activities. "They really have to understand all aspects of the industry, and that's why this award is such an honor."

This year's top junior stockman was Lane Toledo of California. He placed first in Junior B livestock judging, first in the skill-a-thon contest and scored 43 points on the quiz bowl exam for the junior division.

Toledo grew up in the Angus junior program, with 2023 being his fifth time at the NJAS.

"I started showing when I was 6," he says. "I just loved it from Day 1, like it was the right thing for me. It's



Winning the Stockman Contest (from left) are Lane Toledo, Visalia, Calif.; Audrey Curtin, Blue Mound, Ill.; and Ellie Kidwell, Walhonding, Ohio.

better than any other sport I've ever played or any other activity. It's just kind of relaxing and fun to compete with everyone."

The intermediate stockman was Audrey Curtin of Illinois. She placed first in Intermediate B livestock judging, sixth in the skill-a-thon contest and scored 34 points on the quiz bowl exam for the intermediate division.

Taking home the honor of senior stockman was Ellie Kidwell of Ohio. She placed fifth in livestock judging, sixth in the skill-a-thon contest, and scored 40 points on the quiz bowl exam for the senior division.

She says her advisor, Lindsey Hall, encouraged her to start competing in the contests.

"Of the three, quiz bowl is definitely my favorite," Kidwell explains, a junior who has attended the NJAS since 2017.

She also has advice for younger junior members thinking about entering contests.

"I wasn't very good when I started; but the more you do them, the better you'll be," Kidwell said. "You're always going to learn something."

Beginning in 2022, the contest was named the Minix Stockman Contest in honor of the late Ed and Wilma Minix of Black Witch Farm, Athens, Ga. The Minix couple was passionate about supporting youth involved with livestock and helping them become leaders in the agricultural industry.

Each winner received a belt buckle, as well as cash awards: \$750 for the senior division winner, \$500 for the intermediate division winner, and \$250 for the junior division winner. **AJ**