

# **A SUMMARY OF THE GEORGIA STATE JUNIOR LIVESTOCK PROGRAM**

R. E. SILCOX and H. K. SHULTZ

## **SUMMARY**

Animal and Dairy Science programs provide educational opportunities for youth in Georgia. During the 2013-2014 school year 2462 youth participated in state-wide 4-H/FFA livestock show projects. Participants in state livestock show projects in 2013-2014 included 973 4-H members and 1488 FFA members. There were 4727 animals entered as state livestock projects.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Animal and Dairy Science educational programs cover the entire state of Georgia through 4-H junior livestock projects and events. Animal and Dairy Science faculty and staff work with 4-H staff in the development and implementation of these programs. Livestock show projects are conducted jointly with FFA and involve state department of education staff, as well as staff from the state department of agriculture and various commodity groups.

Junior programs provide youths with an awareness of animal products, economics of livestock production, methods of livestock production, and environmental issues involving animal agriculture. In addition, these programs encourage youth to develop important life skills including communication skills, leadership abilities, decision making skills, and a sense of responsibility.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The numbers of animal entered in state projects and the numbers shown at state shows by 4-H and FFA members are presented in Table 1. State market lamb and market goat shows are held at the Georgia National Fair in October. State steer, beef heifer, dairy heifer, market hog and breeding ewe shows are held at the Georgia Junior National Stock Show in February. Entry deadlines for the various shows are 3-6 months before the state show. As shown in Table 1, there were 4727 animals entered as state projects in all shows and only 3394 (72%) were shown at the state level. Some of the animals entered do not make it to the state show for a variety of reasons, but most of those are shown at other local shows and fairs.

Many youth enter more than one project, so the total of the exhibitor columns in Table 1 is not the total number of individuals. During the 2013-2014 school year, 2462 youth entered animals in state 4H/FFA projects. Of these 973 entered as 4H and 1488 entered as FFA.

As shown in Table 1, there are more market hogs, steers, beef heifers and dairy heifers shown by FFA members than 4-H members and there are more market lambs, market goats and breeding ewes shown by 4-H members. One reason for this is that there is a difference in age requirements for the different shows. An exhibitor must be 9 years old or older to show market hogs, steers, beef heifers and dairy heifers. Exhibitors must be in the first grade or older to show

sheep or goats. Sheep and goat shows attract a lot of young exhibitors who are not old enough to be in FFA.

**Table 1. Georgia junior livestock show exhibitors and animals entered in 2013-2014.**

	Animals				Exhibitors at Show		
	Entered	Shown	4-H Shown	FFA Shown	Total	4-H	FFA
<b>Goat</b>	1102	773	400	373	436	222	214
<b>Lamb</b>	318	239	183	56	122	93	29
<b>Ewe</b>	139	125	77	48	67	39	28
<b>Hog</b>	1992	1411	530	881	996	337	659
<b>Steer</b>	252	188	72	116	167	63	104
<b>Heifer</b>	535	367	131	236	306	111	195
<b>Dairy</b>	389	291	94	197	233	62	171
<b>Total *</b>	4727	3394	1487	1907	*	*	*

\*Total numbers of animals are the sum of individual show totals. Many exhibitors compete in more than one show.

Table 2 contains the total number of animal entered in each show since 1990 when the Georgia National Fairgrounds opened and state livestock shows were moved to Perry. The first state breeding ewe show at the Georgia National Stock Show in February was held in 1995. The commercial dairy heifer show began in 1997 and the state market goat show was introduced in 2006.

Over the past seven years beef heifer and steer numbers have declined, probably due to economic conditions. Feed, fuel and cattle prices have gone up while disposable income has dropped. These have become much more expensive projects in the past few years.

The number of market goats has more than tripled since the project began in 2006, while the number of market lambs has declined over the past five years. Some of the decline in market lamb numbers is probably due to exhibitors getting involved in the goat show instead of the lamb show. During the first few years of the goat show, show goats were cheaper than show lambs and the goat project was not as competitive. This tended to draw new, young exhibitors into the goat project. As the goat project became more competitive and prices paid for show goats increased, the rate of increase in this project has slowed.

Entries in the state market hog, breeding ewe and dairy heifer shows have been fairly stable for the past ten years.

**Table 2. Total number of animals entered in state shows by year of show.**

Year	Beef Heifer	Dairy Heifer	Breeding Sheep	Market Goat	Market Hog	Market Lamb	Steer
1990	476				1504	550	510
1991	504				1869	664	442
1992	344				1948	954	381
1993	520				1838	864	412
1994	623				2347	807	398
1995	695		58		2518	727	419
1996	785		47		2384	609	470
1997	788	82	69		2281	553	459
1998	739	167	57		2297	516	478
1999	728	261	56		2070	548	421
2000	723	289	82		1850	523	401
2001	761	336	109		1887	521	396
2002	803	359	91		1885	530	383
2003	923	319	113		1919	528	383
2004	905	280	96		1966	452	393
2005	898	300	95		2014	524	413
2006	900	311	118	321	1955	464	414
2007	921	307	111	404	1953	444	415
2008	903	304	162	582	1973	500	396
2009	805	283	133	758	1835	418	364
2010	732	307	134	946	1932	378	324
2011	683	328	150	1061	2007	345	335
2012	644	340	116	1129	2006	316	308
2013	608	355	100	1102	2058	318	266
2014	535	389	139		1992		252