



Michigan State University Dairy Cattle Judging Team

2021 Year in Review

MSU dairy judging returns to in-person competition

2020 was a year unlike any other. Events all over the country were cancelled, postponed, or moved to a virtual format. This included national dairy shows and dairy cattle judging contests. After a year's pause, in-person dairy cattle judging resumed and MSU was once again in the arena vying for team and individual ribbons. As in years past, 4-H youth, 2-year Institute of Agricultural Technology (IAT) students, and collegiate students represented Michigan well across the country.

The return to in-person judging brought both excitement and challenges. Having been away from competitive dairy judging for a year meant some potential team members lost their eligibility due to aging out of 4-H or graduating from MSU. Others were out of practice and needed time to bring their skills back to a competitive level. Overall, both coaches and team members were happy to be evaluating cattle, building community, and making connections in the national dairy industry once again.

"It has not been an easy road getting back to in-person judging this year - there have been many challenges along the way," coach Joe Domecq said. "I am impressed by and proud of this small group of youth and students who put in the time to practice with little notice once we knew the contests were happening. Not knowing what contests would be held or what travel would look like, we paused."



Agri-Graphics

MSU and Michigan 4-H dairy cattle judging members pause for a group photo at World Dairy Expo. Standing from left Coach Sarah Black, Coach Allison Schafer, Drew Neyer, Kristen Burkhardt, Miriah Dershem, Cristin Theisen, Adalee Thelen, and Coach Dr. Joe Domecq. Sitting, from left Rachael Bosse, Abby VanDyk, Katie Wilson, and Katelynn Webster

Domecq continued, "When we found out in late August we would be able to meet for practices and travel, with health protocols in place, everyone came together quickly to make things happen."

Kristen Burkhardt competed in her final season of dairy judging this fall. She began ten years ago as a 4-H member, continued as a student in the MSU IAT Dairy Management Certificate program (2019), and finished on the collegiate team as she graduated with a degree in Agribusiness Management. Burkhardt reflected on her final season.

"Having the opportunity to judge this past season meant a lot to me. Going into the season not knowing what the next day would bring was challenging, but has been rewarding in so many ways. There have been many life

lessons that came from this past judging season both myself and teammates have acquired. I will always be thankful for the MSU dairy judging team and how it instilled confidence, decision making, and adaptability skills in my life."

Thinking back on the fall, Domecq commented, "The ribbons and awards are great, but what makes all of these young people winners is their dedication to showing up in a difficult time that had a lot of uncertainty. They supported each other through all the practices and contests, with the wins and losses. That is what dairy judging is about, not the cows or reasons, the community and support that comes from working toward a common goal with passion and caring about the team."

Collegiate Division



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The MSU Dairy Cattle Judging program was proud to be represented by three individuals in 2021. Kristen Burkhardt (Fowlerville), Miriah Dershem (St. Johns), and Kelsey Pasch (Beal City) were coached by Dr. Joe Domecq and Sarah Black.

Burkhardt and Dershem competed at the 53rd annual All-American Dairy Invitational Youth Dairy Judging Contest in Harrisburg, Pa. and the 100th annual National Intercollegiate Cattle Judging Contest at World Dairy Expo in Madison, Wis. Burkhardt and Pasch competed at the 48th annual North American International Livestock Exposition (NAILE) Invitational Senior College Dairy Cattle Judging Contest in Louisville, Ky.



From left, Miriah Dershem, Coach Dr. Joe Domecq, Coach Sarah Black, and Kristin Burkhardt visit the Hoard's Dairyman Farm in Fort Atkinson, Wisc.

Allison Schafer

INDIVIDUAL PLACINGS

Kristen Burkhardt

- 6th in Jersey, Madison
- 7th in Ayrshire, Harrisburg
- 7th in oral reasons, Harrisburg
- 8th overall, Harrisburg
- All-American, Madison

Miriah Dershem

- 5th in Red & White, Madison
- 9th in Brown Swiss, Harrisburg
- 10th in Holstein, Harrisburg
- All-American, Madison

Kelsey Pasch

- 1st in Jersey, Louisville

From left, Kelsey Pasch and Kristin Burkhardt at the North American International Livestock Exposition in Louisville, Ky.

Allison Schafer





Three second year MSU Institute of Agricultural Technology (IAT) students, all in the Dairy Management program, competed in the 53rd annual All-American Dairy Invitational Youth Dairy Judging Contest in Harrisburg, Pa.; the 31st Post-Secondary International Dairy Cattle Judging Contest at World Dairy Expo in Madison, Wis.; and the 48th annual North American International Livestock Exposition (NAILE) Invitational Two-Year Junior College Dairy Judging Contest in Louisville, Ky. The team was coached Dr. Joe Domecq and Sarah Black.

The three sophomores competing on the team were: Rachael Bosse (Byron Center), Drew Neyer (Shepherd), and Abby VanDyk (Kalamazoo).



From left, 2021 IAT dairy judging team members – Rachael Bosse, Coach Dr. Joe Domecq, Abby VanDyk, and Drew Neyer celebrate after the NAILE dairy cattle judging contest.

Allison Schafer

TEAM PLACINGS

Harrisburg, Pa. (6 teams)

5th overall

Madison, Wis. (13 Teams)

4th in Jersey

5th in Holstein

5th in Milking Shorthorn

5th in oral reasons

6th in Ayrshire

6th in Brown Swiss

6th in Guernsey

6th overall

7th in Red & White

Louisville, Ky. (8 Teams)

1st in Ayrshire

2nd in Brown Swiss

3rd in Guernsey

5th in oral reasons

5th overall

INDIVIDUAL PLACINGS

Rachael Bosse

1st in Ayrshire, Louisville

2nd in Ayrshire, Madison

2nd in oral reasons, Louisville

3rd in Holstein, Louisville

4th in Brown Swiss, Louisville

4th overall, Louisville

7th in Guernsey, Louisville

9th in Brown Swiss,
Harrisburg

10th in Holstein, Harrisburg

Drew Neyer

4th in Guernsey, Harrisburg

5th in Ayrshire, Louisville

6th in oral reasons,
Harrisburg

6th in Milking Shorthorn,
Madison

7th in oral reasons, Louisville

8th in Jersey, Harrisburg

8th in oral reasons, Madison

8th overall, Madison

8th in Brown Swiss, Louisville

10th in Ayrshire, Harrisburg

10th in Guernsey, Madison

10th in Guernsey, Louisville

Abby VanDyk

8th in Ayrshire, Harrisburg

9th in Jersey, Madison

4-H Division



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From left, Coach Sarah Black, Coach Allison Schafer, Cristin Theisen (sideline), Katelynn Webster, Adalee Thelen, and Katie Wilson (sideline), Coach Dr. Joe Domecq at the All-American Dairy Show in Harrisburg, Pa.

All-American Invitational Youth Dairy Cattle Judging Contest. Harrisburg, Pa.

INDIVIDUAL PLACINGS

Adalee Thelen

2nd in Brown Swiss
6th in Jersey
7th overall
9th in oral reasons

Katelynn Webster

2nd in Ayrshire
6th overall

Agri-Graphics

National 4-H Dairy Cattle Judging Contest. Madison, Wis. (18 teams)

TEAM PLACINGS

6th in Guernsey
7th in Jersey
8th in oral reasons
9th in Ayrshire
10th in Brown Swiss
11th overall

INDIVIDUAL PLACINGS

Cristin Theisen

6th in Jersey

Adalee Thelen

3rd in Guernsey
9th in oral reasons
All-American



From left, Katie Wilson, Cristin Theisen, Katelynn Webster, and Adalee Thelen visit Ocean View Genetics dairy farm in Deerfield, Wisc..

Allison Schafer

Michigan 4-H did not send a team to compete at the North American International Livestock Exposition in Louisville, Ky. Participation in national contests this year was limited to those youth who had previously competed in the 4-H Youth Dairy Days state judging contest in 2018 or 2019. Coaches selected youth who were aging out of 4-H and could not compete nationally after the 2021 season. Overall participation in state and national judging contests was very limited due to COVID-19 protocols.

Thanks for
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Michigan State University

Dairy Cattle Judging Team

2021 Year in Review

Thank you to our host farms, sponsors, assistant coaches and major financial supporters!

Assistant Coaches

Sarah Black
Kirby Krogstad
Sarah Michalek
Allison Schafer

2021 Major Financial Supporters

CentralStar Cooperative
Michigan Dairy Memorial Scholarship Foundation
George and Shirley Hazle Endowment

Host Farms

Brenhaven Holsteins, Caro, Mich.
Cozy Nook Farm, Waukesha, Wis.
Green Meadow Farms, Elsie, Mich.
Hoard's Dairyman Farm, Fort Atkinson, Wis.
Lettinga Jersey Farm, Caledonia, Mich.
Mapleton Valley Farm, Oconomowoc, Wis.
MSU Dairy Teaching and Research Center, Lansing, Mich.
Renee and Moss McCauley, Lowell, Mich.
Ocean-View Farm, Deerfield, Wis.
Paul and Sherry Meyer, Byron Center, Mich..
Ritter Dairy Farm, Byron, Mich.
Rupprecht Family, Vassar, Mich.
Star Summit Farm, Byron Center, Mich.
Starward Farm, Sebewaing, Mich.
Mooville, Nashville, Mich.



Out and about



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