

# Virginia Youth Animal Science



## Newsletter



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### Making the Best Better: Senior 4-Her Danny Schrantz and his 4-H Story

The 2025 State 4-H Horse Show was the culminating, year-end program event for 4-Her, Danny Schrantz and his horse, Shimmer. Danny has been a 4-Her for 8 years and is supported by his family, his club leaders, Tracey Whysong and Dee Wilkinson, and his extension agent in Prince William, Mary Beth Lerch. This year, Danny participated in the Adaptive Rider division at the State 4-H Horse Show and wrapped up his show by completing the Senior Stampede. Hear below from Danny and his Mom, Jenny, about his time in the Virginia 4-H Horse Program.

When asked what his favorite memories of the State 4-H Horse Show were, Danny provided a short answer of camping on the grounds and spending time with other members of his 4-H Club. However, he asked if he could share more about his 4-H Journey and how the program had impacted him. Danny was born with Cerebral Palsy, and many doctors told his parents that he would never walk unassisted. Equine therapy was brought up as a method to help him potentially walk in the future, however the potential costs were monumental. Danny's mom, Jenny, decided that they could do it themselves and matched 4 year old Danny, with his horse, 4 year old Shimmer, who, as Danny says, was in need of direction. The outcome is that Danny can now walk better with crutches and after 14 years of riding Shimmer, they have made quite the team.

Some of Danny's favorite memories with Shimmer include getting attacked by hornets, hit by an ambulance, and even Shimmer falling down once while they were riding! However, their 4 years at the State Horse Show have been some of their best memories and helped them to grow together as a team.

Danny's mom, Jenny, and the rest of his family have been constant supporters of Danny's 4-H journey, whether that be in riding or educational events. Jenny is thankful for Danny's 4-H family and wishes for everyone to know what the adaptive rider program and the inclusivity of Virginia 4-H can do for young people. For Danny, these opportunities have been life changing, strengthening his body, building his confidence, and fostering emotional resilience.

Good luck on your next adventures Danny! Thank you for sharing your story with our Youth Animal Science team!



### UPCOMING EVENTS:

#### OCTOBER

- October 1-5 State Fair of Virginia Youth Livestock Shows, Doswell, VA
- October 3 State Fair of Virginia 4-H/FFA Hippology Contest, Doswell, VA
- October 11 Block and Bridle Youth Meat Career Field Day, Blacksburg, VA
- October 11 Block and Bridle Hippology and Horse Judging Clinic, Blacksburg, VA
- October 21 National 4-H Meat Judging Contest, Kansas City, MO

#### NOVEMBER

- November 7-9 Eastern National 4-H Horse Round Up, Louisville, KY
- November 8 NAILE Invitational 4-H Dairy Quiz Bowl, Louisville, KY
- November 8 Naile Invitational Youth 4-H/FFA Dairy Judging Contest, Louisville, KY
- November 17 National 4-H Skillathon, Louisville, KY
- November 18 National 4-H Livestock Judging Contest, Louisville, KY
- November 18 National 4-H Livestock Quiz Bowl Contest, Louisville, KY
- November 20 National 4-H Poultry and Egg Conference, Louisville, KY

\*The full Youth Animal Science calendar and District Horse Show dates can be found using the link below:

[Calendar](#)

## Virginia State 4-H Horse Show: Recapped

The 64th Annual State 4-H Horse Show was held in Lexington, Virginia at the Virginia Horse Center in early September. This year's show continued to see an increase in numbers, with 325 horse and rider combinations entered to compete in the 4 day event. During this event, we saw exhibitors showing in any of 9 total divisions offered, taking part in our district challenge educational contests, and competing in the portfolio/recordbook and art/photography contest. In addition to these competitive opportunities, exhibitors had a chance to chill at the ice cream social, sponsored by the Rockingham Cooperative and Triple Crown Equine Nutrition and visit the Silent Auction, put on by the Golden Horseshoe 4-H Club to benefit the State 4-H Horse Show.



Along with the events listed above, 4-Hers also came together to represent their units and clubs during the Parade of Units on Friday evening, showcasing the 43 Units and 58 total 4-H clubs represented during the show. Our pre-determined shape this year was a unicorn, in memory of 4-H Agent, Kaci Daniel, who was a long-time Agent on Duty and volunteer at the State Horse Show in addition to supporting youth from across the state at various other events throughout the year.

Additionally, we had the opportunity to recognize the 2024-2025 Virginia 4-H Horse Ambassadors, the Connie Collier Scholarship Recipient, Zoe Bowman of King George, and our Horse Show Heroes during that same event. During the closing ceremonies on Saturday, we recognized Beth Jones of Henrico as our Horse Show Nail Award Winner, for being an invaluable asset to the event, and Carrie Swanson for her State Show Hall of Fame Nomination. Carrie has been assisting at the show for more than 20 years!

Finally, we would like to express a sincere thank you to ALL who help to make this show possible. While there are too many names to fit, we would like to thank our State Show Steering Committee and the Agents/Volunteers who help run the show, our sponsors, and the families/club leaders/4-Hers who continue to support the Virginia 4-H Horse Program and the youth involved in it. Without you, this show and the memories made here would not be possible!



# State Fair Junior Dairywomen's Contest—Results are in!

The State Fair Junior Dairywomen's Contest was held on Friday, September 26 in conjunction with the State Fair of Virginia Dairy Show in Doswell, VA. 273 Youth formed over 75 teams to compete in this contest for the opportunity to win both ribbons and scholarships from the State Fair of Virginia.

Youth competing in this contest had to excel in 4 different areas, including a written exam, live dairy judging classes, in person stations, and DHIA. In the stations sections, youth had to identify a multitude of dairy related items and objects including feeds, dairy equipment, cattle handling equipment, and dairy products.

Thank you to Southland Dairy Farmers for sponsoring some of the scholarship monies, Jeremy Daubert for helping to source live classes, Madison Sifford and Todd Allen for serving as officials, and Dave Winston for providing expertise and assisting with the day of contest. Full results are listed at [judging-card.com](http://judging-card.com)

## Senior Individual

1. Trey Daubert—Rockingham 4-H
2. Hope Bruce—Broadway FFA
3. Emma Wisecarver—Sherando FFA
4. Maggie Toothman—Broadway FFA
5. Walter Rhodes—Rockingham 4-H
6. Rylee Scheulen—Sherando FFA
7. Averie Keller—Broadway FFA
8. Addy Decker—Sherando FFA
9. Emma Dongoski—Sherando FFA
10. Alexis Davis—Wilson FFA

## Senior Team

1. Broadway FFA—Team A
2. Sherando FFA Team A
3. Rockingham 4-H
4. Wilson Memorial FFA—Team A
5. Broadway FFA—Team C
6. Sherando FFA—Team B
7. Sherando FFA—Team C
8. Fort Defiance FFA
9. Wilson Memorial FFA—Team C
10. Orange 4-H

## Junior Individual

1. Noah Barb—J Frank Hillyard FFA
2. Quinn Garber—Montevideo FFA
3. Kenzi Dellinger—Rockingham 4-H
4. Bryar Swecker—Elkton Middle FFA
5. Claire Drumheller—Wilson Middle
6. Spencer Trumbo—J Frank Hillyard
7. Tayler Mcdaniel—Wilson Middle
8. Kristen Stevens—Wilson Middle
9. Olivia Maupin—Wilson Middle
10. Preston Shifflett—Wilson Middle

## Junior Team

1. J Frank Hillyard FFA—Team A
2. Wilson Middle FFA—Team A
3. Wilson Middle FFA—Team C
4. Wilson Middle FFA—Team B
5. J Frank Hillyard FFA—Team B
6. Amherst MS FFA—Team A
7. Riverheads Middle FFA
8. J Frank Hillyard FFA—Team C
9. Elkton Middle FFA—Team A
10. SG Stewart Middle FFA—Team A

## Become a Virginia 4-H Horse Ambassador!

The Virginia 4-H Horse Ambassador Program application for the 2025-2026 cohort is now open. Information about applying and application materials can be found on our website here: [Virginia 4-H Horse Ambassadors](#) | [Virginia Cooperative Extension](#) | [Virginia Tech](#)

The Horse Ambassador Program utilizes senior youth who are enrolled members of 4-H to grow in their leadership skills, assist with state level events, and publicly represent the Virginia 4-H Horse Program at industry level events.

This year, ambassadors attended 4-H Day at the Capitol, where they saw

legislation in action and were able to visit with the VA 4-H Youth Livestock Ambassadors. They also had a visit to the Meadow Event Park for a tour of Secretariat's birthplace. Ambassadors assisted at the Block and Bridle Horse Weekend, Equismartz, State 4-H Congress, and the Rockingham Coop Equine Expo.

Furthermore, youth in this program must secure volunteer hours within their unit or district in providing assistance at local events, helping to create or produce programs with their 4-H agent, or more. Questions should be directed to Hunter Liles at [huntl97@vt.edu](mailto:huntl97@vt.edu).



## 4-H Youth Livestock Ambassadors—Short Course

The first cohort of the Virginia 4-H Youth Livestock Ambassadors took to the ground running at the 2024 State Fair of Virginia Youth Livestock Shows, where they assisted with shows and met with Governor Glenn Youngkin on his visit to the barns. Since then, these exceptional 4-H representatives have been busy on the local, district, and state level, assisting their 4-H Agents with programs in their own locality, helping with district- and state-wide contests and shows, and collecting community service hours.



Ambassadors attended a 3-day short course, held in Blacksburg, in August. The short course included a harvesting demonstration at the Virginia Tech Meats Science Lab, ultrasound pregnancy checking at the Kentland Repro Barn, a tour of the Virginia Tech Swine Center and Dairy, and a carriage-ride tour of McDonald Farms. Ambassadors also learned about agritourism from Rose Jeter of Jeter Farm, government relations and engaging stakeholders from Samuel Hadacek with the Virginia Cattlemen's Association, and social media awareness from the media team for the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

As part of their term, ambassadors were also tasked with identifying a need within the Youth Animal Science program on the county/city, district, or state level, planning a program to fill that need, and delivering the program. Ambassadors presented on their projects at the 2025 Virginia 4-H Youth Livestock Ambassador Short Course. Projects included: Sunshine Showmanship implementation at a county show, "How To" Reasons videos, Preparing for Showmanship videos, National Livestock Breeds project conducted with a middle school agriculture class, and Novice Showman packets.

The 2025 Virginia 4-H Youth Livestock Ambassador cohort included: Mary Grace Menuey (Loudoun), Nina Herrera (Chesapeake), Savannah Jones (Appomattox), Sarah Craun (Rockingham), Josie Caldwell (Rockbridge), Lizzi Zirkle (Shenandoah), Abigail Miller (Wythe), Emma Jo Donnelly (Clarke), Emory Seal (Augusta), and Aubrey Herbers (Bedford).

Applications for the 2026 Virginia 4-H Youth Livestock Ambassador cohort are available now. Reach out to Emmalee Edwards ([eaedwards@vt.edu](mailto:eaedwards@vt.edu)) or Katherine Carter ([carterke@vt.edu](mailto:carterke@vt.edu)) with any questions.



## Virginia was Peachy in Perry, GA! Southern Regional 4-H Horse Show

The Southern Regional 4-H Horse Championships were held in early August in Perry, Georgia. This event is the proud host of the largest 4-H Horse Show in the United States, inviting riders and educational team members from 13 Southeastern States to ride and compete at this event.

This year's event saw both returning and new riders in the mounted activities. Virginia had top placings in Stock Type Geldings, Hunter Type Geldings, the Gaited Division, Hunter Division, and Ranch Division. Riders qualified through their placings at the State 4-H Horse Show last fall and represented Virginia in spectacular fashion.

Virginia also saw many teams and individuals travel to Georgia to compete in educational contests. This was the first contest of the season for these teams and individuals and is great preparation as many of them travel to additional national contests in the fall. Congratulations to all who competed on their many successes!

### Riders

- Bailey Johnston—Henrico
- Sophie Roehl—Caroline
- Sierra Wimer—Prince William
- Elena Guallar Thompson—PW
- Eleanor Leeth—Montgomery
- Michelle Bates—Clarke
- Alexis Small—Highland
- Skylar Mcdaniel—Highland
- Dakota Dunlap—Gloucester
- Meredith Rula—Buckingham

### Educational Contests

- Public Speaking—  
3rd—Emma Kate Sazonov
- Team Presentation—  
4th—Abigail Massie and Sherry Klug
- Horse Bowl—  
3rd—Albemarle 4-H
- Hippology—  
2nd—Montgomery 4-H,  
3rd—Albemarle 4-H
- Horse Judging—  
4th—All Star Team



## 1st Annual—National Youth Cattleworking Contest

The team from Broadway FFA, including Haelyn Keller, Kaley Runion, Taylor Arbogast, and, coach, Kacie Miller won the Virginia State Cattleworking Contest during Beef Expo in April. They earned the privilege of attending and representing Virginia at the first ever National Youth Cattleworking Contest held in Athens, Georgia this September.

This team earned Third in the nation during this event, showcasing their skills in both working live animals and solving related problems on paper. In addition to competing, they had the

opportunity to attend trainings on how best to showcase animal agriculture to the public and better answer questions on common misconceptions within the industry. They were also able to hear from Dr. Tyson Strickland of Custom Livestock Solutions.

This team would like to express gratitude to those that put on this event, their coaches, John Welsh and Kaci Miller, their community, and Katherine Carter who organized and coordinated their trip.

We would like to wish a huge congratulations to this team!



## Meet The Youth Animal Science Team



Katherine Carter

Extension Youth  
Animal Science  
Specialist

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As the Extension Youth Animal Science Specialist, Katherine serves as our Team Leader, coordinating all youth animal science programs and events. She plans and provides oversight for all youth livestock and poultry events and works closely with Agents



Lauren McCroskey

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Associate

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As an Extension Youth Animal Science Program Associate, Lauren is excited to assist and provide leadership to programs and events across all species. Lauren has a particular interest in curriculum development and design.



Hunter Liles

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As an Extension Youth Animal Science Program Associate, Hunter supports all youth animal science programs and events,. She serves as the lead on many of our youth horse activities and events.



# Virginia Cooperative Extension

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