



► **Left:** Austin Thummel, Cameron Ward and Paige Wallace explain why the judges should buy their heifer.

► **Below:** Cameron Ward uses his best salesmanship skills to “sell” a heifer.



Sell This Heifer

NJAA members compete in team sales contest at the NJAS.

Story & photos by **Abby White**

It happens all the time — thousands of cattle are sold every day. But, there is an art to selling cattle. One contest at the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) helped National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) members develop their selling skills.

First-time contest participant Cameron Ward of Plattsburg, Mo., said being in the contest helped him learn more about how

to sell cattle. Team member Paige Wallace, Stotts City, Mo., agreed.

“It’s fun to think that we’re going to have a future in the industry,” she said. “It’s good to learn what you need to be doing if you’re going to be selling cattle.”

The junior division team from Missouri also consisted of Austin Thummel of Sheridan. Austin and Paige have competed in the contest for the last three years.

“We just like the competitive spirit,” Paige explained. “It’s fun to find out where you’re ranked. We get to do this together, and it helps plan for the future.”

The contest’s objective was to sell a heifer, bull or cow-calf pair to the judges, while gaining a working understanding of performance and pedigree organization. Emphasis was placed on team organization,

communication skills and marketing techniques. The presentation included pedigree information, performance information and visual characteristics.

The team practiced its parts both together and separately. Team members met a few times to practice, but the rest of the time they either faxed information back and forth or talked on the phone.

“Our parents helped with stuff, too,” Cameron said. “We worked on our parts day and night, pretty much.”

Paige said she practiced her part whenever she sat down and had spare time, going over her part in her head.

The team only had 10 minutes to complete its presentation, which wasn’t enough time.

“They cut us off since we went longer,” Paige said.



► Missouri team members (from left) Cameron Ward, Austin Thummel and Paige Wallace show off the notebooks they used to sell their heifer. They made notebooks, brochures and business cards.

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The time constraint didn't hurt their placing, however. The team placed first in the junior division. The team from Kansas was second, and the team from Texas was third.

"I had to shorten the speech just a little bit," Austin said. "I didn't quite get terms of sale done, and I still had a couple paragraphs on how we were going to close the deal."

The judges asked the group questions after the presentation. Austin said they asked about the heifer's eggs.

"We said in the deal that they would get 50% of the natural progeny, but we didn't tell them about the eggs," Austin said. "I just told him that we'd split the eggs 50:50. He wanted to know what would happen if there were five eggs. I told him he would get the oldest one."

The judges also wanted to know how many individuals were in her contemporary group. Cameron told them she didn't have one.

"You should have just told him a number," Austin said, ribbing Cameron.

"No, you should have answered it, Austin," Cameron replied.

Even though their question-and-answer session didn't go as planned, they felt like they made up for it with the package of information, which supplemented their presentation. They gave each of the judges a notebook, business card and brochure.

The team used Cameron's heifer to sell for the contest. The cattle used in the contest were not to be groomed, but had to be clean.

The team said the hardest part was memorizing the entire speech.

"Some people try to put their speeches together when they get here, but I think that would be too hard," Paige said.

"It's fun," Cameron continued. "You just have to get out there and do it."



► Nebraska's Jara Settles, Kellen Jorgensen and Samantha Harl show their heifer to the judges during the NJAS team sales competition.

Another team's experience

In the senior division, Samantha Harl, Kellen Jorgensen and Jara Settles made up the team from Nebraska.

"It's such a rush," Kellen said. "You can prepare and prepare, but it doesn't mean anything, really."

Samantha agreed, saying, "It was a little nerve-wracking. We had it all planned out. But once you get in there, it's a whole different ball game."

The Nebraska team took a different approach to their preparation for the contest. They didn't know which animal they were going to sell until they arrived at the NJAS.

"I got a hold of some people who had some high-performance animals with really good EPDs (expected progeny differences) and prepared to give a sales talk on all of

those animals," Jara said. "So when we got here, we could pick and choose and we would know about the sires and dams."

They picked the heifer they used in the contest because they're friends with the Satree family from Montague, Texas.

The team won the 2005 Team Sales contest using one of the Satrees' bulls.

"It worked out really well last year," Kellen said. "So we asked them again this year, and they were more than happy to oblige."

Kellen said the team sales contest went smooth this time around.

"It's the smoothest one I've ever done," he said. "But you never know your competition."

The team's strategy was to know what they were talking about and be prepared for the judges' questions.

"They'll ask just about anything," Samantha said. "You never know what they're going to ask."

Samantha said the best way to succeed in this contest is to know what is going on in the Angus industry.

"You can really separate the people who know their stuff from those who don't," Jara explained. "It comes from your background and being involved in the breed."

Despite their strategy, the Nebraska team didn't place in the senior division this year. Winners in the senior division were Wisconsin-Minnesota in first, Kansas in second and Missouri in third. In the intermediate division, Missouri placed first, Kansas placed second, and Arkansas was third.





► Winning first in the junior division are members of the Missouri Junior Angus Ass'n. Pictured are (from left) **Austin Thummel**, Sheridan; **Paige Wallace**, Stotts City; and **Cameron Ward**, Plattsburg.



► Winning second in the junior division are members of the Kansas Junior Angus Ass'n. Pictured are (from left) **Ransom Gardiner** and **Cole Gardiner**, both of Ashland; and **Mitchell Rucker**, Burdett.



► Winning third in the junior division are members of the Texas Junior Angus Ass'n. Pictured are (from left) **Jacie Gibson**, Cooper; **Tyler Jones**, Bleiberville; and **Mollie Lastovica**, Fredericksburg.



► Winning first in the intermediate division are members of the Missouri Junior Angus Ass'n. Pictured are (from left) **Jessica Weigand**, Warrensburg; **Holly Bellis**, Orrick; and **Kathryn McDonald**, Seneca.



► Winning second in the intermediate division are members of the Kansas Junior Angus Ass'n. Pictured are (from left) **Clinton Laflin**, Olsburg, and **David Lundgren**, Ottawa. Not pictured is **Samuel Rucker**, Burdett.



► Winning third in the intermediate division are members of the Arkansas Junior Angus Ass'n. Pictured are (from left) **Paige Tribble**, Pochontas; **Sarah Connolly**, Rogers; and **Kimberly McGuire**, Fort Smith.



► Winning second in the senior division are members of the Kansas Junior Angus Ass'n. Pictured are (from left) **Darin Wiley**, Saint Francis; **Flinton McCabe**, Elk City; and **Kristen Lundgren**, Ottawa.



► Winning third in the senior division are members of the Missouri Junior Angus Ass'n. Pictured are (from left) **Brittany Gillig** and **Ashley Gillig**, both of Aurora; and **Cody Washam**, Pierce City.



► Winning first in the senior division are members of the Wisconsin and Minnesota junior Angus associations. They were awarded the Bob Laflin Memorial Award for their achievement. From left, Jeana Sankey, Guy Laflin, Clinton Laflin and Sharee Sankey present the award to team members **Keela Retallick** and **Kelsi Retallick**, both of Glen Haven, Wis.; and **Lindsay Waugh**, Goodhue, Minn.; with assistance from Cody Sankey, Josh Laflin and R.D. Laflin.

