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## Porkahontas wins Grand Champion Swine at Suwannee River Fair



Swine Show Grand Champion Kendal Bussard shows off Porkahontas her winning pig. Shown from the left is the breeder, Stephen Cordle (kneeling), Frank Bussard, Kendal Bussard, Judge Paul Wigley and Becky Bussard.

**Story and Photos By Terry Witt, Senior Reporter © March 22, 2017 at 3:07 p.m.**

**FANNING SPRINGS** -- A 280-pound hog named Porkahontas, exhibited by Dixie County eighth grader Kendal Bussard, won grand champion in the Suwannee River Fair Monday.

Anna Ellison of the Dixie County Wranglers 4-H Club won reserve champion with her 260-pound hog.

The two pigs were picked from among 233 swine shown at the Suwannee River Fair show barn in Fanning Springs. The competition lasted four and one-half hours.

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Swine Show Reserve Champion Anna Ellison (center) is seen here with her winning entry. Shown (from left) are Levi Carr, Susan Jones, Jennifer Johnson, Anna Ellison, Judge Paul Wigley, Jerry Jones and Reggie Gibbs of K&H Show Pigs.



The small army of volunteers who made the swine show run smoothly are pictured above. The swine show is the biggest event at the Suwannee River Fair and requires considerable help from the people in the Tri-County Area of Levy, Dixie and Gilchrist counties.

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Two swine exhibitors gently prod their animals to move past some of the show ring men who were there to guide the animals away from corners and other congested areas.



Chiefland 4-H exhibitors Emma Swain, Aubri Brown, Claire Horne and Ashtyn Brown spend time babysitting their hogs before the big show.

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**The swine show brought a big crowd of parents, grandparents and other family members.**

Kendal, a Dixie County Middle FFA Chapter exhibitor, said she picked out the hog based on the way she stood and how she looked when she saw the pig at the farm where she was born - Stephen Cordle of Southern Select Showcases.

"The way she stood and how she looked and how she was grown out; she was very symmetrical," Kendal said.

She plans to use money from sale of the pig to help pay for her college education. She wants to major in some phase of agriculture at the University of Florida.

Her mother Becky Bussard said that raising and training the pig was a family affair with older brother Dillon giving his sister tips on how to show the hog.

Kendal's father, Frank Bussard, said winning grand champion was a first for the family.

"We're very proud of her," Frank Bussard said. "We're very proud of our son helping her and we're proud of her hard work. It's what we've been working for a lot of years."

Conventional wisdom reflects that the odds were learning toward Show Judge Paul Wigley picking a grand champion in the 265- to 270-pound range. Bussard said he was aware of that fact, but he said his daughter's pig had a big enough frame to carry 290 pounds easily.

Carrying 280 pounds was a breeze.

The only problem with the hog was her appetite. Bussard said the hog was gaining 3.7 pounds a day at one point. They had to slow down her feed consumption.

Kendal said Pokahontas' favorite treat was apples. She ate a lot of apples.

She trained the pig in a fenced area around the house. She took daily walks with Pokahontas to get the hog accustomed to commands with the show stick.

Wigley, an experienced hog show judge retired from the University of Georgia, and has judged competitions around the United States, including at the SRF before.

He said the show barn and ring at the Suwannee River Fair are the best he has seen for a county facility. He congratulated the Tri-County community for its outstanding facility.

Wigley, who had judged hogs in the old Suwannee River Fair show ring, said "This is like going from the outhouse to the penthouse."

The crowd chuckled at the comparison and knew exactly what he was talking about. The old facility served the Tri-County community well for decades but was outdated by today's standards.

The new facility was constructed thanks to funding by the late Joe H. Anderson Jr., founder

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of Anderson Columbia Paving Co., one of the most successful highway construction companies in the Southeast United States, along with his family. Anderson was 77 when he passed away on Nov. 29, 2016.

As for the deciding factors of which swine rated top ranking, Wigley said he looked for pigs that carried soundness in their feet and legs, flexibility and a body type that would provide the most meat when the carcass was butchered.

“I look for the full package with one that’s real sound; one when you cut the head off will yield a lot of meat,” he said.

Wigley said he remembers the days when judges tried to pick lean hogs in shows, which as it turned out didn’t match what consumers wanted on their kitchen table. He said the lean hogs didn’t have enough fat to make much bacon or sausage.

“If you wanted to make sausage you almost had to kill two to get enough fat,” he said. “The consumer housewives said they wanted lean meat but that didn’t match what they bought at the market. The fat’s what keeps the meat from being dry.”