

Science Olympiad team places first in state competition

By Dirk Lankford
Reporter

Grimsley's Science Olympiad team is the best in North Carolina. The team won the state competition and has made itself the top high school team in the state. However, this competition was initially won behind the scenes and within the stress-filled months of practices. The long days will not be forgotten.

It is eleven o'clock at night the day before the competition. For most parents and teachers, school ended about seven hours ago. For some, however, tonight, even at 11 P.M., Grimsley is alive and bustling with action. Ms. Keele, a Chemistry teacher and Science Olympiad advisor, as well as team moms are staying late to make sure everything will be perfect for the big day ahead. They all realize these chances only come around once a year. Tomorrow is the Science Olympiad state competition. It will be a long night for all of them.

Morning finally comes and the 15 team members, accompanied by Ms. Keele and other advisors, head to North Carolina State University where the competition will be held. The team will split into two or three person groups and participate in the



Science Olympiad photo

The Science Olympiad team was victorious at the state competition, becoming the top ranked high school team in the state. In May, they will travel to the National Science Olympiad competition in Colorado.

23 different events that will be held this day.

The main motivation to win this year was the way the competition went for Grimsley a year ago. Last year, Grimsley's Science Olympiad team came in third place, only two small points away from going to the national competition. The team is determined not to fall short again this year.

The events start and everyone

breaks up into their assigned teams. By the end of the day the team will know if they have become the best of the best.

The Rocket Launch event gave an idea of what kind of day it would be for Grimsley's team. The rocket flew perfect off the launch pad, straight as an arrow, and rose over the building beside the pad. The building had a fan on the top, and when the rocket launched above the

building, the fan caused it to hover in the air and helped the Grimsley team win the event.

The events carry on through the day and by the end of the competition, all the teams were dog-tired. All that was left was the award ceremony and the discovery of the winner.

The moment comes. Like an overdue vacation for a weary student, the feeling is sweet and relaxing.

After all their work, Grimsley's team is announced as the winner.

Nearly everyone on the team did well in his or her specific events as well. In Physics, Percy Link and Tom Maynard received third place. Diana Taft and Erin Wrenn won first place in Dynamic Planet. Jessica Rosenkrantz and Anne Timmins won Water Quality. Percy Link and Anne Timmins placed third in the Chemistry Lab. The Road Scholar event brought second place for Will Key and Tom Maynard. Ibraheem Khalifa and Will Yearn won first place in the "Wright" stuff, and Will Key and Ibraheem Khalifa won the Bottle Rocket. It was a busy and successful day for the Grimsley team.

"The award ceremony and winning was the highlight of the day. They countdown the awards from last place forward and around the announcement of the third place team, we [the Science Olympiad team] were all nervous," said Alyson Nunez and Percy Link, both seniors.

The Science Olympiad team will be off to the national competition, held in Colorado, in the middle of May, but for now, Grimsley's team reigns as the top high school team in North Carolina.

Foot and mouth disease causes death in large numbers

By Tim Norton and Erin West
Reporter and Staff Writer

Do you have relatives who work in farming, or food industry? Do you eat cheese, yogurt, meat, or drink milk? Are you thinking about traveling abroad any time soon? If your answer is "yes" to any of these questions, you may have reason to be concerned about foot and mouth disease.

Foot and mouth disease or FMD is a highly contagious animal virus that rarely affects humans - at least directly. FMD strikes cloven-hoofed animals, such as cows, pigs, and sheep, and goats. Even some wild animals can contract it, such as deer, hedgehogs, and elephants.

It spreads rapidly through animal populations and over long distances on the wind. Therefore, it is extremely difficult and costly to control. The concerns that have made international news in the last year are far

from over. Many countries have been affected, and North Carolina farmers are afraid that our state could be the first to be hit by the disease if it enters this country.

Early warning signs for cows include decreased milk production, loss of appetite, and running a fever. Later, the animal will start salivating profusely. As the virus progresses, blisters appear on the lips, teats, and above the hooves. Pigs may appear lame, and piglets may suddenly die from cardiac failure. If the pigs are not killed, some may lose their complete hooves. Infertility is also a side effect. In areas where vaccination is carried out routinely, the disease is not a serious economic problem in pig herds. However, European governments have resisted vaccination because the inoculated animals carry similar antibodies as those infected with the disease. This means that countries that vaccinate lose their

disease-free trading status on world markets.

Nowhere has the problem been more serious than in Britain, where the FMD cases are still rising. There have been over 890 confirmed cases as of April 1st, and hundreds of thousands of animals have been slaughtered. The problem is so bad that animals are being slaughtered faster than burial or burning can dispose of them. While sheep and pigs could be buried, the government determined that burying cow carcasses could spread to the water table, causing an increased risk of mad cow disease.

Great Britain's government has taken the matter so seriously that it is banning some long time traditions. Dublin cancelled its St. Patrick's Day parade. A decision was just made to cancel the spring Cheltenham Festival, Europe's biggest horse jump-race meet.

The disease has taken a huge

emotional toll, as well as an economic one. British veterinarians have had to kill animals they wanted to cure and have had to leave the livestock owners in extreme trauma. Trained soldiers sent to assist with the slaughter are also reported to show effects of trauma.

One of the saddest FMD stories comes from the Forest of Dean near Beam, England. There, sheep have roamed freely through oak and pine groves for centuries. They have been part of the area's landscape, history, and traditions. Though the disease has not been detected in these sheep, the Ministry of Agriculture ordered them to be slaughtered because a rash of cases nearby puts them at risk of catching and spreading the disease. (This would be devastating to meat exports.)

Other countries have been seriously hit, as well. For example, the disease is spreading in South Korea, requiring immediate quarantine

of large numbers of animals. In Baghdad, Iraq, the disease has crippled over a million sheep and cattle, and threatens to ruin farmers.

What are the solutions for such a devastating disease? According to PigSite, an online publication for hog farmers, rapid and accurate diagnosis is critical for preventing its epidemic spread. Unfortunately, there are not many laboratories that are able to tell FMD apart from other diseases that have similar features. For example, the Plum Island lab in New York is the only one in the US. There is not treatment for the disease; diagnosed animals have to be destroyed.

On March 13th, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) placed a temporary ban on European livestock and fresh meat. The USDA is also expected to enforce a ruling that all importers must certify that dairy products have been properly heat-treated to kill possible FMD virus.

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