

DC 4-H'ers excel at national contests

Written by Gothenburg Times
Thursday, 23 January 2014 15:15 -



Five Dawson County 4-H'ers brought home some top awards from the 94th Annual Western National Roundup in Denver, CO, where they competed as Nebraska's delegation to the National 4-H Horse Classic, Jan. 9-12.

Neil Henderson of Cozad earned championship honors with his individual demonstration "Give 'em Your Best Shot." The demo focused on how to give horses injections.

"Neil did an excellent job and impressed the judges with his actual demonstration and injection techniques," said Bruce Treffer, Extension educator. "It took a lot of practice to perfect the skills and presentation to win the top spot."

The Dawson County Hippology team of Kylee Miller of Cozad, Jessica Schmidt of Gothenburg, Emily Smith of Cozad and Tigh Renken of Bertrand also scored high during the two-day 4-H Hippology Contest, bringing home the reserve championship award.

Hippology is an activity that can make learning fun for 4-H members by letting them exhibit their knowledge and understanding of equine science and husbandry in a friendly but competitive setting, Treffer said.

The contest was made up of four phases including written exams, identification stations, halter and performance class judging and team problem solving, for example developing a horse health plan or discussing the horse industry's response to genetic defects.

Treffer said three of the four team members have been competing and working on their horse knowledge for over seven years.

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Earning the top score as overall individual was Miller with 521 points. She won first in the judging portion, second in the hippology stations and sixth on written exams.

Schmidt contributed to the team reserve champion award by placing third overall individual, fifth on the written exams and seventh on stations.

Smith has only two years of 4-H hippology training but her knowledge earned her a ninth overall individual rank and first in the stations phase.

Renken rounded out the team and had a strong showing in the judging contest.

“All of the competitors were very good about attending workouts at the extension office in preparation for the national contest,” Treffer said. “They also had countless hours of study on their own from five different references, most of which are college level textbooks. They can be extremely proud of this significant accomplishment.”

While in Denver, the group attended the National Western Stock Show, the Boulder Dinner Theater and youth dances.

Nebraska also sent delegates from other counties in horse bowl, public speaking, team demonstrations and horse judging. Their contest placing along with those of Dawson County led to a second place state team finish, behind only Colorado.