For Immediate Release
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Maine-Anjou Youth from 13 States Attend National Youth Leadership Conference

Stillwater, Okla. – Youth from across the country gathered in Stillwater, Oklahoma for the Maine-Anjou Industry Networking Event (MAINE) Conference July 26-29. This year’s participants ranged in age from 13-21 and are members of the American Junior Maine-Anjou Association. States represented were – Ohio, Indiana, Nebraska, Minnesota, Texas, Oklahoma, Illinois, Iowa, Georgia, South Dakota, Colorado, Arkansas and Kansas.

The MAINE Leadership Conference was created to provide young people with the opportunity to hone their leadership, teamwork and personal development skills in a unique and challenging atmosphere. Maine-Anjou members from across the country joined together for three days to develop relationships with not only their peers, but also respected industry professionals.

To kick off this year’s MAINE conference was youth leadership and motivational speaker, Aric Jackson. Jackson’s mission is to Teach, Inspire and Encourage by pursuing those goals and dreams. “You are already leading something called life, so you were born a leader.”

The second day of the conference started with a tour stop at one of the premier show goat operations in the nation, Pfeiffer Farms. Following the tour, participants loaded the bus and headed for the Oklahoma State University (OSU) Purebred Beef Center. Upon arrival we were greeted by past OSU Judging Coach, Mark Johnson, current judging coach, Parker Henley, and OSU’s Purebred Beef Center manager, Jeremy Leister. After lunch we headed to the OSU’s Meat Science department for a tour and taste panel, and as you can imagine, Beef was supreme when compared to its plant based counter parts. A highlight of the afternoon was our next stop, a personal tour from OSU’s First Cowboy, Darrin Shrum, of the OSU athletics department. Not only did attendees get on the football field, but a tour of the wrestling and basketball locker rooms as well. We wrapped up by hearing from Mr. Jerry McPeak in the football team film room and his take on leadership and life. As
promised, the day wasn’t over yet, and our final stops were seed stock organizations near Stillwater. Lucky Strike Cattle Company, the Arthur Family and followed up with a meal and tour at Griswold Cattle, Inc.

On the final day of the trip attendees were up bright and early for a trip to Oklahoma City and the Oklahoma State Capitol. After a tour of the building and special visits from Oklahoma Secretary of Agriculture Blayne Arthur, Senator Blake Stephens, Representative John Pfeiffer, and Senator Chuck Hall, attendees learned more about Oklahoma agriculture and the stock show industry from State Veterinarian Rod Hall and the Oklahoma Youth Expo team. Good policy and industry leadership is crucial to the success of the agricultural industry, and we hope these students will put to use what they have learned as they return to their home states later this week.

After wrapping up at the Capitol, the group headed to the Oklahoma City Stockyards to hear from Kelli Payne and Oklahoma Cattlemen Association’s, Tiffani Pruitt. The last two stops in OKC included the Oklahoma City National Memorial and Cowboy Hall of Fame. The finale of the day was none other than the world famous Eskimo Joes for some cheese fries before we ended the night with a game night and pool party at the hotel.

The MAINE conference is a unique way for members of the association to get involved in something other than a cattle show. It provides these youth with a great opportunity to network, visit places and operations they may have never been, all while encouraging growth and leadership.

The AJMAA is excited for what is to come from this conference and looks forward to next year’s event in Fort Collins, Colorado.

*Enjoy. Learn. Experience. The American Junior Maine-Anjou Association’s goal is to provide experiences for AJMAA members through events like the National Junior Heifer Show, MAINE leadership conference and other skill building and leadership opportunities throughout the year. For more information on the AJMAA visit our website, maine-anjou.org/junior.*

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