

Comal Independent School District

NEWS RELEASE

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Comal ISD students ready for San Antonio Stock Show experience

The world of showing livestock can be best described as hours and hours of demanding work followed by a few of the most important seconds of a student's life.

Many students in Comal ISD, ranging from third graders to seniors in high school, will soon experience the feeling of displaying their livestock in front of judges who will determine whether or not they walk away with a bundle of scholarship money.

The San Antonio Stock Show, one of the nation's largest, runs from Feb. 4-21. Comal ISD students will show chickens, lambs, goats, turkeys, hogs and steers during the event.

The San Antonio Stock Show is a unique event not only for its size but also because the revenue a student can earn is uncapped. Students will earn 100 percent of the money for their auctioned livestock, which will go toward his or her college scholarship fund. Students can also put some of their earnings toward raising next year's crop of livestock.

"This show is one of the very few that has uncapped revenue," Canyon Lake High School Ag Department Chair Wade Albert said. "It's a great motivational tool for the kids because you can really earn some great money."

Getting a piece of that prize pool can be a challenge.

For example, at the San Antonio Stock Show, 2,500-3,000 hogs will be shown. In that category, as well as in most of the animal categories at the show, only 10-15 percent will make it to auction.

"It's very exciting but it's also stressful," said Smithson Valley High School student Kaitlyn Craft, who shows lambs. "San Antonio is one of the best

places to earn scholarship money, so it's very important we do well there. Everything has to go just right, but that's why we do it. Winning a big show like this is everybody's dream."

Victory can mean big bucks for a student.

At the San Antonio Stock Show, a grand champion hog or lamb can sell for close to \$50,000, a grand champion turkey or chicken will bring an average of \$20,000, a grand champion goat can sell for as much as \$35,000, and a grand champion steer can bring in as much as \$100,000.

"Doing well at a show like this is such a big accomplishment," said SVHS student Taylor Walker, who will show hogs. "It makes all that hard work we put in worthwhile."

Even if a student isn't one of the fortunate few to win grand champion, just making it to auction means they could bring home an average of \$3,000-\$5,000.

SVHS Ag Department Chair Wayne Dietert said Comal ISD students enjoy a home-court advantage in San Antonio.

"We have a lot of support at this show," Dietert said. "Many local individuals and businesses really come through for our kids at the auction."

Competitors will come from far and wide around Texas to the San Antonio Stock Show.

"San Antonio is just an amazing show," said Canyon High School student Dana Ogrin, who will show chickens. "You get to meet so many other people and students from around the state. It's always fun to see how you stack up against the competition."

CHS Ag teacher Glenn Grimm said many of Comal ISD's students have raising livestock in their blood.

"What's great about this show is it's not only one of the biggest, but it's been around for so long," Grimm said. "Many of our students had parents who were participating in this show 25 years ago."

CHS senior Emily Drastata, who shows chickens, said having support not only at school but at home is a big help to her and fellow Ag students.

"Getting prepared for a big show like this is special because it's such a family effort," Drastata said. "If you win, it's that much better."

IN PHOTOS: Smithson Valley High sophomore Jana Hardin and her lamb show off their smiles during the SVHS FFA show at the Comal County Fairgrounds last year. Hardin is one of many students in Comal ISD who will present livestock at the San Antonio Stock Show, which runs from Feb. 4-21.

Canyon High student Hunter Brown proudly displays his steer at the Comal County Junior Livestock Show last year. Comal ISD students ranging in age from third graders to seniors in high school will display their livestock at the San Antonio Live Stock Show this month.