When you support Extension, 4-H youth gain knowledge to aid in their science, technology, engineering and math in pursuit of professional careers.

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Woodford County 4-H Livestock Skillathon Team continue to prepare for national competition at the North American International Livestock Exposition.

4-H Livestock Skillathon Prepares Youth to Pursue Careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math

4-H Livestock Skillathon programs allow elementary through high school youth to expand their knowledge, apply skills, demonstrate their communication skills, and work as a team to earn local and national recognition and scholarships.
Livestock has become a major part of Kentucky agriculture. County Extension Councils urged Agriculture and Natural Resource (ANR) and 4-H Youth Development agents to develop and strengthen livestock programs throughout the state. Kentucky 4-H supports individual livestock programs, Livestock Judging Contests, as well as, Livestock Skillathon Contests.

Counties create teams to compete in Livestock Skillathon Contests. The content of these contests provide a framework for youth to learn a variety of topics related to the production and management of beef cattle, meat goats, sheep, and swine. Participants in these events learn about different breeds of livestock, external parts of livestock, skeletal anatomy of livestock, feedstuffs used in livestock diets, equipment using in raising and showing livestock and in processing meat, wholesale and retail cuts of meat derived from livestock, expected progeny differences (EPDs), common calculations used to measure animal performance and profitability, judging hay, judging meats, and judging performance classes of livestock.

In preparation for the 2017 4-H Skillathon Contest, the Woodford County teams visited local farms and businesses, conducted home study using research-based resources and met weekly to prepare. The Cloverbud (ages 9 to 11 years) and Intermediate (ages 12 to 13 years) participants scored in the top ten for their divisions while the Senior (ages 14 to 19) team will represent Kentucky 4-H at the 2017 North American International Livestock Exposition.

Kentucky 4-H Livestock Skillathon teams have won the national competition twice in the past 15 years. 4-H alumni identified that 4-H helped them accept responsibility, influenced their ability to work with others, and helped develop their skill in decision-making and public speaking. The 2016 Kentucky 4-H Livestock Skillathon team, comprised of youth from Christian County, Webster and Jessamine Counties won the National Livestock Skillathon Competition. The team graduates from high school and are pursuing degrees in veterinary medicine and animal science.