BY DEBBIE HIGHTOWER

TRINITY — In the Trinity High School agriculture room, children and teens are captivated as Josh Reddick gives a presentation on the basics of showing a dog. His visual aids include a 3-year-old beagle named Venom.

According to the American Kennel Club, the beagle breed is in the hound category. Through his presentation Josh explained how and why Venom earned the title of Champion. He’s hoping to increase his status to Grand Champion in upcoming competitions.

The presentation took place after school hours at Trinity High School. In the audience were members of the Trinity 4-H chapter. Goat showing is a special focus of the Trinity group, meaning many of its members were excited about the opportunity to show their goats this week at the N.C. State Fair in Raleigh.

Wearing a T-shirt with the slogan ‘Keep Calm and Show On’ on the back, 4-H veteran Rylee Schofield has been in the club for four years. She planned to take four Boer (meat) goats to the state fair this year.

“I’ve been showing goats for a few months now,” said senior Jillian Vick, who plans to take two goats. “The state fair is the biggest show you can do.”

Also a senior, Tyler Swigget plans to take what he’s learned in 4-H and Trinity High School agriculture classes to North Carolina State to study poultry science. He took a turkey and a goat to the state fair.

The most experienced club member is Reid Harmon, 10, who has been in the club for five years. His state fair strategy is to enter his two Grand Champion goats named Crackerjack and Dipstick.

Some of the 4-H members got practice showing their goats at the Guilford County Agricultural Fair, but Bailey Davis was a show novice. The state fair is her show debut along with her two goats #10 and Fluttershy.

“Why not start big?” she said.

Show date for the Junior Market Wether Meat Goats Showmanship Champion contest was Oct. 13.

Although the competitors hope to return home with show ribbons, 4-H leaders Michael and Bobbie Harmon believe there is more value to be gained through the experience of raising the animals and preparing for the competition.

The 4-H organization allows youth ages 5 to 18 the opportunity to complete hands-on projects in areas like health, science, agriculture and citizenship in a positive environment where they receive guidance from adult mentors and are encouraged to take on proactive leadership roles. Membership is free and, because 4-H is a family organization, parents are encouraged to attend meetings and participate in projects.

Emmy Gantt, who is currently raising an 8-month-old Boer goat, described the reason why she got involved in showing goats: “I thought it would be fun to have a goat and feed, water and wash it.”

“I like showing goats, having the meetings and learning about animals,” said Alby Pulaski, 10.

Trinity 4-H Club meetings take place on the fourth Thursday of every month at 6 p.m. in Trinity High School Agriculture room. For more information email Michael Harmon mharmo@randolph.k12.nc.us.

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