



SOIL AND PLANT SCIENCE DIVISION

Technical Soil Services

South Central Soil Survey Region

Altus, Oklahoma, MLRA Soil Survey Office

Childress County, Texas, 2024 Land Judging and Homesite Evaluation Contest

Purpose

Tyson Morley, MLRA soil survey leader in Altus, Oklahoma, assisted the Childress County, Texas, NRCS office with the annual Future Farmers of America land judging contest on March 26. The contest site offered a great diversity of soils that ranged from a moderately deep residuum soil over a deep red Permian siltstone to a Pleistocene sand dune. Forty-five total students judged the site in either the land judging or homesite evaluation contest.



Students fill out judging cards at a contest site.



Background

Soil scientists from NRCS selected and prepared four sites within walking distance of one another that exhibited unique soil and landscape characteristics and then filled out the official answer key based on observations from each soil pit. Land judging and homesite evaluation teams judged sites based on characteristics of the soil and observations of landscape conditions. They recommended land treatments after considering factors such as soil characteristics, vegetative conditions, and planned use for the site.

Key Outcomes

Sixty-one students participated in the one-day contest. The students acquired valuable knowledge that can be used to determine if a site is suitable for building a home or for farming and ranching activities. After the contest, many students realized how important soil is to everyday life for things such as food and construction materials. Many students had questions related to careers in agricultural and natural resources during the contest. The contest was a success and provided students with resources that can be used for conservation planning or in a future career.

