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DANE, BARRON AND MANITOWOC COUNTY 4-H TEAMS TOP STATE DAIRY QUIZ BOWL CONTEST

Dane County's senior dairy bowl team topped the State 4-H Dairy Quiz Bowl Contest on January 30 in Portage. The team will represent Wisconsin in November at the national contest in Louisville, Ky. Barron County earned top honors as the winning mixed division team, while Manitowoc finished first in the junior division.

The competition tested the quick wit and extensive knowledge of more than 270 4-H members of 49 county teams. This was one of the largest groups ever to compete in the 4-H dairy bowl. Contestants answered questions about dairy cattle genetics, health, nutrition, showing and other topics. Four-person teams and their alternates traveled from all corners of the state to represent their counties in the three divisions.

"This was my first year working with the Wisconsin 4-H Dairy Bowl contest and I was amazed at the level of participation and the knowledge of all of the contestants," said Beth Heinze, the event's coordinator. "These kids and their coaches have worked very hard over the past few months to learn as much as they can about dairy and it really shows!"

Teams from 17 counties vied for first place in the junior division, which includes contestants under 14 years of age. The Manitowoc County team topped the competition with team members Siemers, Josh Siemers, Jake Siemers, and Connor Siemers. The team was coached by Jeff Neuser.

"This year we have dedicated multiple hours of studying each week and in addition to have fun at our practices. As a county we are very proud and excited that our young team had success this year. Jordan has competed for several years, third year for Josh and Jake, and this is Connor's first year. I think this is a great accomplishment for our Manitowoc County 4-H youth, and hopefully more to come."

Thirteen counties competed in the mixed division, which includes both junior and senior team members. Undefeated Barron County beat out runner-up Fond Du Lac County in the final round. Coached by Chuck, Cathy and Kayla Solum, the Barron County team included Isaac Solum, Abigail Solum, Dane Thompson, and Sierra Solum.

"This Barron County Team consisted of members from the Marquette Pacemakers and Country Kids 4-H Clubs," said coach Cathy Solum. "All of them worked hard individually and worked well as a team. All contributed well both on individual and toss up questions which gave them the advantage of earning bonus questions in each round. Coaching for many years we know the team members are learning way more than the facts they are quizzed on, such as leadership, sportsmanship, team work, self confidence, the importance of agriculture in our world...We enjoyed coaching them!"

Eighteen senior teams (youth between the ages of 14 and 19) competed. The seniors from Dane County went undefeated this year to claim the 4-H Dairy Bowl title and the right to compete at the North American International Livestock Exposition in Louisville this fall beating out a tough Polk county team in the finals. The Dane County team, consisting of Abbey Wethal, Mackenzie Sarbacker, Sara Harn and Katie Harn was coached by Chad Wethal.

“We had a young team this year with two first year senior contestants and they practiced quite a bit to get this far,” said coach Chad Wethal. “We are most proud of the fact that they all contributed and truly put in a team effort. We are looking forward to competing at Nationals this fall and representing Wisconsin!”

UW-Madison Department of Dairy Science faculty, Badger Dairy Club members and UW dairy science alumni helped with moderating, judging and operating the contest. The event was co-sponsored by the Wisconsin 4-H Dairy Endowment Fund, the UW-Madison Department of Dairy Science, UW-Extension and the Badger Dairy Club.

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Photos available for download:

Manitowoc County team

— Winning Junior Team from Manitowoc County (L to R): Jordan Siemers, Connor Siemers, Josh Siemers, Jake Siemers and Jeff Neuser (coach).

Barron County team

— Winning Mixed Team from Barron County (L to R): Isaac Solum, Abigail Solum, Dane Thompson, and Sierra Solum.

Dane County team

– Winning Senior Team from Dane County (L to R): Front: Abbey Wethal, Mackenzie Sarbacker, and Katie Harn Back: Chad Wethal (coach) and Sara Harn

All three team photos available at:

<http://picasaweb.google.com/WiDairyYouth/2010QBPhotos?feat=directlink>