

## SOIL AND PLANT SCIENCE DIVISION

# Technical Soil Services

## South Central Region



### Hot Springs, Arkansas, and Ruston, Louisiana, Major Land Resource Area Soil Survey Offices

### Southern Arkansas University 4H and Future Farmers of America Regional Land Judging Contest

#### Purpose

On March 13 and 14, 2023, staff from the Hot Springs, Arkansas, and Ruston, Louisiana, offices assisted Arkansas Resource Soil Scientists with the setup and execution of the Arkansas Regional Land Judging contest at Southern Arkansas University in Magnolia, Arkansas. The weather was wonderful, albeit a bit chilly, and coupled with the backdrop of the perfect pasture, pristine pond, and magnificent cows made for two fantastic field days. There were 4 pits excavated (see figure 1). Pits 1, 2, and 3 were described as the Harleston series, and pit 4 was described as the Smithton series. Pit 1 was located on a slight depression of the backslope and had a water table present in the bottom of the profile. Pits 2 and 3 were on similar landscape positions and had differences in the A-horizon. Pit 4, located adjacent to the pond, had some compaction in the profile (see figure 2 and 3).

#### Key Outcomes

Event day was bleary and blustery but did not impede the land judging. Over 40 students from surrounding schools participated. University volunteers escorted attendees to each pit where they had 20 minutes to determine the characteristics of the soil, associated slope, and landscape characteristics. Students submitted their scoresheets upon completion of the contest and then huddled around anxiously awaiting the announcement of the correct answers. Overall, the land judging contest was successful and served as a dynamic learning opportunity for the participating students.



*Figure 1. Soil profiles 1–4 (from left to right) from the contest site.*



*Figure 2. Participants leaving pit 4 during the contest.*





*Figure 3. A view of the pond near the contest site.*