Nine teens will compete at state 4-H conference

Competitors in it to win at New Mexico State University next week.

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Curry County 4-H is gearing up to take nine competitors to the New Mexico State 4-H Conference next week at New Mexico State University, and according to 4-H Agent Janelle Duffey, they are in it to win.

“They are all fired up,” Duffey said. “They are extremely competitive, well-rounded, goal-oriented young people.”

The sophomore through seniors will be competing in two teams of four in agronomy, wildlife habitat evaluation, livestock skill-a-thon, meats identification, and livestock judging.

To earn a spot on team one, the individuals first had to win a top four individual placing at the county contest.

Duffey said competitors began attending regular practices right after school let out.

“It’s pretty hectic,” said competitor Garrett Rutherford, 16, of Grady. “I’m practicing as hard as I can with my other team members.”

Rutherford said the team has been using a variety of study methods to practice for the events, including visiting local farms to evaluate livestock, all to “go in with confidence and be able to do your best.”

It also helps that nearly all of the team members have attended the state conference together before.

“We are very close knit — and we know each others strengths and weaknesses,” Rutherford said. “We’ve also been good friends for a long time.”

If any of the teams win the state conference, which Duffey said they’ve been only points away from achieving in previous years, they will earn a spot at the national 4-H conference later this year.

“I keep telling them this is your year,” Duffey said. “If we are going to do it this is the year to do it.”

The teams will practice one more time in an intense, all-day session tomorrow, and then Monday it’s off to Las Cruces.

“At this point they’ve learned all they are going to learn, so it’s just a matter of cheering them on and helping them out and being the supportive person,” Duffey said.