

# A Different Kind of Outlook

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In my position as an Agricultural Economist with the Alabama Extension System I make numerous outlook presentations for various agricultural related topics, but in this article, I would like to share some observations about a different topic- our future leaders.

For the last five years, I've assisted Ken Kelley, Regional Extension Agent with the Alabama Extension System with the Alabama Junior Cattlemen Association (AJCA) Quiz Bowl. This event is made possible by the Alabama Beef Checkoff Program. The experience of being on a stage, having a large audience watching, and trying to answer questions helps to build confidence and develop leadership qualities for the participants that will be beneficial in the future.

Reid McQuire, ACA's Director of Field Services, deserves credit for making some minor changes with this competition and increasing the number of youths that participate in the Quiz Bowl. The 2024 AJCA Quiz bowl was the best in years in terms of participation with thirteen teams competing. Reid also had the AJCA officers involved in several aspects of the ACA Convention and Trade Show, including working the registration desk, trade show, youth competitions, and assisting with meals. Another impressive group with a positive outlook for the future of the cattle industry in Alabama is the participants of the Young Cattlemen's Leadership Program (YCLP). This program provides a comprehensive overview of Alabama's diverse cattle operations. The XYCLP (tenth) class graduated during the ACA Convention and Trade Show. These young leaders have a passion for cattle production and are directly involved in the cattle industry across the state. The networking opportunities of being involved with all aspects of Alabama's cattle industry will lead to long-term relationships that are beneficial for everyone.

The opportunities for the youth and young leaders are made possible by the parents, teachers, 4-H agents, and our more experienced cattlemen and cattlemen that volunteer. It takes time, effort, and a desire to provide opportunities for our youth and young leaders to develop knowledge and confidence as they develop their leadership potential. The farms, businesses, organizations, and educational groups that provide facilities, knowledge, and experiences are making investments for our future leaders.

The Alabama Cattlemen's Association has been blessed with outstanding leadership. I have high expectations for ACA with Dr. Terry Slaten as President this year. Dr. Slaten and I grew up near Eva, Alabama, attended the same elementary school, and rode the same school bus. We participated in 4-H together and went to the National 4-H Congress in Chicago in 1976. Dave Maples, an inductee into the Alabama Livestock Hall of Fame was also on that trip to Chicago. In his inaugural address as president of ACA, Dr. Slaten noted that 4-H and FFA leaders that work with youth can and do make a difference. He pointed out Ms. Betty Gottler, retired 4-H agent in Morgan County as being influential in his success (and I must say my success too.) Betty and other leaders that provided their time to youth really do make a difference in people!

In summary, I am excited about the future of Alabama cattle industry knowing the quality individuals that are involved in competition and leadership opportunities.

*Note: Applications for the next Young Cattlemen's Leadership Program are currently being accepted. Contact Reid McGuire for more information.*

## FCCLA Culinary Arts, Food Innovations and Leadership Contests



The Alabama Cattlemen's Association and the Alabama Beef Checkoff Program sponsored this year's Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) Culinary Arts, Food Innovations and Leadership contests. The featured Culinary Arts dish this year was a Marinated Skirt Steak with Alabama Spinach and Mushroom Risotto and Pan Seared Asparagus with Lemon and Parmesan.

Students also had the opportunity to learn more about the Alabama Beef Industry, discuss suggested tips related to beef preparation, and create their own steak rub blend.