

Local students, pigs show well at Houston

By Geoff Baumgartner
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KNOX CITY — The Knox City FFA and the Knox County 4H program took several students to the Houston Stock Show and Rodeo this past week and the biggest winners for the county, by far, were the young siblings Jordan and Melanie Ruiz. Jordan and Melanie are the son and daughter of native Rochester residents Lori and Ricky Ruiz.

Jordan is 13 years old, in eighth grade, and attends O'Brien Middle School while his younger sister Melanie is 11, in fifth grade and attends Knox City Elementary. Jordan won the Breed Champion for his Berkshire while Melanie also won Breed Champion for her Spotted Poland China pig. They both also qualified to enter the Grand Champion competition, but did not have as much success. In total, nine breed champions were awarded throughout the competition, and the Ruiz were two of the nine.

The brother and sister pair started showing animals three years ago after being introduced to 4-H program through friends of the family in Knox City.

"We had friends in Knox City that were actively involved, and the interest just grew from there. They have loved it ever since," said Lori Ruiz.

Jordan plans on competing all the way throughout high school until graduation and even though they currently enter stock shows through the Knox County 4-H program, he is anxious to participate through FFA. His sister Melanie has similar plans.

"I'll support them for as long as they show an interest. They can pursue it through college with our support if they want to," Lori Ruiz said.

Other local students who placed included Tanna Moeller, 11th place Duroc; Kolby Brown, eighth-place Duroc; Kristen Kuehler, seventh-place cross.

Also Participating were: Kate Baker, Christian Abila, Alexia Jimenez, Matthew Jimenez, Skylin Ledesma and Kayla Jo Hunter.

Jason Evans, Knox City FFA adviser and ag teacher, said Knox County had a great showing this year.

"Knox County couldn't have been better represented," he said.

Jerry Coplen, the Knox County agricultural extension agent, said he was pleased with all of the results and enjoyed working with the students this year.

"It has been a pleasure working with these students this year and we look forward to another banner year next year," said Coplen.

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