

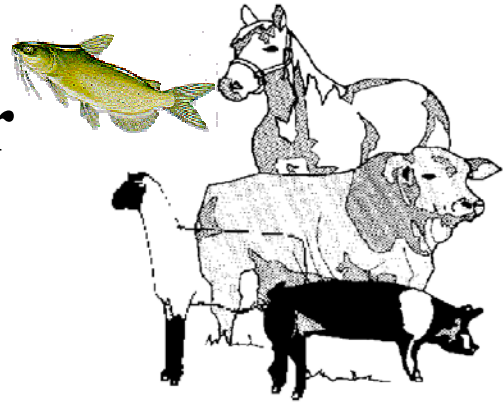
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Animal and Dairy Science Department  
Rhodes Center for Animal and Dairy Science

# Livestock Newsletter

March/April 2003

<http://www.ces.uga.edu/Agriculture/asdsm/beef-home.html>



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Robert L. Stewart  
Extension Coordinator  
Animal and Dairy Science Department

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# LIVESTOCK NEWSLETTER

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March-April 2003

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## **Catfish Prices Rise as Frozen Inventories are Reduced**

Gary J. Burtle  
Extension Aquaculture Specialist

Catfish consumption in the United States has continued at an increasing rate during the last two years, but prices to catfish farmers dropped until March 2003. After a 20% drop in price, pond bank prices for live catfish rose more than 10% in the first week of March. The price depression began with pressure from Vietnamese imports in 2001 that caused catfish inventories to build. Now, imports are reduced, catfish sales are up, inventories are reduced, and grower prices are rising.

In 2002, more than 630,600,000 pounds of catfish were reported as sold by catfish growers in the U.S. That was up 5.6% from 2001 and resulted in 317,600,000 pounds of processed catfish. The strong demand for catfish allowed inventories to be sold during 2002 to a level that was more than 15% lower in December 2002 than the same period in 2001. Since catfish grow very little during the winter, inventories are still low and grower prices are expected to be better during the second and third quarters of 2003. The December 2002 price of \$.53 rose to \$.63 per pound in March 2003. During this time, however, prices to small processors remained near \$.75 per pound and sales directly from the farm remained near \$1.50 per pound (low of \$1.25 per pound).

The costs of the most important inputs to catfish production are expected to remain relatively low during 2003. Soybean meal and corn prices are expected to rise relatively little. Loan interest payments are expected to remain at record low levels. However, fuel costs will affect catfish feed prices in 2003, especially for feed delivered over long distances. Feed costs may start in the range of \$250 per ton and reach \$275 per ton or higher by the end of the second quarter.

Catfish processor income fell by 1% in 2002 in spite of increased sales volume. The prices paid to processors were 8% less in 2002 than in 2001. Even with an increase of 7% in the volume of processed catfish sold, costs of processing those catfish were not fully recovered. In the slow U.S. economy, catfish processors were successful in maintaining and perhaps growing market share by offering catfish at reduced prices. Helpful in recovering some of the market share was the 31% tariff levied on Vietnamese catfish imports pending a final ruling on the antidumping tariff to be decided later in 2003. Yet, Vietnamese fish imports are recovering due to demand for the fillet at certain U.S. retail outlets. Vietnamese fillet imports dropped from

about 18,000,000 pounds in 2001 to 10,000,000 pounds in 2002. However, January 2003 imports of Vietnamese fillets were up and 2003 imports may reach 15,000,000 pounds.

Georgia catfish marketing efforts continue to grow. A relatively large processor is scheduled to open this spring in Willacoochee. Sweetwater Catfish Processors expects to process about 50,000 pounds of catfish per day when fully operational. Other processors plan increased catfish buying during 2003. Some catfish producers are opening on-the-farm processing operations. However, two other catfish processors were unable to meet marketing expectations during 2002 and will cease operation. Catfish acres remained about the same in 2002 as some farms ceased production while others finished planned pond construction. Approximately 700 acres of catfish ponds are in the east-central area of Georgia, 1,000 acres in west-central Georgia, 200 acres in south Georgia are producing commercial quantities of catfish. More than 4,000 additional acres of local or on-farm sales catfish are scattered across the state. Catfish fingerling production has increased in 2002 with the addition of at least two new catfish hatcheries. Markets for catfish fingerlings produced in Georgia include catfish producers in South Carolina, North Carolina, Florida, and Alabama.

Successful catfish production depends on dependable marketing. Current projections for profitable catfish production require at least three partial-harvests each year in order to sell 7,000 pounds of catfish per pond acre. The average market size for catfish to processors in Georgia exceeds 1.5 pounds per fish. East-central Georgia catfish producers are required to produce catfish weighing 2.0 pounds. Expanding markets for catfish fillets are driving the demand for larger catfish. Traditional markets for small-bone-in catfish products continue to be supplied by growers in south Georgia and, to some extent, wild catfish from rivers and lakes.

National information for this article was obtained from the "Aquaculture Outlook" by David Harvey, March 14, 2003, USDA Economic Research Service, <http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/usda>.

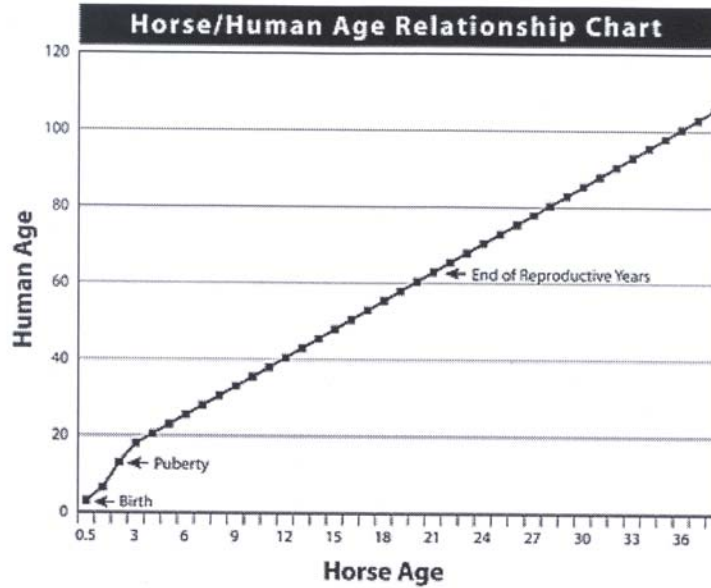
## **How Old is My Horse and How Long Will My Mare Remain Productive?**

Gary L. Heusner  
Extension Equine Specialist

Horses, like humans, are living longer lives. It is not unusual to see horses in their late twenties and early thirties. Many horses are experiencing what I would call a second or even third career after retirement from a show or work career and then even possibly after a breeding career. One of the most often asked questions I receive is, “to what age can I breed my mare?” Obviously the answers vary for individual horses and before I give an answer I try to equate the horse’s age to a human’s age. For example, many horsemen subscribe to the theory that horses age 3 to 4 years for every human year. In other words, a horse that is twenty years old would be comparable in age to a 60-80 year old person. Obviously the physical and physiological condition of the horse would dictate whether it is nearer 60 or 80. Recently a “Horse/Human Age Relationship Chart” has been developed (Figure 1) that better explains the human horse age relationships. This chart reveals that beginning at birth, horses age 6.5 years for each human year until puberty. Once a horse reaches age four, that rate slows to 2.5 years for each human year. Most people arbitrarily call a horse a geriatric horse in their early to mid twenties. If you look at the Horse/Human Age Relationship Chart, a 22 year old horse would equate to a human of about 65. A horse making it to 36 years of age would be equivalent to a 100 year old person.

So, to what age can I expect a mare to be fertile? Research has shown that beginning about 16 years of age mares will have higher incidences of early pregnancy failures. There appears to be higher incidences of losses between 2 and 4 days of pregnancy in older mares. This is a time when the embryo is still present in the oviduct of the mare as the embryo does not reach the uterus until day 5 or 6 after fertilization. Two factors may be responsible for reduced fertility and higher incidences of embryo losses in the older mare between 2 and 4 days of pregnancy. Evidence points to oocyte defects as a possible major cause. The older the mare the more likely abnormal oocytes are produced. Older mares tend to have longer periods of follicular growth and this may be one of the contributors for abnormal oocytes. The second factor which may contribute to embryo losses in the older mare at 2 to 4 days post fertilization may be the oviductal environment. The oviductal environment may be altered in older mares in some fashion to not only prevent survival of the embryo, but movement out of the oviduct into the uterus. The original question posed is to what age will my mare remain productive? We have had mares as old as 25 years of age (approximately 70 years in human terms) foal. However, from the research and field work generated once a mare reaches about 18 years of age (55 - 60 human years) fertility will decline quite rapidly.

FIGURE 1



## UGA Master Cattlemen's Program

**Timothy W. Wilson**  
**Extension Animal Scientist – Beef Cattle**

The University of Georgia's "*Beef Team*" is currently offering the Master Cattlemen's Program. This program involves detailed, in-depth educational seminars related to beef cattle.

A maximum of two programs will be offered annually throughout the state. Participants who attend a minimum of five of the seven consecutive Monday night meetings will receive a certificate of completion. Each meeting includes two one-hour topics by specialists from the University of Georgia. These topics may include: record-keeping, economics, nutrition, forages, fly control, reproduction, genetics, breeding, facilities and herd health.

The registration fee is \$35 for each participant, which will be used to offset the cost notebooks and supplies for this program. Speakers attending each meeting may provide additional materials to supplement this notebook.

A meal will not be provided, but snacks will be furnished. A wrap-up session will conclude each program to allow producers to discuss issues or problems relating to their operations. Counties are encouraged to work together to include as many interested participants as possible.

If you have any questions regarding the UGA Master Cattlemen's Program, please feel free to contact your local County Extension Agent or contact me at (912) 681-5639.

## **Temperature Affects Calf Birth Weight**

Johnny Rossi  
Extension Animal Scientist

Some producers have noticed increased calving problems this year. Calf birth weight is the primary cause of calving difficulty. Temperature has been shown to have a significant impact on calf birth weight. Certainly, using sires with low birth weight EPD's can avoid some calving problems. However, environment is responsible for 55% of differences in calving difficulty. Calf birth weights can vary significantly from year to year even though the same genetics and management are used. Cold weather would not have as large an impact in Georgia as in northern states. However, small differences in temperature can have significant effects on calving difficulty. It is not uncommon for winter average temperatures to vary as much as 10 degrees. With colder than normal temperatures this past winter, increased calving difficulty may be in part due to the weather.

Increased birth weights during cold winters are most likely increased because of increased nutrient flow to the fetus. Cold weather results in increased blood flow to the uterus allowing the fetus to obtain more nutrients and in turn increase growth rate. Several studies have shown that calves born in the fall months are much lighter than calves born in the winter and spring months.

A long-term study was conducted at the University of Nebraska to determine the effects of temperature on calf birth weight. An 11 degree difference in winter temperatures resulted in an 11 lb difference in calf birth weight. They concluded that as average winter temperature decreased 1 degree, calf birth weight increased 1 pound. Also, calving difficulty increased by 2.6 percentage units for every 1 degree increase in average temperature.

Weather data was collected for the three months prior to calving. Most of fetal growth occurs in the last 3 months prior to calving. Therefore, only temperatures during this time period should affect calf birth weight. Cold weather should only affect calf birth weight with late winter and fall calving. Fall calving herds should have less calving problems, and less death loss than calves born in the winter and spring months.

Producers can expect a 1 lb increase in birth weight with each 1 degree decrease in average winter temperature. Cows should not be fed less during cold weather in an attempt to decrease calf birth weight. A cow calving condition of 5 to 6 will have a much better chance of producing a live calf with minimal difficulty than a cow in poor condition. When selecting bulls, birth weight EPD's should be more closely evaluated for herds calving in the late winter.

## A Look At Georgia Lamb Show Projects

Ronnie Silcox  
Extension Animal Scientist

Lamb buying season is getting started and the new lamb show year is on us. Through the year people ask questions about participation in the project. Following are a few statistics gleaned from the 2002 show that may be of interest. Some may even be a little surprising.

In 2002 there were 531 market lambs entered in the state market lamb project in Georgia. These lambs were entered by 264 exhibitors. That means that the average exhibitor had 2.01 lambs. An exhibitor can enter up to three lambs in the state show and ownership broke down as follows: 94 entered 1 lamb, 73 entered 2 lambs and 97 entered 3 lambs.

Of the 531 market lambs entered in the state project 426 (80%) made it to the state show in Perry. Of the 264 exhibitors who entered lambs, 224 (85%) showed lambs at the state show.

Here at the University of Georgia, I have college students who I checked into classes when they were in the first grade. Us old timers tend to forget just how many new faces are showing up each year. Of the 264 exhibitors who entered lambs, 80 (30%) entered as first year exhibitors. At the state show there were 63 in the first year show out of 224 exhibitors at the show. That's 28% new exhibitors! Of the 80 new exhibitors who entered lambs, 44 (55%) entered only one lamb.

It is my personal opinion that there are some excellent quality lambs being produced in Georgia. At least some of those buying lambs these days must agree. Of the 531 lambs entered in the 2002 show 443 (83%) were bred in Georgia. On the entry cards 307 (58%) had Georgia Club Lamb Producer tag numbers entered. Exhibitors are not required to list GCLPA numbers and this figure may actually be low. Of the 426 lambs that made it to the state show in Perry, 357 (84%) were Georgia bred and born.

Ages of exhibitor are spread across the board. The table below shows the number of exhibitors in each grade at the 2002 show.

<b>Grade</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Number of Exhibitors</b>	15	10	20	21	22	21	23	20	17	23	16	14

## **Prawn Culture Training in 2003**

Gary J. Burtle  
Extension Aquaculture Specialist

Prawn culture in Georgia continues to grow in popularity. This trend is occurring across the southeastern U.S. as well. Potential producers are looking for a cash crop that can be raised on small acreage and provide returns in a short period of time. Prawns can be raised to a successful yield in Georgia and sold at a profitable price. However, many failures have occurred when people have missed key elements in the production system. This training is an attempt to provide more depth of experience for beginning prawn producers and for anyone who is considering the freshwater prawn enterprise as an investment. Three days of training will expand the available information across several months so that students can experience different times during the prawn season.

The three meetings will be held on May 10, June 7, and August 30, 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM.

Cost for the training is \$100.00 per day and you are encouraged to attend at least two of the sessions. Homework assignments are intended to help you make decisions regarding your investment in the prawn enterprise. County agents are encouraged to attend and should inquire for registration at a special rate.

**Session I.** Economics of prawn production, nursing and stocking prawns.

**Session II.** Pond system design and water management, feeding, and substrates.

**Session III.** Harvest, prawn spawning, and recirculating system management.

### **Course Philosophy:**

Practical management methods will be presented in a classroom setting for part of each session followed by demonstrations and laboratory experience with prawns, equipment or software. Some course objectives will be accomplished using student teams to develop solutions to management questions. Tests must be passed. Reference materials will be provided.

Casual dress is recommended for activities outside of the classroom.

### **Expected Results:**

Students will gain proficiency in practical aspects of the prawn culture enterprise. Knowledge of equipment calibration, operation and maintenance will be gained in order to assure effective water quality management of prawn ponds. Prawn nutrition, spacial, spawning, and environmental requirements will be learned so that decision making is based on the biological limits of the species.

### **Enrollment:**

Enrollment is based on available space with a maximum of 25 students.

For additional information contact: Dr. Gary Burtle, 229-386-3364, [fish@tifton.uga.edu](mailto:fish@tifton.uga.edu).  
Or, access the web site at Calendar at <http://www.cpes.peachnet.edu/aquaculture>.

## 45<sup>th</sup> Tifton Bull Performance and Sale Summary

Johnny Rossi  
Extension Animal Scientist

The 45<sup>th</sup> Tifton Bull Sale was held at the Tifton Bull Evaluation Center in Irwinville on March 5, 2003. A total of 121 bulls sold for an average of \$2,031. There was a good crowd with a total of 79 buyers from Georgia, Florida, Alabama, South Carolina, and Tennessee. Sale results are shown in Table 1.

The test consists of a three week warm-up period and an official 112-d high concentrate feed test designed to measure performance. Bulls were born between December 16, 2001 and February 28, 2003. Bulls are eligible for the sale if they finish in the top two-thirds of their breed based upon an index, which is equal to ADG + WDA. The test ADG of 4.68 lbs per day was a record for all 45 years of the bull test evaluation. The all breed all time record gain of 6.42 lb per day was set by an Angus bull consigned by Twin Dreams Farm. Performance data is presented in Table 2.

Cooperators with the extension service include the Department of Animal and Dairy Science, the Coastal Plain Experiment Station at Tifton and the Georgia Cattlemen's Association.

Table 1. 2003 Tifton bull sale summary.

<b>Breed</b>	<b>No. Sold</b>	<b>Average</b>
Angus	75	\$2,453
Brangus	5	\$1,180
Charolais	10	\$1,170
Gelbvieh	7	\$1,514
Hereford	4	\$900
Simmental	20	\$1,500
6 breeds	121	\$2,031

Table 2. 2003 Tifton bull test performance results.

<b><u>Breed</u></b>	<b><u>No.</u></b>	<b><u>On Test Wt.</u></b>	<b><u>Final Wt.</u></b>	<b><u>ADG</u></b>	<b><u>WDA</u></b>
Angus	115	845	1390	4.87	3.57
Brangus	7	726	1182	4.07	3.13
Charolais	17	870	1346	4.25	3.33
Gelbvieh	10	721	1235	4.59	3.39
Hereford	5	826	1269	3.95	3.31
Santa Gertrudis	1	692	1055	3.24	2.71
Simmental	29	822	1328	4.52	3.45
Averages	184	831	1355	4.68	3.49

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### **Dates to Remember**

April 16	Mountain Beef Shortcourse, Blairsville
April 22	HERD Sale, Irwinville
June 7	Lamb Field Day, Athens
July 17-19	GA Jr Beef Futurity
July 25-26	GCLPA Lamb Futurity

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## 2003 Georgia National Heifer Show Results

### Showmanship

4 <sup>th</sup> & under	Taylor Gazda	Oconee 4-H
5 <sup>th</sup>	Grant Easom	Decatur 4-H
6 <sup>th</sup>	Danielle Thornton	Wilkes 4-H
7 <sup>th</sup>	Katie Gazda	Oconee 4-H
8 <sup>th</sup>	Austin Atkinson	Gwinnett 4-H
9 <sup>th</sup>	Laura Bramblett	Jefferson City FFA
10 <sup>th</sup>	Adam Shirley	Jackson 4-H
11 <sup>th</sup>	Will Cabe	Franklin 4-H
12 <sup>th</sup>	Mary Bea Martin	Banbridge FFA

Champion	Cole Elrod	Jackson FFA
Maine-Anjou Reserve	Danielle Thornton	Wilkes FFA
Other Breeds Champion	Brandon Wilbanks	Eastside FFA
Other Breeds Reserve	Jake Alford	Madison FFA

### Breed Show Results

Angus Champion	Austin Atkinson	Gwinnett 4-H
Angus Reserve	Jared Scott	Coffee 4-H
Charolais Champion	Julia Martin	Jackson 4-H
Charolais Reserve	Jake Alford	Madison FFA
Chi-Influence Champion	Adam Shirley	Jackson 4-H
Chi-Influence Reserve	Tyler Minish	Jackson FFA
Commercial Champion	Joseph Sweatland	McDuffie FFA
Commercial Reserve	Ryan Moore	Colquitt FFA
Hereford Champion	Katie Johnson	Cherokee 4-H
Hereford Reserve	Morgan Dinsmore	Madison 4-H
Limousin Champion	Lacy Stephens	Oconee 4-H
Limousin Reserve	Lacy Stephens	Oconee 4-H

Red Angus Champion	Robert Taylor	Jackson FFA
Red Angus Reserve	Casey McDaniel	Jackson FFA
Santa Gertrudis Champion	Susan Stephens	Butts 4-H
Santa Gertrudis Reserve	Blake Belflower	Jones FFA
Shorthorn Champion	Roger Boswell	Banks FFA
Shorthorn Reserve	Katie Brown	Jackson FFA
Simmental Champion	Cole Elrod	Jackson FFA
Simmental Reserve	Danielle Thornton	Wilkes 4-H

### County Group of 5

- 1 - Jackson 4-H & FFA
- 2 - Tift Co. Show Team
- 3 - Oconee 4-H

### Breeders Special

Champion - Talmo Ranch  
Reserve - Thornton Show Cattle

## 2003 Georgia National Steer Show Results

Showmanship				
4 <sup>th</sup> and under	B.J. Townson	Tift 4-H	Division 2 Reserve	Adam Shirley, Jackson 4-H
5 <sup>th</sup>	Keaton Griner	Colquitt FFA		
6 <sup>th</sup>	Melissa Lance	Union 4-H	Division 3 Champion	Robby Avery Colquitt FFA
7 <sup>th</sup>	Victoria Hill	Miller FFA		
8 <sup>th</sup>	Ben Scott	West Coffee MS FFA	Division 3 Reserve	Ashley Cleary Tift FFA
9 <sup>th</sup>	Ashley Cleary	Tift FFA		
10 <sup>th</sup>	Benjamin Whiddon	Turner 4-H	Division 4 Champion	Randi Walden Henry 4-H
11 <sup>th</sup>	Mandy Hampton	Colquitt FFA		
12 <sup>th</sup>	Katie Johnson	Cherokee 4-H		
Show Results				
Division 1 Champion	Wright Gunter	Washington/Wilkes FFA	Division 4 Reserve	Ashley Roberts Worth HS FFA
Division 1 Reserve	Tyler Minish	Jackson FFA	Grand Champion	Randi Walden Henry 4-H
Division 2 Champion	Ethan Armour	Washington/Wilkes FFA	Reserve Champion	Ashley Roberts Worth HS FFA

## 2003 Georgia National Breeding Sheep Show Results

Showmanship				
Pre-Club	Kate Josey	Franklin 4-H		Banks 4-H
Junior	Jennifer Dalton	Banks 4-H	GA Bred & Born Reserve	Chad Stoyle Banks 4-H
Senior	Jeremy Herrin	Turner FFA		
Show Results				
Hampshire Champion	Kristen Clayton	Wilkes 4-H	Rambouillet Champion	Cari Westbrook Rabun 4-H
Hampshire Reserve	Callie Thompson	Coweta 4-H	Rambouillet Reserve	Apraha Henry-Fisher Rabun 4-H
GA Bred & Born Champion	Kristen Clayton	Wilkes 4-H	GA Bred & Born Champion	Ian Robinson Rabun 4-H
Montadale Champion	Cody McMahan	Banks 4-H	GA Bred & Born Reserve	Rhett Ackles Rabun 4-H
Montadale Reserve	Chad Stoyle	Banks 4-H	Suffolk Champion	Beth Lynn Tattnall 4-H
GA Bred & Born Champion	Cody McMahan		Suffolk Reserve	Beth Lynn Tattnall 4-H
			Commercial Champion	Jeremy Herrin

	Tuner FFA		Wilkes 4-H
Commercial Reserve	Emily Smith Clinch 4-H	Supreme Reserve	Jeremy Herrin Tuner FFA
GA Bred & Born Champion	Emily Smith Clinch 4-H	GA Bred & Born Supreme Champion	Emily Smith, Clinch 4-H
GA Bred & Born Reserve	Jeremy Herrin Tuner FFA	GA Bred & Born Supreme Reserve	Jeremy Herrin, Tuner FFA
Champion Ram	Kristen Clayton Wilkes 4-H	Breeder's Special	
Reserve Ram	Beth Lynn Tattnall 4-H	1 <sup>st</sup>	Kristen Clayton
		2 <sup>nd</sup>	Jeremy Herrin
		3 <sup>rd</sup>	Jennifer Dalton
		4 <sup>th</sup>	Beth Lynn
		5 <sup>th</sup>	Shari Taylor
Supreme Champion Ewe	Kristen Clayton		

### 2003 Georgia National Commercial Dairy Heifer Show Results

4 <sup>th</sup> and under	Showmanship	Division 2 Champion	Jenna Saxon Oglethorpe 4-H
5 <sup>th</sup>	Meagan Steed Morgan 4-H		
6 <sup>th</sup>	Katie Garrett Oconee 4-H	Division 2 Reserve	Ashley Price Houston FFA
	Jessie Lawson Bonaire Middle FFA		
7 <sup>th</sup>	Anna Savelle Oconee 4-H	Division 3 Champion	Brian Edger Houston FFA
8 <sup>th</sup>	Whitney Franks Burke 4-H		
9 <sup>th</sup>	Megan Bell Houston FFA	Division 3 Reserve	Zachery West Houston FFA
10 <sup>th</sup>	Kathryn Bell Houston FFA		
11 <sup>th</sup>	Ashley Price Houston FFA	Grand Champion	Brian Edger Houston FFA
12 <sup>th</sup>	Audrey Shutter Houston FFA	Reserve Champion	Zachery West Houston FFA
	Show Results		
Division 1 Champion	Alicia L. Aaron Oglethorpe 4-H		
Division 1 Reserve	Amanda Davis Houston FFA		

