



## **For Immediate Release**

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## **State Land Judging Competition Challenges Youth in McCool Junction**

**LINCOLN, Nebraska** – Students and instructors from 32 Nebraska FFA chapters met in McCool Junction to compete in State Land Judging Oct. 28. The Upper Big Blue Natural Resources District (NRD) partnered with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to host the annual competition.

To accommodate the health and safety of participants during the pandemic, everyone wore face masks and a staggered start time allowed for less interaction between schools at the judging location.

“We appreciate this opportunity to host the State Land Judging contest,” said David Eigenberg, Upper Big Blue NRD general manager. “It is important that we educate the youth on one of our most important resources. COVID-19 made this year’s event logistically challenging, but our many volunteers and partnering agencies made it a tremendous success.”

Land Judging is a high school competition that challenges students to gain a better understanding of soil structure and land evaluation. Teams consist of four students from the same FFA chapter, and a few individuals who qualified separate from a team. Each participant learns how to recognize the physical features of the soil, determine land capability for crop production, and evaluate management practices needed for proper stewardship.

During the competition, students judge four soil pits using an evaluation card to make assessments on: soil depth, surface texture, permeability, slope, thickness of surface and erosion. Each evaluation card is scored and added together to determine overall scores for

individuals and the team. In order to compete in the state contest, teams advance from one of the seven regional competitions hosted across the state in October.

2020 State Land Judging **Individual** Champions:

1. Jackie Schelkopf, Fillmore Central
2. Alex Goertzen, Heartland
3. Grady McDonald, Deshler
4. James Hansen, West Point
5. Jaxson Sullivan, Fullerton

2020 State Land Judging **Team** Champions:

1. Heartland
2. Fillmore Central
3. Red Cloud
4. West Point
5. Fullerton

These top five Nebraska teams will advance to the national competition hosted in Oklahoma City May 4-6, 2021. For more information on Nebraska Land Judging, visit [www.nrdnet.org](http://www.nrdnet.org).

*The Nebraska Association of Resources Districts (NARD), the trade association for Nebraska's 23 Natural Resources Districts (NRD), works with individual districts to protect lives, property and the future of Nebraska's natural resources. NRDs are unique to Nebraska, and act as local government entities with broad responsibilities to protect Nebraska's natural resources. Major Nebraska river basins form the boundaries of the 23 NRDs, enabling districts to respond to local conservation and resource management needs. Learn more about Nebraska's NRDs at [www.nrdnet.org](http://www.nrdnet.org).*

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**EDITOR'S NOTE: See attached PDF for a full list of individual and team scores. Competition photos can be viewed and downloaded from the [NARD Flickr page](#).**