

By Carolyn Lee

The Imperial Republican

Despite the impact of extreme drought on range land, the Imperial FFA range judging teams identified enough material to take first place in both the junior and senior divisions during the West Region Range Contest in Kimball Sept. 18.

Organizers were able to locate a rare unused pasture in which to hold the contest, but conditions were still difficult.

As the teams worked to identify plants, most were not in good condition and were very fragile. Others did not get enough growth to make good specimens, and some plants that might have been otherwise abundant were unavailable for use in overall range condition evaluations.

Scottsbluff High School's Tevyn Baldwin captured top individual senior honors, followed by Callin Ledall, Spencer Hartman and Justin German, all of Chase County High School.

In the junior division Mindy Castle of CCS captured top honors, with teammates Jessica Hartman and MaKenna Ketter second and third respectively.

Ledall, Hartman and German teamed with Mason Holmes on the way to the senior team title. Another Imperial team, comprised of Blair Hartman, Andrea Hogsett, Ashlin Bussell and Jordyn Doetker, placed second.

Castle led Imperial's junior division team championship, teaming with Jessica Hartman, MaKenna Ketter and Darin Knobbe. Second place went to the Imperial team of Regan Gittlein, Taylor Wilson, Jared Sharp and Hunter Dillan.

Range Judging is sponsored by the Nebraska Section of Society for Range Management. The contest was organized by volunteers from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, UNL Extension, South Platte and North Platte Natural Resources Districts, Pheasants Forever and Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

Kristin Miller of the area Natural Resources Conservation Service office said, "Because rangelands account for over 50 percent of the land in the state of Nebraska, range judging contests are an effective tool for teaching students about Nebraska's rangelands and grasslands, and the bene-fits of good range management."

"This is especially important this year due to the drought conditions. This made for a very difficult contest and still the contestants did an outstanding job."

Individual ribbon winners included:

Senior division—Purple, Tevyn Baldwin, Scottsbluff; Blue, Callin Ledall, Imperial; Red, Spencer Hartman, Imperial; White, Justin German, Imperial. Green ribbons—Jayson Rezak, Sutherland; Blair Hartman, Imperial; Andrea Hogsett, Imperial; Jennifer Meyers, Sidney; Ashlin Bussell, Imperial; Paxton Ewing, Sidney; Nick Banaszak, Sidney; and Madi Malzahn, Sidney.

Junior division—Purple, Mindy Castle, Imperial; Blue, Jessica Hartman, Imperial; Red, Makenna Ketter, Imperial; White, Regan Gittlein, Imperial. Green Ribbons—Hannah Schievelbein, Creek Valley; Darrin Knobbe, Imperial; Logan Criswell, Creek Valley; Brett Storer, Paxton; Taylor Wilson, Imperial; Jared Sharp, Imperial; and Aftan Bartels, Creek Valley.