



## **For Immediate Release**

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## **State Land Judging Competition Challenges Youth near Bertrand**

**LINCOLN, Nebraska** – Students and instructors from 39 high schools met at the Bertrand Community Building to compete in State Land Judging Oct. 20. The Tri-Basin Natural Resources District (NRD) partnered with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to host the annual competition.

The students judged at the Platte Republican Diversion (PRD) pasture west of Smithfield. The land is on the Platte-Republican divide. On the north side, runoff water flows toward the Platte River and on the south toward the Republican River.

“We are honored to host the State Land Judging contest,” said John Thorburn, Tri-Basin NRD general manager. “It is critical that young people learn about the value of our soil resources. Holdrege Silt Loam is Nebraska’s official state soil, so this area is ideal for a land judging event. I’m so thankful for the many volunteers and partnering agencies who helped make this contest 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.

2021 State Land Judging **Individual** Champions:

1. Brayden Dose, Hampton Public Schools
2. Evan Pankoke, Hampton Public Schools
3. Gage Friesen, High Plains Community Schools (Polk)
4. Julianna Zubrod, Adams Central
5. Charlie Wells, Holdrege

2021 State Land Judging **Team** Champions:

1. Hampton (Brayden Dose, Evan Pankoke, Drake Schafer and Lillian Drose)
2. Fullerton (Landon Ziemba, Max Voichahoske, Jaxson Sullivan and Trey Swertzic)
3. Heartland (Carson Ott, Alex Goertzen, Mason Hiebner and Tyler Lewis)
4. Holdrege (Charli Wells, Nick Taylor, Katie Jewett and Mitchell May)
5. Adams Central (Julianna Zubrod, Justin Barbee, Creighton Jacobitz and Jack Trausch)

These top five Nebraska teams will advance to the national competition hosted in Oklahoma City May 3-5, 2022. 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](#).**