

**News Release**

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**CHAMPION HAM RECORD FALLS AT PUTNAM-LINCOLN  
HAM, BACON AND EGG AUCTION**

Nelson's Custom Meats smashed the record for price paid for the Grand Champion Ham at the 26th annual Putnam-Lincoln County FFA and 4-H Ham, Bacon and Egg Show and Sale at Pullman Plaza Hotel March 6.

Nelson's paid \$3,750 for Zachary Call's Ham, besting the \$3,000 that Portec Rail Products paid for Andrew Linville's ham in 2008. Altogether, the 2014 sales brought \$39,225 to students, who frequently use the proceeds as college funds, or roll them in to the following year's livestock project.

"West Virginia has a tremendous economic opportunity if we would just grow more of the \$7 billion in food we consume each year," said Commissioner of Agriculture Walt Helmick, noting that current production is less than one-seventh that number. "To boost that production, we have to have the younger generation coming into the profession. This program shows young people that there are financial rewards possible in farming. I congratulate all this year's entrants for a job well done."

Call also had the distinction of having the third-place ham, fourth-place brown eggs and sixth-place white eggs. The eggs he entered in the state FFA Ham, Bacon and Egg Show placed seventh.

On top of that, with \$4,189.42 in sales to his local school district, Call was the second-highest earning student farmer in the state's budding Farm To School (FTS) program, providing fresh eggs, romaine lettuce, cherry tomatoes, slicing tomatoes, cucumbers, butternut squash and potatoes to his classmates at Cabell-Midland High School. Orin Jackson, the state's top student FTS producer with nearly \$10,000 in sales, also attends Cabell Midland.

Despite the success of the agriculture-based career development program, the school's FTS coordinator will likely become a casualty of a reduction in force at the end of the school year. Unlike many counties throughout West Virginia, neither Cabell nor Lincoln County has a dedicated meat processing facility for students to use. Students prepare their hams and bacons at Nelson's Meat Processing in Milton, which also donated slicing services for all the buyers at sale.

*The top finishers at the event were:*

Grand Champion Brown Eggs – Chelsea Smith, \$1,000, purchased by Putnam County Bank  
Reserve Champion Brown Eggs – Jake Hill, \$400, purchased by Del. Doug Reynolds.  
Grand Champion Bacon – Brooke Holley, \$1,500, purchased by Andy's Custom Meats.  
Grand Champion Ham – Zachary Call, \$3,750, purchased by Nelson's Meat Processing.

Reserve Champion Ham – Andrew Linville, \$1,000, purchased by Putnam County Bank.**HAM,  
BACON AND EGG AUCTION**

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