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## Champions Named in 2007 Illinois State Fair Jr. Sheep Show

In her final year showing at the Illinois State Fair, 17-year-old Lysie Bane has finally done it: she's been named the 2007 Grand Champion Wether, pending Illinois State Fair verification. She will also sell her animal at the Governor's Sale of Champions on Tuesday, August 14.

"I was just numb," says the McLean County 4-H member. Lysie showed a Hampshire-Suffolk cross named "Downy," after the fabric softener. "He's just really soft," she said with a laugh. Lysie said that Downy is "just a great sheep. He's got a great top, a good loin, a good profile, and he's long." The State Fair was Downy's first show, but Lysie had confidence in him. "He looked good and was growing," she said. "He was ready."

According to Lysie, the sweltering temperature was hard on the animals. "It was hard to keep Downy looking full and fresh," she remarked. "We just had to give him lots of liquids with a little feed mixed in."

Lysie has several previous successes. She won Champion Dorset at the State Fair three years in a row, and showed the Champion Crossbred and Champion Dorset at the National Livestock Show in Louisville, Kentucky. "Dorsets are hard to show," she explained. "So I've been honing my skills for a few years."

In fact, Lysie and her family have a few jokes about her secret of success. She and her sister have lucky matching belt buckles, and there's also what's called the "Dad alarm"—a six a.m. wake-up call each and every morning. Lysie says hard work and practice have brought her to this point.

Lysie will be a senior at Tri-Valley High School this year, where she plays basketball. The money she earns at the auction will be put towards college next fall. She hopes to attend the University of Illinois and major in biology.

Lysie lives in Arrowsmith with her parents, Patrick and Sheri Bane. She is a member of the Ellsworth Tiptoppers 4-H Club.

Winning Reserve Champion Wether was Jared Whitcomb, of Greenview, in Menard County. Jared was also the 2006 Reserve Champion and the 2005 Grand Champion with his wethers. The 15-year-old will be a sophomore at Greenview High School. He is a member of the Greenview Booster 4-H Club. Jared's parents are Ed and Coni Whitcomb.

This year's Land of Lincoln Grand Champion was Sarah DeSchepper, 14, of Knox County. Sarah will also sell her wether at the Governor's Sale of Champions, pending verification. This will be Sarah's second trip to the auction; last year, she was named the Grand Champion Wether.

Sarah's Suffolk wether was named Magic. "Each year, I pick a theme, and this year's was basketball. So I named him after Magic Johnson," she explained. Sarah described her sheep as powerful and long. In the ring, "I was focused," she says. "I concentrated on making him look the best."

Sarah says that she doesn't have a secret of success. "I just work hard and practice," she claims.

Sarah will be a freshman at ROWVA High School this fall. She plays every sport she can, and describes herself as "a redneck girl." She already knows where the money from the auction will go—a pickup. "I want a big truck!" she exclaimed. In the future, she hopes to become a large animal veterinarian.

Sarah resides in Victoria and is a member of the Cloverleaf 4-H Club. She is the daughter of Rich and Beth DeSchepper.

Land of Lincoln Reserve Champion honors went to 19-year-old Barret Von Behren, of Clark County. Barret showed a Suffolk wether. He lives in Martinsville and is a member of the Willow Creek 4-H Club. Barret is the son of Ollie and Linda Von Behren. He will be a sophomore at Lakeland College.

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*Editor's Note: High resolution digital photo available upon request – low resolution photo available at: <http://www.4-h.uiuc.edu/fairmedia.html>. 2007 Illinois State Fair Jr. Department press releases also available at Web address.*