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# SHOWING OFF SKILLS

New contest highlights junior members' beef industry knowledge.

Story & photos by *Kasey Brown*, special projects editor

**T**ongues stick out as heads bow in concentration. Photos are scrutinized. Feedstuffs are held up for examination. Pencils fill in blanks carefully.

The hum of the fans in the cattle barn aren't heard in the Varied Industries Building at the Iowa State Fairgrounds as National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) members take their Skill-a-thon tests. However, these juniors are showing off the knowledge they've gained in their own barns at home.

A new contest this year at the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS), the Skill-a-thon contest was designed to show off industry production knowledge despite the show setting.

"The Skill-a-thon came about through a survey of members. It is directed to highlight knowledge-based production; and it was something else for kids to participate in who are not showing at NJAS," says Caitlyn

Brandt, events coordinator for the American Angus Association.

The Skill-a-thon is a test that was modeled after an Iowa State University extension test with added Association questions, Brandt explains, so the test is about beef production, not just showing. The contest tests knowledge in these areas of focus: breed identification; Association identification (people, places, things, etc.); feedstuff identification; livestock equipment identification; meat cuts identification; mineral/supplement identification; and beef industry question scenarios.

The test is laid out as laminated photos and questions on tables, and each junior fills in a Scantron sheet. The questions are the same for each age division, but younger contestants have to answer fewer questions. Junior members answer 30 questions, intermediates answer 50, seniors answer

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— *Morgan Blommel*

65, and all contestants answer the same tiebreaker question. The tables are set up by topic, so juniors answer the questions on the first two tables, intermediates complete the first five tables and seniors complete the whole area.

In a week that is crammed full of

# WINNING WITH THE ANGUS TEAM

educational contests and showing activities, Brandt says a helpful aspect of the Skill-a-thon contest is its flexibility. NJAA members could come take the Skill-a-thon test Monday through Wednesday from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. However, juniors did have to preregister for the contest.

Also new this year is the Stockman Award that awards the highest-achieving junior member in each age division in the quiz bowl written exam, cattle judging and Skill-a-thon contests. Morgan Blommel, Dade City, Fla., said the Stockman Award was good motivation to try the new Skill-a-thon contest, though not her only reason to try it.

“My advisor encourages us to do as many contests as we can. Our state fair has a similar program, and I thought this

was a good way to test my knowledge.” Blommel smiles as she advises, “I would tell other juniors not to be afraid to do the contests here at NJAS. I still talk to kids I met at the Quiz Bowl contest a few years ago.”

Carter Kornegay, Owasso, Okla., agrees that she enjoys participating in contests, and that previous participation helped her in this one.

“I decided to try the Skill-a-thon contest as practice for quiz bowl to see how much I knew. The quiz bowl study guide helped me a lot, and I knew some of the meat cut questions from being in the [Auxiliary-sponsored All-American Certified Angus Beef®] Cook-off contest.”

Other perks of the contest include the premiums for division winners. In each age division, first place wins \$75, second place wins \$50 and third place wins \$25.

Inaugural junior division winners of the Skill-a-thon contest are Ryan Borer, Buchanan, Va., first; Mary Wood, Willow Spring, N.C., second; and Macie Sexten, Wooster, Ohio, third. Intermediate winners are Zach McCall, Greenville, Va., first; Eva Hinrichsen, Westmoreland, Kan., second; and Cutter Pohlman, Hereford, Texas, third. Senior winners are Jake McCall, Greenville, Va. first; Jayne Bannister, Kent, N.Y., second; and Kristen Brown, Cookeville, Tenn., third.



## SKILL-A-THON



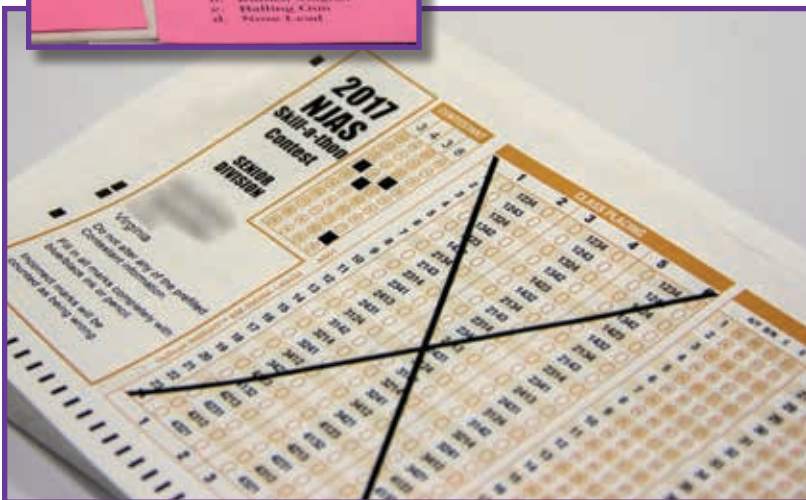
► Winning the junior division of Skill-a-thon are (from left) **Ryan Borer**, first; **Mary Wood**, second; and **Macie Sexten**, third.



► Winning the intermediate division of Skill-a-thon are (from left) **Zach McCall**, first; **Eva Hinrichsen**, second; and **Cutter Pohlman**, third.



► Winning the senior division of Skill-a-thon are (from left) **Jake McCall**, first; **Jayne Bannister**, second; and **Kristen Brown**, third.



► The test is laid out as laminated photos and questions on tables, and each junior fills in a Scantron sheet. The questions are the same for each age division, but younger contestants have to answer fewer questions. Junior members answer 30 questions, intermediates answer 50, seniors answer 65, and all contestants answer the same tiebreaker question. The tables are set up by topic, so juniors answer the questions on the first two tables, intermediates complete the first five tables, and seniors complete the whole area.