

# Speaking Up

NJAA members compete for scholarships in the public speaking contest.

Story & photos by Garrett Wilkerson

Armed with professionalism and their knowledge of the beef industry, junior Angus members competed for top honors in the prepared public speaking contest at the 2003 National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) July 17 in Louisville, Ky. Seven senior contestants gave speeches on topics ranging from carcass improvement strategies to fence maintenance tools.

The senior prepared public speaking contest is open to junior Angus members age 18-21. The contest is sponsored by the *Angus Journal*, which awards scholarships to the top three contestants. The first-place contestant receives a scholarship for \$1,000; second, \$750; and third, \$250.

This year, contestants were allotted 10 minutes to give a speech that would answer this question: "If you had use of unlimited resources or technology, what product would you invent to 'revolutionize' the cattle industry on the farm, local or national level?"

Judging this year's contest were Wilson Leith, Harrodsburg, Ky.; Cheryl Meyer, Louisville, Ky.; and Diane Beck, Red Lodge, Mont.

## Winning ideas

Rebecca Scharpe, Arlington, Minn., won first place for her speech titled "It's in the Headlines." She discussed the possible benefits of inventing a scanner that would detect the presence of drug residues in beef. Citing growing concerns among consumers over antibiotics in meat, Scharpe suggested that expanding the *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) brand to include drug-residue-free beef, would ultimately increase beef consumption.

"So, why do we need a scanner? We need it to create a truly desirable product that the consumer will feel good about serving to [his or her] family," Scharpe said in her speech.

Scharpe says the idea for

her speech came to her while working as a trainer in the quality assurance (QA) program that all Minnesota 4-H members must complete in order to attend the state fair. She was responsible for conducting the drug-residue portion of the seminar. "Teaching in the program made me more aware of the antibiotics-in-meat issue," she says.

"It really means a lot to me to win this award," says Scharpe, who has competed in the contest for seven years. "[Public speaking] was a contest I have always enjoyed and have worked hard at. I feel public speaking is an important skill for anyone to have."

This was the last year she was eligible to compete at the NJAS.

## Tough competition

"Lessons from the Calf Pens" was the title of the second-place speech, given by Emily McCurry, Burrton, Kan. McCurry discussed the need for a product that could "change the face of the industry."

Marand's Pure Life was the name of the product McCurry created to solve the problems faced by cattle producers every day. Reduced stress, lower costs and ease of application are just some of the benefits that would be offered by the proposed elixir.

Placing third in the speech contest was Kristi Wilson, Orleans, Ind. "The Amazing New Finished Finder" was the name of her speech. Wilson proposed a patch that could be attached to the sides of feedlot cattle that would change colors depending on how



► Speech contest winner Rebecca Scharpe, Arlington, Minn., is a nursing student at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa. She says the scholarship money will go toward the cost of her education.

close the cattle were to their most profitable end point.

When asked what impressed her most about the contestants, Beck says, "I was impressed with their rapid responses under pressure," adding that she believes speech contests are "very beneficial in developing poise."

Other contestants who participated in the event, in no particular order, include Chelsea Frost, Tallula, Ill., who gave a speech on a proposed product called "The Cow Connection."

Wravenna Phipps, Kearney, Neb., discussed the benefits of a bolus that would lead to feedlot cattle having perfect carcasses, in her speech "Opportunity of a Lifetime."

In "The New Age of Building Fences," Crystal Palmer, Ripley, Miss., devised a product that would enable fences to fix themselves.

Megin Santee, Langdon, Kan., discussed the obstacles faced by the beef industry, and proposed more aggressive public relations tactics to counteract them, in her speech, "The New Challenge for Beef."



► Judging this year's senior public speaking contest are (from left) Wilson Leith, Harrodsburg, Ky.; Cheryl Meyer, Louisville, Ky.; and Diane Beck, Red Lodge, Mont.