

2017 New Mexico Beef Ambassador Report
Shelly Hathorn - Chair

The New Mexico Beef Ambassador Contest was again held in conjunction with the State FFA Career Development Contests in Las Cruces on March 31, 2017 on the NMSU campus.

In order to promote the NM Beef Ambassador Contest, news releases were submitted and published in January and February of 2017 in the *New Mexico Stockman* and the *CowBelle Wrangler*. Additional contacts were made directly with State FFA advisors, County Extension 4-H Agents, the NMSU Agricultural Extension and Education (AXED) Department, and other departments within the NMSU College of Agriculture, Consumer and Environmental Sciences to encourage them to promote the contest to youth in their programs and classes. The State FFA office also posted contest information on their FFA Facebook page as a means of directly reaching students. NMSU also advertised the contest via their Youth Ranch Management Camp website which served as direct link to an on-line registration form on the New Mexico CowBelles website and Facebook page.

A new NM Beef Ambassador contest brochure was developed and distributed at the NM Beef Council booth at Ag Fest in Santa Fe; to CowBelle members, presidents and board members via email; and through promotion by the NM Beef Ambassadors. Individuals also received contest brochures and information as requested.

This year there were four junior age contestants who competed in the NM Beef Ambassador Contest held in the NMSU Animal Science Department in Knox Hall. There were no senior contestants pre-registered for the contest. Judges were Dalene Hodnett, NMCB past president and NM Farm and Livestock Bureau Director of Communications and Media Relations; Fita Witte, NMCB and ANCW past president, and Teresa Dean, Dona Ana County 4-H Agent and NMCB member and past beef ambassador chair. A team of three juniors were chosen to represent New Mexico CowBelles as our beef ambassadors. John Davis of Springer received first place honors followed by Magdelyn (Maggie) Rich of Capitan earning second place and Savannah Graves of Roswell receiving third place. Hallie Vigil of Cundiyo also competed. NM CowBelle t-shirts and beef license plates were presented to all four contestants at the State FFA awards program held at the NMSU Pan Am Center.

The contest consisted of a 10-15 PowerPoint presentation sharing the contestant's "Response to Consumer Myths About Beef" as opposed to the previous years prepared speech, issues response, mock media interview, and consumer promotion. Each contestant was interviewed by the judges after their presentations. After the contest, news releases announcing our contest winners were sent to *The NM Stockman*, *The NM CowBelle Wrangler* and local newspapers from the contestant's home towns.

The NM CowBelles, NM Beef Council, and NM Cattle Growers continued their sponsorship of the beef ambassador program with additional support from CowBelle locals and members. Monogrammed shirts and jackets were purchased for the team members to wear during consumer promotion events and activities and educational presentations.

The Women in Ag Leadership Conference (WALC) was held the end of May in Las Cruces. This was the first event the beef ambassador team members were able to attend. Arrangements were made for John Davis to present his winning presentation/speech at the welcome event. The ambassadors were introduced and information about the contest was shared with the attendees. They also attended the majority of the WALC workshops, general sessions, and tours.

John Davis and Magdelyn Rich participated in workshops and events at the summer Cattleman's Conference and CowBelle meeting in Ruidoso. Savannah Graves, who also serves as an officer on the NM State 4-H Leadership Team, was in Colorado for a leadership training.

The ambassadors have individually completed the following activities:

John Davis

- **In July, he participated in the State 4-H prepared speech contest at State 4-H Conference in Las Cruces with his winning beef ambassador speech. His first place state win allowed him to share his beef related speech with the 300+ 4-H members, parents, agents, and guests attending the 4-H conference. He will go on to represent NM 4-H on the national at the Western National Round-Up in Denver, CO in January of 2018.**
- **Participated in NMSU's Youth Ranch Management Camp held on the CS Ranch in Cimarron.**

Magdelyn Rich

- **Volunteered at her local CowBelle beef information booth during the Lincoln County Fair.**
- **Handed out beef samples and recipes at the NM Beef Council event at the NM State Fair in Albuquerque this past September. Her photo was featured in the NM Beef Council's Bullhorn report in the November 2017 NM Stockman magazine.**
- **She is currently working to start a CowBelle local in Socorro.**

Savannah Graves

- **Attended the NM State Fair in Albuquerque assisting officials at junior livestock shows, interacting with youth and families at the McDonald's Farm, and assisting with the NMSF Jr. Livestock Sale.**
- **Attended the Eastern NM State Fair in Roswell assisting at livestock shows and events.**
- **Attended the District FFA creed and quiz competitions sharing information about the NM beef ambassador program.**

During the remainder of the ambassador's year of service, they will continue to speak to youth and adult audiences on beef industry issues and misconceptions and to educate their peers and meal-time decision makers about beef nutrition, cattle care, and safety during events and activities within the state. They also plan to assist NM CowBelles at their booth at Ag Fest in Santa Fe and will assist with the 2018 beef ambassador contest.