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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Illinois Beef Foundation Announces 2024 Scholarship Winners

This Illinois Beef Foundation is pleased to announce eight young people from across the state as 2024 scholarship recipients. The Foundation wishes to recognize the incredible talent of young beef industry enthusiasts by helping them achieve their educational goals.

The following individuals each receive a \$1,000 scholarship:

Aubrey Wagner of Onarga is the daughter of Calvin and Alicia Wagner. She is a senior at Iroquois West High School and plans to attend Iowa State University in the fall. Wagner has been involved in several breed associations throughout her time as a junior livestock exhibitor, including Simmental, Maine-Anjou, Chianina and Shorthorn. She participates in a variety of school sports and community outreach programs.

Audrey Curtin of Blue Mound is the daughter of TJ and Megan Curtin. She is a senior at Taylorville High School and plans to attend Butler Community College in the fall. Curtin has been highly involved in the Illinois Junior Angus Association and Illinois Junior Beef Association serving as a junior board member for both associations, as well as the National Junior Angus Association attending a variety of leadership development programs. She actively partakes in FFA and 4-H club activities, including a variety of Career Development Events and livestock judging.

Drew Mickey of Taylorville is the son of Jon and Carla Mickey. He is a senior at Taylorville High School and plans to attend Kansas State University in the fall. Mickey is an active member of the Illinois Junior Angus Association, Illinois Beef Association, and the National Junior Angus Association. He is involved in FFA and 4-H programs where he competes in local, state, and national judging contests and skill-a-thons.

Ella Thacker of Walnut is the daughter of Michael and Sherri Thacker. She is a senior at Bureau Valley High School and plans to attend Black Hawk East in the fall. Thacker is involved in the Junior Red Angus and Simmental Associations, as well as her high school FFA Program. She has certifications from the Beef Quality Assurance program, and the Select Sires Artificial Insemination programs, and stays active within her community.

Katelyn Engel of Galesburg is the daughter of Kevin and Lori Engel. She attends the University of Illinois where she majors in agricultural leadership, education and communications. Engel is a member of the U of I meats judging team, Hoof N' Horn Club, and livestock judging Team. She has been a member of a variety of local and collegiate organizations in her communities.

Lilie Perry of Marshall is the daughter of Justin and Angie Perry. She attends the University of Illinois where she majors in dietetics and nutrition. Perry is actively involved in the American Shorthorn, Lassie, Simmental and Maine Associations, and the Illinois Junior Beef Association. She has been a part of local FFA and 4-H programs throughout high school and now in a collegiate role, as well as a variety of community outreach organizations.

Natalie Evans of Jacksonville is the daughter of Sean and Amy Evans. She attends Murray State University, majoring in pre-veterinary medicine with a minor in chemistry. Evans is actively involved in the Illinois Junior Red Angus Association and the Junior Red Angus Association of America. She participates in various agricultural clubs through her college and has a history in FFA and 4-H programs. Natalie is the current 2024 Illinois County Fair Queen.

Reese Anderson is the daughter of Scott and Cindy Anderson. She attends the University of Illinois where she majors in biology. Anderson is active in the Illinois Junior Angus and Red Angus Associations, and National Junior Angus and Red Angus Associations. She has been a part of the Chrisman FFA Chapter and Champaign County 4-H programs throughout high school, during which she competed on judging teams and served in leadership positions.

“This year the Foundation had a fantastic pool of applicants for the 2024 scholarship program,” said Jamie Martz, Illinois Beef Association Checkoff Chair and Beef Foundation Board Member. “It’s so exciting to see what the future generations of our industry have to offer, and it’s even more rewarding to give back to those youths. Each applicant really stood out as a scholarship candidate. I enjoy being a part of the Illinois Beef Foundation board for opportunities it provides, like that of the scholarship program.”

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