



UNIVERSITY OF
GEORGIA
EXTENSION

Animal and Dairy
Science Department



TOP HAND
Stockmanship & Stewardship Contest
POWERED BY UGA BEEF TEAM & GA

Educating young cattlemen through innovative competitions



Knight, C.H.¹, Blackwell, M.², Davis, D.B.³, Duggin, J.⁴, and Stewart, L.⁴

¹4-H Specialist for Animal Science Programs, UGA Extension, clh@uga.edu, ²Programs Coordinator, UGA Animal and Dairy Science, ³Youth Livestock Specialist, UGA Animal and Dairy Science, dylan.davis@uga.edu, ⁴Beef Cattle Specialist, UGA Animal and Dairy Science, jduggin@uga.edu, lawtons@uga.edu

INTRODUCTION

Georgia cattle producers own approximately 1.3 million head of cattle worth more than \$676 million. Annual cash receipts total more than \$262 million, making cattle production the state's sixth largest cash crop. Because cattle are grown in all 159 counties of Georgia, the beef industry has a large impact on the state's economy. The average age of the Georgia farmer is 60, which has increased 2 years since 2007. This means to sustain the cattle industry in the state, more young people need to enter into production. Although there are many opportunities to learn about beef cattle through the showing and ag education classes, projects focusing on beef cattle production outside of the showing and classroom are limited.

Through a collaborative effort of the University of Georgia's Beef Team, Georgia Cattlemen's Association, and allied industry sponsors, the Georgia Junior Herd Builder Program and Top Hand Stockmanship and Stewardship Contest were developed.

OBJECTIVES

Top Hand Stockmanship and Stewardship Contest

- Teach youth proper cattle handling techniques and use of animal health products and equipment.
- To inspire, educate and equip Georgia's youth with the skills, knowledge and confidence to be successful advocates and/or employees for the beef industry.
- Youth acquire Beef Quality Assurance Certification (BQA).

Georgia Junior Herd Builder

- Learn about cattle nutrition, reproduction, herd health, and record keeping.
- Expose youth to the beef industry of Georgia
- Educate and serve the beef industry of Georgia
- Enhance leadership, decision-making and management skills of youth participants
- Promote animal and environmental stewardship
- Youth become members of GA Junior Cattlemen's Association or Georgia Cattlemen's Association and acquire BQA Certification.



Top Hand Stockmanship and Stewardship
Contest Website

Top Hand Stockmanship and Stewardship
Facebook Page



Georgia Junior Herd Builder Contest Website

PROGRAMMATIC METHODS

Top Hand Stockmanship and Stewardship Contest

- Teams of 3 youth (grades 9th-12th) compete in a scored and timed event being evaluated on their cattle working skills.
- At the regional contests and state contest, teams were scored by two judges for vaccine administration, handling, safety, tagging (visual and EID), use of EID technology, TSU sampling and processing map details.
- A series of short informational videos was created to further educate youth and public (QR Code below).



Georgia Junior Herd Builder

- Open to FFA or 4-H members currently enrolled in 8th-12th grade.
- Participants must complete the UGA Master Cattlemen's Course, either in person or through a pre-recorded option available only to these youth.
- Participants develop a pen of heifers for the purpose of future production or sale. They are responsible for securing three (3) heifers of similar age and genetics to develop through the beef production cycle utilizing the UGA Extension Beef Management Calendar as a guide.
- Participants are responsible for transporting their pen of heifers to the evaluation site. Participants will give a presentation regarding their managerial decisions, goals achieved, and knowledge gained during the program. Additionally, an interview portion along with live pen evaluation is conducted.

RESULTS

Top Hand Stockmanship and Stewardship Contest

- Twelve teams (of 3) competed across 3 regional contests.
- State winners were awarded \$300 cash, team banner, and individual "ear tag" trophy cut-outs. Reserve Champion team received \$150. All participants received a Top Hand hat at the regional contest. Regional winning teams received \$150.

Georgia Junior Herd Builder

- Since 2021, twenty-one youth have completed the project from across the state.

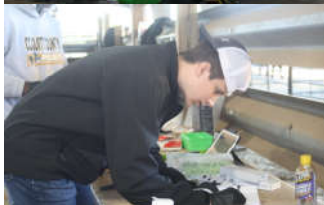
IMPACT

Top Hand Stockmanship and Stewardship Contest

- Educational videos have reached 276 views. The project Facebook page has 83 likes and 129 followers.
- "I was very excited to have the opportunity to instill and help students find a passion for beef cattle production and learn how to handle cattle in a humane, safe and ethical manner." - Spencer Highsmith, Coffee County High FFA Advisor and Coach of Reserve Champion Team.

Georgia Junior Herd Builder

- Maddie Dean, 2021 contest participant, says, "Winning Reserve Champion honors in the Georgia Junior Herd builder is one of my most life changing accomplishments. Through this project me and my sister purchased 6 purebred Charolais heifers and are now the owner-operators of MED4 Cattle Company." Maddie says she has "learned countless life lessons on raising livestock" and plans to continue growing this operation.



Thank you to the Georgia Beef Commission for their continued support of UGA Beef Team programs!