

# Southeast Dairy Producer's Check-Off Program Research Summary

## Florida Youth Dairy Program

Chris DeCubellis, 4-H State Headquarters, UF/IFAS Extension

**Funding Year:** 2022

**Amount Awarded:** \$25,000

### Implications

We have over 1700 youth enrolled in a 4-H dairy project, and reach several thousand other youth in short term dairy educational experiences and contests. Of enrolled youth, over 2/3 are female and over 2/3 live in urban/suburban areas and many of these youth lease an animal. In addition to animal husbandry and basic dairy science, youth learn about careers in the dairy industry and allied industries. Youth also learn to become informed consumers and advocates for animal agriculture.

From a youth development perspective, young people enrolled in dairy projects learn life skills that set them on a trajectory to thrive as adults. Sadly, research indicates that only 1 in 4 youth are on a trajectory to thrive as adults. This idea of thriving encompasses an intentional journey toward achieving one's own personal potential. This would mean producing adults who will be good citizens, with skills that contribute to themselves, their families and society. Young people in the dairy program are consistently among the best and highest quality young people in our youth programs, and we have a tremendous history of producing outstanding individuals from our youth dairy programs who will go on to be contributors in the dairy industry and beyond.



### Methods

Florida 4-H sponsors or assists with several state-level dairy judging contests including events/activities at the North Florida Fair, South Florida Fair, Florida State Fair, and State 4-H Dairy Show. Several hundred 4-H and FFA youth compete at these state-level judging contests. Top senior-age youth (14-18) can qualify to represent Florida at national contests held in Louisville, Kentucky; Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; and Madison, Wisconsin. In Florida we hold four state-level dairy quiz bowl contests at the North Florida Fair, South Florida Fair, State 4-H Dairy Show, and a stand-alone contest in Gainesville. Top youth can represent Florida at national competitions at the breed association conventions. We help organize state shows at the state fair and state 4-H dairy show, and assist as needed at regional dairy shows (North Florida Fair and South Florida Fair). We help organize dairy learning experiences at Florida 4-H University, dairy judging and quiz bowl practices, the Southeast Youth Dairy Retreat, and several smaller trainings throughout the year. The dairy chain remains strong with three heifers placed in 2022 from original donor animals. We have new dairy clubs/youth in three new counties in 2022 (Leon, Citrus, and Dixie Counties).

## Results

In 2022 Florida youth placed first in international competition in Europe at the Royal Highlands Dairy Judging Contest. These youth qualified for this trip in Fall of 2021 winning 2nd place at World Dairy Expo in Madison, Wisconsin in the national 4-H judging contest. Also in 2022 at Ayrshire Florida had first and second place individuals in the dairy jeopardy contest and had a first-place display board. At the Guernsey Convention the Florida youth quiz bowl team placed second. We also were first and second juniors at the Guernsey Contest for prepared public speaking and first place intermediate in Extemporaneous speech. We also had the second place Folding Display, third place Essay and first Place Video at the Guernsey convention. In addition, Florida had a youth qualify as a Young Distinguished Junior Member in the Holstein breed association. Two Florida youth represented Florida at the National 4-H Dairy Conference. Florida also competed nationally in dairy judging in Louisville and Harrisburg. Three heifers were placed in our 4-H Dairy Heifer Chain program, offspring of original donor animals. We have three new counties with 4-H clubs involved in the dairy project in Leon, Citrus, and Dixie Counties.



## References of Published Work

<https://www.wcjb.com/2021/08/11/children-have-chance-raising-their-own-heifer-thanks-4-h-north-florida-holsteins/>