

New Mexico Activities Association Student-Athlete Spotlight

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Mackenzie Lightfoot, a sophomore at Logan High School, has been around the Future Farmers of America program since she can remember, as her father, Clay Lightfoot is an agriculture teacher and FFA advisor.

Lightfoot has competed in Agriculture Science since the seventh grade. Agriculture Science is a broad multidisciplinary field of biology that encompasses the parts of exact, natural, economic and social sciences that are used in the practice and understanding of agriculture.

In mid-October, Lightfoot traveled to the 90th National FFA Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana and placed third overall, presenting her project titled, "The Race of the Peroxidase." The project tested which types of root vegetables have the most peroxidases in them. Peroxidase is a type of reaction in which oxygen atoms are formed leading to the production of peroxides. It is stimulated in the body by certain toxins and infections. Basically, Lightfoot was testing which vegetable helps break down the toxins in your body the best.

"To compete at the national level is a great opportunity for me to expand my horizons. To meet new people and view their projects and ideas was a tremendous experience and very educational at the same time. I would say the best part of this year's competition was sharing the experience with my sister," said Lightfoot.

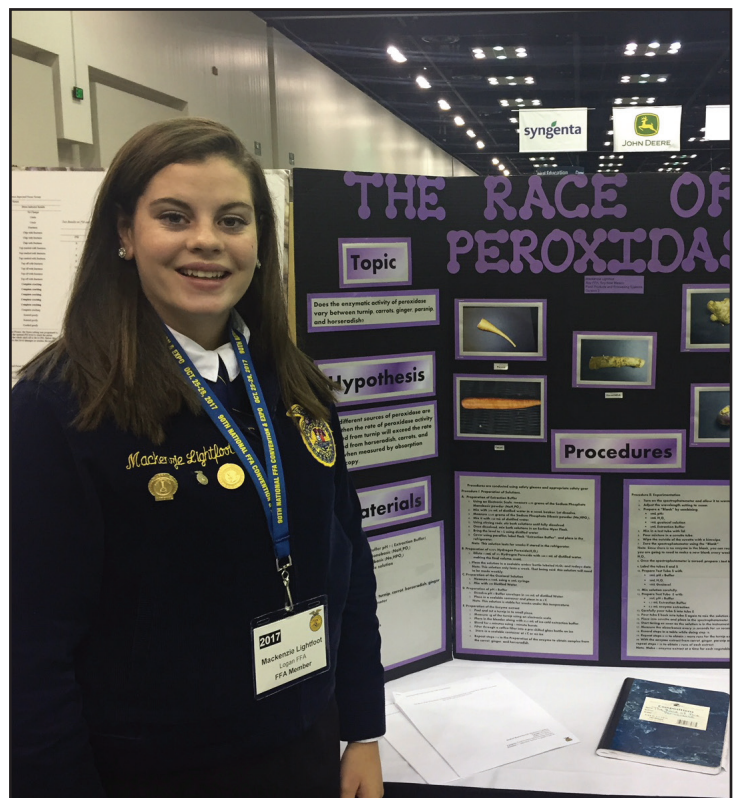
She competed at the state competition in June and placed first in her category. She was when selected as one of the top-12 projects in the nation. Lightfoot traveled to Indianapolis to presented her findings and was selected third overall.

In 2016, Lightfoot placed third as well, with a project that tested the effects of commercial and natural preservatives on homemade mozzarella cheese to see which one would improve the shelf life of the cheese.

Lightfoot believes that Agriculture is our country's future and the FFA program not only teaches students about agriculture but helps groom leaders through leadership training.

"FFA is very important to me. Students learn public speaking and leadership skills and I truly believe that the future of America will be built around our younger leaders. I love FFA because it has transformed me from a shy little seventh grader to a leader in my school."

Her father, Clay, has been a big influence and inspiration to her and is a driving force behind her success thus far.



“My father’s influence has been a major part of my success and involvement in FFA. I have watched him over the years help groom and mold other students into leaders and good citizens. He has truly impacted not only my life but so many others as well.”

She plans to attend college after graduating high school and, although that might be a little over three years away, Lightfoot has her eyes set on the future.

“After high school, I plan to go to college and graduate with an animal science degree, becoming either a veterinarian or an agriculture teacher and FFA advisor.”

Regardless of the path Lightfoot takes, one thing you can bet on is she will be at the front of the pack, leading the way.