

Beat *the* Buzzer

Angus juniors enjoy the thrill of competition in the NJAS Quiz Bowl.

Story & photos by **Corinne Blender**

The pressure is on. Your buzzer is lit. Ten seconds to answer, "What does FSH stand for?"

The quizmaster calls for your answer. "Follicle stimulating hormone" rolls off your tongue in the nick of time. Ten points for your team.

"I like the buzzer round because it makes you feel like you are on 'Jeopardy,'" says Megan Ahearn, Wills Point, Texas. "The buzzer round is a lot better than the written test, because with the written test you really don't put as much effort into it as you do when people are in front of you, hanging on your every word."

The Texas team, consisting of Ahearn, Gretchen Ettrede, Pilot Point; Logan Lastovica, Fredericksburg; and Taylor McQueen, Gilmer, won the junior division of the 2003 National Junior Angus Show

(NJAS) Quiz Bowl.

The quiz bowl is a popular competition at the NJAS. More than 250 juniors competed for the top eight spots in each age division — 9-13, 14-17, and 18-21 years. The two-part contest, consisting of a written round on Wednesday and a verbal round on Thursday, tests juniors' knowledge of the Angus industry and beef industry in general.

Making the cut

To qualify for the buzzer rounds at the NJAS, teams must take a written test. This process was implemented at the 2002 NJAS in Milwaukee, Wis.

"There were so many teams wanting

to enter the quiz bowl that the number of teams simply grew to be so large that the oral rounds could not be managed in a reasonable time frame at the NJAS," says James Fisher, director of activities and junior activities for the American Angus Association. "As the junior Board reviewed options, it was decided to offer a written test to allow all teams wishing to enter the contest an opportunity to compete. The top eight teams on the written test would then proceed to the oral rounds of the quiz bowl."

The written test has proven popular with those who participate and with those who plan the quiz bowl.

"The written test is a good way to get the teams narrowed down. I thought the test was very difficult, and I came out of the room thinking there is no way that our team can be in the top eight teams," says Landi

McFarland, Ellston, a team member on the champion Iowa senior team.

Due to the large interest, many junior members have to compete at the state level to win the opportunity to compete at the NJAS.

Ahearn says the Texas juniors take a test before coming to the NJAS to determine who will represent the state. "It kind of helps that we were friends to begin with, and we were just put together on the team," she adds.

Some states may not have enough interest from their members, so they call upon juniors from other states. That is how Georgia junior Angus member Cliff Riner,

Lyons, became a member of the South Carolina team. While combined state teams are allowed, the points

What was the name of the first registered Angus cow in America?

Frozen semen should be thawed in a water bath at what temperature?



► Junior Angus members have fun while sharing their knowledge of the industry by answering questions at the quiz bowl competition.



► NJAA Board member Trevor Kuipers, Onarga, Ill., sorts teams into the testing rooms at the quiz bowl. The written test was added to the competition two years ago to select eight teams in each age division to advance to the buzzer rounds.

gained for placing do not go toward the coveted Sweepstakes Award that is given to the state with the highest placings in educational events.

Covering the bases

The eight teams selected for the buzzer rounds compete one-on-one in a single-elimination tournament to determine the winning team overall. Ten toss-up questions, each worth 10 points, are given to both teams in a heat. Any contestant on either of the two teams may answer a toss-up question; however, the contestant must first press the buzzer and be recognized by the quizmaster.

"I had never done quiz bowl before, so it was really exciting for me to see the variety of questions," McFarland says. "Each one of our team members knew different subjects and contributed in his or her own way."

Riner says that knowing "four categories" of questions can offer juniors an advantage. He says the first category, general Angus knowledge, includes knowing special Angus events, National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) Board members and American Angus Association staff members.

A second category he defines as reproduction and management — the science behind the cow. Category three requires knowledge of marketing. An example would include figuring the value of cattle if they sold for a specific price. The catchall category of "general beef industry knowledge" rounds out category selections.

Riner says that he was amazed by the quality of youth participating in this event, from all areas of the country, who knew so much about all aspects of the beef industry. He says that it's proof that Angus youth provide a strong backbone for the beef industry.

While the junior division questions are simpler than those asked in the senior division, Lastovica says he's learned a lot about the history of the breed. "We ask each other questions and answer them until we have them down," he adds.

Life lessons

Peggy Sullivan says the quiz bowl is a great competition for juniors to be involved with. Sullivan is the Iowa Junior Angus Association advisor from Saint Charles. She says that many of the questions can teach youth about the "business side of things" and how to

Which mineral, when imbalanced, will cause waterbelly in steers?

manage their Angus herds. The general nutrition and general genetic questions are especially important to learn, she adds.

Sullivan says she has seen the educational value of the quiz bowl go beyond the competition. Sometimes not knowing the answers to all the questions is beneficial.

"After they miss a question or don't do as well, it encourages them to go out and read and learn additional things so that they can build for next year," Sullivan says.

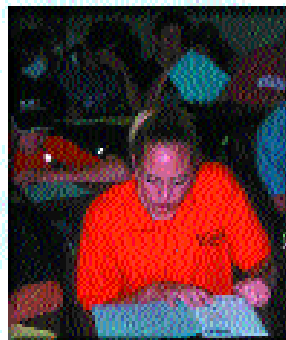
Benefiting youth for years to come is an important part of participating in the educational events at the NJAS. With hopes of becoming an ag Extension agent, Riner says participating in the quiz bowl will definitely benefit him in the future. He says,

"I could use a tool like the quiz bowl to help kids learn more about cattle or anything else."

Beat the buzzer

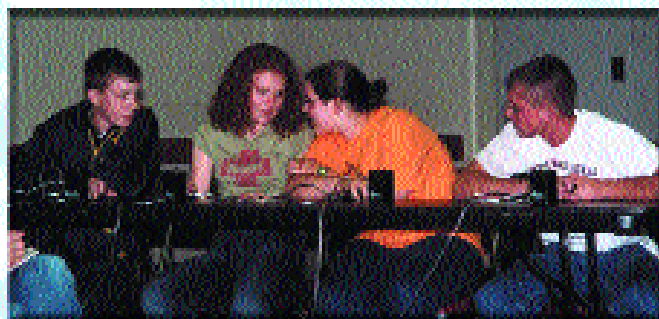
If you are a junior member who wants to compete in the quiz bowl, Sullivan recommends you first sit through the competition to learn what it's about.

"That's how you learn, even if you are not



► Participants take a multiple-choice test to qualify for the buzzer rounds.

► **Below:** Team members discuss a bonus question before the team captain replies. Teams are allowed to discuss bonus questions, but help from the audience is not allowed.



part of the teams. Watch the other teams compete," she says. "You'll learn that it's OK if you don't answer any of the questions; that happens on other teams."

All juniors agree that there is one way to prepare that always helps. "Study hard and be patient with your other team members," Ahearn says.

It's true that even senior division competitors can participate for their first time.

"Don't get too uptight your first time ... and have fun with it," McFarland says, adding that she didn't know what she was getting into this year as she was a first-time participant.

What is the drug prostaglandin commonly used for?

Did you know?

- Feeding a heifer too much green alfalfa will cause bloat.
- In a crossbreeding program, the first generation is called F₁.
- Progesterone is the hormone produced by the body to maintain the corpus luteum (CL).

The National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) members who compete in the quiz bowl at the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) know a lot of interesting facts about their breed and the beef industry.

Juniors participating in the 2003 contest say a lot of the information that they learn is gained by working with their cattle and by being involved in the Angus industry. But they also say they come prepared knowing the answers to a list of questions developed by their junior advisors.

By studying, they learn several interesting facts.

"The most interesting fact I learned was that the Angus organization uses the AIMS (Angus Information Management Software) program," says Megan Ahearn, Wills Point, Texas. "I had no idea what that was, and then my teammate, who really didn't know any other questions, buzzed in and answered that right." Her teammate, Taylor McQueen, Gilmer, Texas, warned the team that she only wanted to answer the easy questions. The AIMS question wasn't one that the others knew until McQueen buzzed in with the correct answer.

While the AIMS question was easy for McQueen, she says the most interesting information she learned was about the Pathfinder cows.

"It seems like you have to work really hard to qualify, and it motivates you to want your heifer to be a Pathfinder someday," she says.