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## **MISSOURI 4-H DAIRY JUDGING TEAM EXCELS IN INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIONS**

Missouri 4-H Dairy Judging Team continued their tradition of excellence by placing first in an international dairy judging contest as a part of the International Dairy Youth Tour.

Missouri 4-H team members Molly Archer, daughter of Robert and Jamey Archer of Falcon; Case Melzer, son of Matt and Kelly Melzer of Harrisonville, and Libby Shaver, daughter of Shane and Denise Shaver of Grovespring were invited to compete in the 2024 International Dairy Judging Tour of Scotland, Ireland and England from June 19 to July 3. Missouri 4-H's team was invited in recognition of their 2nd place team finish from the National 4-H Dairy Judging Contest at World Dairy Expo this past October.

In Scotland, the teams competed with other winning 4-H, FFA and intercollegiate teams on June 22nd at the Royal Highland Show in Edinburgh. Preliminary results indicated a Missouri pair placed second overall, but final tabulations had the pair of Molly Archer and Libby Shaver placing as the top pair over all the competing teams. Both were in the top ten individually, with Shaver tied for 4<sup>th</sup> and Archer in 6<sup>th</sup>. Missouri 4-H Dairy judging team alum Whitney Yerina was the top individual in the contest. Yerina earned her invitation as a member of the SUNY/Cobleskill collegiate dairy judging team.

Additionally, a team competition was held during the dairy cattle show at the Clonmel Agricultural show in Ireland. Teams judged rail-bird style and were able to work together, judging a number of classes as they came in to be shown.

In addition to the competitions, the team toured farms and historical and cultural sites, providing a variety of experiences. The team also took part in an extension to London, visiting the Tower of London, experiencing the London Eye and a river cruise on the Thames.

“Our team really embraced this opportunity to travel and have these new experiences,” said Deaver. “We are very proud of how they competed in the two judging competitions. Not only did they see agriculture and the dairy industry in another part of the world, but they developed lifelong friendships with members of the tour from other states,” Deaver said.

The team was very fortunate to have a number of sponsors for the trip. “We are truly thankful for each and every sponsor and donation received to support the team,” said Deaver. “Without their support, it would not be possible for us to provide this experience. Thank you seems so inadequate, but we are incredibly grateful for the businesses and individuals who see the value in supporting dairy judging teams.”

Programs offered by Missouri 4-H would not be possible without support from our partners. Major support for Missouri 4-H Agriculture programs is provided by the Missouri 4-H Foundation in partnership with Ballenger Propane, Corteva Agriscience, FCS Financial, MFA Foundation, Missouri Association of Meat Processors, Missouri Farm Bureau Federation, Missouri Holstein Association, Missouri Soybean Association, National 4-H Council, Safety National, Eunice Campbell, and Dr. Robert E. “Bud” Hertzog.

For more information about the Missouri 4-H Dairy Judging Team program, contact Karla Deaver, Field Specialist in 4-H Youth Development, at 417-466-3102.