

FFA Students and Their Rabbits Shine at County Junior Livestock Show

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Show rabbits of Frisco ISD students hopped into the winner's circle at the Collin County January 2016 Livestock Show with two Grand Champion and six Reserve Grand Champion awards.

Frisco ISD has a long and successful history with students who belong to FFA showing animal projects at livestock fairs. As the area has become more urban, many students in FFA choose rabbits as a “starter” animal, according to Olivia Dodson, agricultural science teacher at Wakeland High School.

From rabbits, students may go on to add showing goats, lambs, steers or hogs. Larger animals are kept at the District agricultural barn but rabbits are raised at the student's home.

“Many of my students choose the rabbit project because they want to keep their rabbit year-round and we actually have a few students that have created their own business and breed their rabbits and sell the kits (young rabbits) as pets or to other FFA students as show rabbits,” Dodson explained. “Students also like that they have to keep them at home and the rabbits end up becoming a big part of the family. The student is also able to show the same rabbit for multiple years, so it is possible to begin as a freshman and show the same rabbit through their senior year, which is not possible with the other livestock projects.”

What makes a winning rabbit? Dodson says the judge is looking for a lot of different things at the show. Basics such as fur condition, overall health, muscling and conformation (how the animal is put together) are standard. Conformation and muscling are generally the two greatest factors in any livestock competition.

"For certain breeds however, the judge will look for very specific things that are characteristic of that breed," Dodson said. "For example, the judge will have an English Spot hop down the judging table to see how well it moves because that is a requirement of the breed. A judge will measure the ears of a Mini Rex to make sure they are not too long or too short or they will have a Holland Lop 'pose' or sit a certain way."



Rabbit weight can play a factor too. If the rabbit is too skinny or too big for its breed's specifications, it will lose points. For example, a Jersey Wooly has a maximum weight of 3.5 pounds and a Flemish Giant must be a minimum weight of 13 pounds but it does not have a maximum weight. Mini Lops should ideally be around 6 to 6.5 pounds.

The breeding rabbit division, in which FISD students compete, differs in many ways from larger show projects, with the greatest difference being that breeding rabbits do not make sale at the livestock shows. This means that the student does not earn money for their rabbit, however this does allow for students to keep their project at the conclusion of the show season unlike the other show projects which require the student to sell their project back to a breeder or to market.

FISD students also compete in Rabbit Showmanship, which is where the judge has the student demonstrate their rabbit handling skills and tests their knowledge on rabbits and the specifics of their rabbit's breed, Dodson said.

Winners of the Collin County Junior Livestock Show in McKinney include:

Taylor Chapman- Centennial FFA

- Grand Champion English Spot
- Reserve Champion English Spot
- 1st place English Spot Black Senior Doe
- 1st place English Spot Chocolate Senior Buck
- 1st place English Spot Lilac

Carly Beatty- Centennial FFA

- 1st place Mini Lop Broken Senior Doe

Danielle Tran- Centennial FFA

- 6th place Holland Lop Solid Senior Buck

Alessandra Guillen- Heritage FFA

- 10th place Holland Lop Solid Senior Buck

Brandon Herzog- Independence FFA

Reserve Champion Jersey Wooly
1st place Jersey Wooly Tan Pattern Senior Doe

Lauren Johnson- Liberty FFA

Grand Champion English Angora
1st place English Angora Colored Senior Buck

Trinity Beale- Liberty Junior FFA

Reserve Champion Lionhead
1st place Lionhead Tortoise Senior Doe

Presley Beale- Liberty Junior FFA

Reserve Champion Holland Lop
1st place Lionhead Black Senior Doe

Andrea Del Rio- Liberty FFA

1st place Holland Lop Solid Senior Buck

Madeline Heimer- Liberty FFA

8th place Holland Lop Solid Senior Buck

Avery Pigman- Liberty FFA

1st place Mini Rex Broken Senior Doe

Kristen Niekamp- Liberty FFA

1st place Mini Rex Black Senior Doe

Carly Whitworth- Reedy FFA

9th place Holland Lop Solid Senior Doe

Marisa DeMattia- Wakeland FFA

Reserve Champion Senior Showmanship
9th place Holland Lop Solid Senior Buck

Haley Donovan- Wakeland FFA

Reserve Champion American Fuzzy Lop
1st place American Fuzzy Lop Solid Senior Doe

Callie Colgrove- Wakeland FFA

4th place Mini Lop Broken Senior Doe

Samantha Zike- Wakeland FFA

1st place Mini Rex Broken Senior Buck

Alison Haughey- Wakeland FFA

1st place Polish Broken Senior Buck

Cailey Nixon- Wakeland FFA

2nd place Polish Broken Senior Buck

Lauren Compton- Wakeland FFA

2nd place Dwarf Hotot Black Senior Doe

Michaela Aguirre- Wakeland FFA

3rd place Holland Lop Solid Senior Buck

Sara Schmidt - Wakeland FFA

5th place Holland Lop Solid Senior Buck

Sarah Keeler- Wakeland FFA

7th place Holland Lop Solid Senior Buck

Claire Huff, Lauren Clinch, and Paige Musselman of Wakeland FFA, Jasmine Callier of Independence FFA, Branden Johnson and Morgan Hinson of Liberty FFA, and Tori Severance of Centennial FFA also participated in the Holland Lop division.