

(10-2009-soiljudging)

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Aggie Team Wins Soils Judging Contest

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COLLEGE STATION—A team of students from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Texas A&M University has won the Southern Regional Soils Judging Contest. The event was held Oct. 22-23 at Texas Tech University in Lubbock.

Six university teams from Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Arkansas competed in the contest. The Texas A&M team placed first, followed by Oklahoma State in second and the University of Arkansas, third.

The contest included two group and four individual judging events.

In addition to the team victory, Aggie team members Andy James of Gatesville placed first; Steven Goertz of Waco placed second; Laura Kolb of Beaumont placed fourth, and Jason Price of Austin was fifth. Paige Graves of Nocona was also a member of the Texas A&M winning team.

“Teams and team members were required to describe individual soil horizons to a designated depth to include horizon nomenclature, horizon depth, soil color, redox (reduction-oxidation) features, structure, texture, and boundary conditions,” said team coach C.T. Hallmark, Ph.D. “Whole soil characteristics included site position, parent material, slope, erosion class, water movement and storage characteristics plus classification of the soils into the United States Soil Taxonomy at the Order level.”

For first-place individual winner James, the victory was especially meaningful: For the second time in October he was part of a first-place team. He also is a member of the Plant Team, which took first place in the Texas Society for Range Management Meeting and Contest earlier in the month.

“This is my first time to participate on the Soils Judging team,” James said. “I joined the Soils team for the chance to learn something new. Doing well just topped it off.”

The Aggie team represents two different academic departments within the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. Team members Graves and Kolb are agronomy majors in the Department of Soil and Crop Sciences. In the Department of Ecosystem Science and Management, Goertz and James are rangeland ecology and management majors, and Price is a renewable natural resources major. Hallmark, the team’s coach, is a professor of pedology (soil study) in the Department of Soil and Crop Sciences.

Photo: *l. to r.: Andy James, Laura Kolb, Paige Graves Steven Goertz, and Jason Price. Photo by C.T. Hallmark.*