

NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Brandy VanDeWalle, Extension Educator
Nebraska Extension In Fillmore/Clay Counties

Phone: 402-759-3712

Email: brandy.vandewalle@unl.edu

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Corn Challenge Encourages STEM Careers

Science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) careers are in high demand and will continue to be in future years. To engage youth in crop science based education, the Innovative Youth Corn Challenge (IYCC) was created as a partnership between the Nebraska Corn Board and Nebraska Extension. Since the Innovative Youth Corn Challenge program's inception in 2012, 35 teams have participated in the program with 20 teams successfully harvesting and analyzing their plot data. A total of 105 youth have participated. This contest, open to 4-H members or FFA members, guided participants through all aspects of corn production, as well as agricultural careers related to corn production.

The 2017 winning team was the Rising Stars 4-H Club from Platte County which consisted of Kade and Isaac Stromberg with Brad Stephens as their sponsor. They tested the mid-season V6 application of ammonium sulfate on corn yield, a treatment which cost \$18.00 per acre. Their hypothesis was that ammonium sulfate would increase yield by making more nitrogen available before tasseling. Their check plot had a yield of 265.6 bu/acre compared to the innovative plot yield of 270.4 bu/acre.

Second place team overall was the Wood River FFA consisting of Nathan Burnett and Zane Turek with Juliana Loudon as their sponsor. They tested the potential for a yield increase from using a higher planting population for dryland corn than what is normally planted for their area. Their standard practice was a planting population of 21,000 seeds per acre, compared to a higher rate of 26,000 in their challenge plot. They faced a challenge this year in their plot with the rapid growth of palmer amaranth. In the end, their check plot was 220 bushels/acre and challenge plot was 192 bushels/acre.

Third place went to the Lost Creek 4-H Club from Colfax County which consisted of Logan, Gavin, and Rylan Nelson with Steve Nelson as their sponsor. They tested the use of automatic down pressure management versus static levels of down pressure on yield. Their plot had 5 different treatments, automatic down pressure, 0, 125, 250, and 375 pounds of downforce. Their plots had the following yields: 193 bu/acre for 0 pounds of downforce, 197 bu/acre for 125 pounds of downforce, 201 bu/acre for 250 pounds of downforce, 198 bu/acre for 375 pounds of downforce and 195 bu/acre for the automatic down pressure plot.

Also, completing their plot was:

The Maple Creek Creators 4-H Club of Colfax County team consisting of Korbin and Kara Kudara. They tested the use of an in-furrow 8-20-5-5-.05 starter fertilizer in their operation as they recently switched from minimum to no-till. Their observation is that dry weather and a high salt fertilizer may have affected their challenge plot. Their ending yield was 173.1 bushels/ac for the control and 170.3 for their starter fertilizer plot. Their project sponsor was Kevin Kudara.

The Kornhusker Kids 4-H Club of Cuming County which included Kaleb and Landon Hasenkamp, Angela, Matthew and James Rolf, Levi Schiller and Payton Schiller with their plot located in Dodge County. Team members decided to test the effects of interseeding two different cover crops into standing corn at V5 with the goal of increasing nutrient availability to the crop and to allow for the earlier establishment of the cover crop. The plot included a control with no cover crop as well as medium red clover and tillage radishes. Unfortunately, Nebraska's weather got the better of them with a dry June resulting in poor cover crop establishment.

Clover Catchers 4-H Club of Otoe County which consisted of Hayden and Nolan Beccard with Ryan Beccard as their sponsor. They tested the difference in yield between one corn hybrid with different insect traits. Their study was set up to see if the rootworm trait would increase yield by controlling rootworm with extended diapause in a corn/soybean rotation. Their check plot of a hybrid with no rootworm trait had a yield of 176.6 bu/acre compared to the innovative plot with 175.9 bu/acre.

The Shelton FFA Chapter consisted of Jacob Snyder and Ryan Lewis with Hannah Horak as their sponsor. They tested the addition of Agnition products on corn yield. Their check plot had a yield of 230 bu/acre compared to the innovative plot yield of 228.5 bu/acre.

As a team, youth worked with an adult mentor throughout the process. Mentors can be extension faculty, ag teachers, or other qualified agronomy professionals.

Other awards handed out during the banquet held on UNL's East Campus included:

- The Extra Mile Award went to : Kornhusker Kids 4-H Club, receiving \$200.
- The Innovation Award, worth \$200, was presented to the Lost Creek 4-H'ers.
- The Sustainability Award went to Kornhusker Kids 4-H Club (dryland) which is a \$200 award. This utilized the Field to Market tool which is a leading multi-stakeholder initiative that is working to unite the agricultural supply chain in defining, measuring and advancing the sustainability of food, fiber and fuel production in the United States.

To participate in 2018, youth must complete and return an entry form by March 15th to the Fillmore County Extension Office in Geneva, NE. Forms can be downloaded at <http://cropwatch.unl.edu/youth/cornchallenge>. For more information, contact Brandy VanDeWalle at brandy.vandewalle@unl.edu.

See photos below:



Group Photo Caption: Youth in attendance at the Innovative Youth Corn Challenge Banquet were recognize for their efforts. (Back Row L-R: Isaac Stromberg, Kade Stromberg, Juliana Loudon, Korbin Kudera, Hayden Beccard, Levi Schiller, James Rolf. Front Row L-R: Gavin Nelson, Rylan Nelson, Nolan Beccard, Landon Hasenkamp and Payton Schiller.)



Speaker Caption: Cropping Systems Specialist, Justin McMechan provided participants background on the career path he chose and his educational background, in addition to sharing cutting edge research he does utilizing technology.