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NEWS RELEASE

Youth livestock show awards \$26,500 in scholarships



The Calgary Stampede's International Youth Livestock Show handed out \$26,500 in scholarship money this week to the future leaders of agriculture. Photo credit: Calgary Stampede

Calgary -- If you're looking for the cause of Lindsay Parker's animal magnetism, then mom's the word.

"I've pretty much always wanted to be a vet, ever since I was little -- and it's my mom's fault," said Parker, 20, a native of Three Hills, Alta., on Saturday afternoon.

"My mom (Kathleen) is a veterinarian herself, and she would take me out of school at lunch time, so I could go and help her do a Caesarian and deliver puppies.

"She looks after everything from pigs and sheep down to snakes and iguanas," added Parker. "She had to treat a python once for pneumonia, because the owner wanted to put it into dormancy, and stuck it in a bag and put it in the fridge.

"She's had to deal with all sorts of crazy cases. It's something I'm already trained for, you could say, and I couldn't see myself doing anything else."

To realize her dreams, Parker has plenty of school ahead of her. This fall, she'll be entering her final year of animal sciences at Montreal's McGill University. After that, she's looking at eight more years on campus -- four for vet school, and four more to specialize -- either at the University of Calgary or the University of Saskatoon.

The Calgary Stampede's annual International Youth Livestock Show has helped her defray those costs. Parker, who's in her final year of eligibility in the program, has earned an educational scholarship for the sixth straight summer, picking up a \$2,000 post-secondary bursary Saturday along with four other young leading lights of the agriculture industry.

In all, \$26,500 in International Youth Livestock Show scholarships was distributed to 25 future industry leaders aged 12 through 20 this year by the Calgary Stampede Foundation and sponsors EnCana, the United Farmers of Alberta, ConocoPhillips, WA Ranches, and Ted and Enid Jansen.

Agricultural skills, knowledge and practical experience, as well as problem-solving, operational and entrepreneurial savvy, all came to the forefront during this four-day event for competitors in the senior (ages 15 to 20), intermediate (12 to 14) and junior (9 to 11) age categories.



This year's International Youth Livestock Show saw 65 youths exhibit about 125 animals in four species classes -- sheep, dairy, heavy horse or beef.

Young hopefuls entered as many as six different disciplines — a youth marketing competition, a multi-species judging competition, heavy horse decorating, conformation (for beef and dairy cattle, heavy horse and sheep), showmanship (beef and dairy cattle, heavy horse and sheep) and a senior herdsman quiz.

"The contests that they have? There is a natural tie-in with life skills, there's no two ways about it," said Rob Smith, a member of the Stampede's International Youth Livestock committee.

"A nine-year-old kid could look at judging livestock and wonder: 'What am I getting out of this?' " added Smith. "But it's the ability to assess a situation, to critically examine, to make the decisions that it makes to place a class of animals, and then to convince the person you're giving your reasons to, in a little bit of a speech, why it is you've placed them that way.

"The kids we've got here are at the top of their game, and I would say among the very best there is in the entire nation, at those types of skills."

Parker credits the International Youth Livestock Show for sharpening her career focus.

"It has a lot to do with dedication, for sure," she said. "The multi-judging competition, the marketing competition, the herdsman quiz, your individual show for each species . . . everyone wants to do their best, and it's extremely competitive. You have to want to do it, for sure, because it's very demanding."

Four other senior-aged participants, Arisjan Appel of Penhold (dairy), Michael Hanei of Didsbury (dairy), Tyson Hertz of Duchess (beef), and Lars Iversen of Olds (dairy), received \$2,000 scholarships, while 10 scholarships in the amount of \$1,000 were awarded to Wyatt Hanson of Airdrie (beef), Sarah Hunder of Olds (heavy horse), Marissa Kemp of Carseland (beef), Amy Kraemer of Cochrane, Anthony Murphy of Wetaskiwin, Hal Nixdorff of Airdrie, Cameron Olson of Rocky View (beef), Marissa Weleschuk of Ponoka, Piper Whelan of Irricana (beef) and Kelty Whelan of Irricana (beef).

Three intermediate-aged contestants, Jodi Graham of Innisfail (heavy horse), Samuel Hanei of Didsbury (dairy) and Kylee Hebbes of Strathmore (sheep) won \$1,000 scholarships. Seven others won \$500 scholarships -- Taylor Giles of Cochrane (beef), Brandon Hertz of Duchess (beef), Megan Mcleod of Cochrane (beef), Clinton Miller of Calgary (beef), Dale Palsson of Strathmore (sheep), Miranda Ross of Crossfield (beef) and J.T. Ross of Crossfield (beef).

Junior age contestants competed for prizes, ribbons and fun.

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The Calgary Stampede is a volunteer-supported, not-for-profit community organization that preserves and promotes western heritage and values. The Stampede contributes to the quality of life in Calgary and southern Alberta through its world-renowned 10-day Stampede, year-round facilities, western events and several youth and agriculture programs. All revenue is reinvested into Calgary Stampede programs and facilities. For more about the Stampede, visit www.calgarystampede.com.

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