

# **Record Book Story**

*By Rachel Martin*

*Junior 4-H Member*

*Valencia County*

*2007 Junior 4-H Essay Winner*

My name is Rachel Martin. I am 12 years old and I live in Valencia County. I am a member of the Rocky Mountain Clovers 4-H club run by my mother, Donna Martin. This is my story about how I started 4-H and about all the things I have learned this year.

I was eight years old when I got my first dairy goats. I got them up in Ruidoso from a young lady that was selling off her herd because she was going to college. I didn't know anything about goats then, but now, well, that's a different story. I was, I guess, what you call a girly girl. I loved dresses, skirts, sandals. I didn't care much for goats at all. My dad said we were getting some Nigerian Dwarf goats so they could eat the weeds. I wasn't excited. In fact, I didn't really care. I just wanted to go and play with my Barbies. When we got there and I saw them, I knew that they would be my lifelong friends. When we got our goats, we joined 4-H and that's when I began my adventure. As I said, I was eight years old. I was very young and I didn't understand what 4-H was. When we got to the Extension office there was someone there that I knew. Her name was Juli Hitchins. My sister Kaitlyn bought two sheep from her dad, Hutch, five years ago. I was very happy to see her. She was very helpful and explained to me all about 4-H.

She has helped me throughout these four years grow as a person and learn more and more. This year, Juli has left us to move to Sulfur Springs,

Texas. She may not be here but her memories will stay forever. We have a new Extension agent and her name is Breanne Green. She has been so helpful with all the questions that I have had. She has a wonderful personality and we all have enjoyed her being here with us.

In October we had the Halloween bowling bash at the Bosque Farms bowling alley. I dressed up as a Deal or No Deal model. I did not get a prize for my costume, but I had fun bowling and eating chili cheese fries!

The first time I met Breanne was at Livestock Skill-a-thon Practice. We were studying the cows so she came in to help. At first I wasn't sure about her just because I did not know her. When we got more into the meeting, I realized that I really liked her. She would tell you what she thought and not just keep in all bundled up inside. She was a big help.

When county contests came around I entered Talent Review, Entomology, Presentations, Public Speaking, Livestock / Home Economics Skill-a-thon, Favorite Foods, Consumer Decision Making, Meats ID and Horticulture. I had so much fun this year. It was also my first time doing Presentations and Public Speaking in a contest. In Public Speaking I got 163 out of 200 points. In my Presentation about hunting dogs I got 150 out of 200 points. Next year I plan to work a little harder and see if I can raise my score a little. I cannot tell you about Horse and Livestock Judging because no one ever told me when the contest was. It was also my first year doing Meats ID. I am not doing that again. My friend, Lacey, and I almost threw up looking at all the meat. (I'm a vegetarian!).

In District Contests I signed up for Livestock Skill-a-thon, Horticulture, Air Rifle, Favorite Foods and Home Economics Skill-a-thon. I got third in Livestock Skill-a-thon with my team that got first. I had a great team for Livestock Skill-a-thon. On my team were Lacey Sanchez (12 years

old) and Casey Canon (9 years old). I did not place in Entomology or Horticulture. In Air Rifle I took first and so did my team. On the novice team for Air Rifle was me, John Micheal Nagy, Altahea Sellers and Austin Ahlgrim. In Favorite Foods I got second! I was so excited because that is the best I have ever done. It was really great. Oh! I almost forgot about Horse Bowl. I took second and our team took first. Considering we were the only team, but we all still had fun!

Right after District Contests I left for my grandma's house. I was staying with my grandparents while my sister, Kaitlyn, was away at 4-H Nationals. On June 29<sup>th</sup> we got on a plane to Nashville, Tennessee. We stayed in Nashville three nights. We went to the Grand Ole Opry, the Country Music Hall of Fame and the Parthenon. Then, we drove down to Bowling Green, Kentucky, where I would see my family and my sisters and I would shoot in the Daisy Open and the Junior Olympics. I got three medals total. That was an awesome trip!

Finally! It's County Fair time. In County Fair I am aiming for two belt buckles. One is the Grand Champion Novice Showman buckle for dairy goats. The other is the Novice Indoor Exhibits belt buckle. So in dairy goats I showed five goats on Wednesday the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Nacho, Willy Wonka, Sopaipilla, Leche and La Bamba are the names of the goats I showed on Wednesday. All right, so I got through all of my shows except showmanship. I wasn't nervous because I was trying to focus on getting all my goats hooked up to the fence. I grabbed La Bamba and went into the show ring. I smiled and tried to watch the judge and my goat at the same time. Then I realized that I could not. I tried to get my eyes uncrossed and eventually when I did so, I could actually see where I was going. From then

I decided to watch my goat for five seconds and the Judge for five seconds. That was much easier.

We all lined up in a side-by-side line and he asked us questions. Mine was, "If you could change something about your goat what would you change?" I said that sometimes when she stands, her hocks turn in so she looks bad. When he moved on to the next person I let out a big breath and started praying. Who knows what else he was going to ask me! In the end, I ended up getting my belt buckle and was very happy! I also got another belt buckle for goats. My doe, La Bamba, got Reserve Grand Champion and she has been in milk for a year and a half and her udder is tiny. That was the best County Fair ever! I also ended up getting the Novice Indoor Exhibits belt buckle, so in total I got three belt buckles.

It's September and the leaves are falling. Guess what else? State Fair time! At State Fair I did not take Nacho this year so I only had four goats. I wanted the showmanship buckle at state fair so the night before the show, I stayed up until midnight studying and setting up. I could not sleep because I was a little nervous. Then I told myself to just relax, because if I am nervous, that's not going to help in any way. So I got up, walked around and went back to bed. The next morning showmanship was first and the judge's name was Christy Black Montoya. She said that that day we were each going to learn something new. I learned that anytime you enter a show ring, you go clockwise. We walked around the show ring and lined up in a head-to-tail line. She told me to switch position. So I took my goat behind all the other people. Halfway, I realized that I was supposed to go in front of the other people. Oops! I did not think that I would get the belt buckle because I made such a big mistake. Then the judge told the others to switch places.

They made the same mistake. So the judge really could not count me off. I took the belt buckle that year and was really thankful.

I also did really well in my indoor exhibits at State Fair. The thing I was most excited about was my Air Rifle exhibit board. That took first.

Well, that pretty much sums up my year. There is a lot more that I have not talked about yet. I hope you enjoy my project stories (and this story) as much as I enjoyed writing them. Thank you! This year was awesome.