



Blake Smith wins 2021 Arkansas Soybean Science Challenge Junior Division Award at the Virtual Northeast Arkansas Regional Science Fair

Blake Smith, age 12, a 7th grader at Salem High School in Salem, won the Soybean Science Challenge Junior Division award at the 2021 Northeast Arkansas Regional Science Fair held virtually at the Arkansas State University on March 6.

Smith received a \$200 cash award provided by the Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board. His science project was titled "River pollution."

Amanda Smith, Blake's teacher, won the \$100 Soybean Science Challenge Junior Division Teacher-Mentor Award. Smith stated that the Soybean Science Challenge is a great way to learn about agriculture. "I decided to have my students participate in the Soybean Science Challenge because farming in Arkansas is a major industry and soybean production is one of the top three crops in Arkansas. The science of soybeans falls perfectly into the Arkansas Science Standards. The Soybean Science Challenge modules are a great source for learning about soybeans and farming in Arkansas," she replied.

Blake was thrilled to win the 2021 Junior Division Soybean Science Challenge. "I was honored to be chosen to receive the SSC Award," he stated.

Amanda Smith, Blake's mother and teacher, was proud to see him receive the award. "I was very proud of my son when I found out he tried his hardest and came out winning the award," she responded.

Blake found learning about soybeans and agriculture through the online course to be enlightening. "Before this project I had no clue about what soybeans were and what they did. I was amazed about how much the soybeans help the soil in Arkansas. I gained a great deal of knowledge on the importance of soybeans and the effect they have on our lives," he explained.

Smith feels that the Soybean Science Challenge is a great program for students. "Prior to participating in the Soybean Science Challenge, I had not focused on crops in Arkansas. I do feel it is extremely important for our students to know where our food sources come from and what the major crop industries are in our state. We live in a rural farm community, so agriculture type projects for science fair come natural to my students. The Soybean Challenge provides them with sources to help them with their project along every step of the way. I really like the spiral-bound soybean science challenge science fair project booklet. I have even used it as a

source for my non-agricultural students who need help with their projects. I have gained more knowledge about soybean production in Arkansas and a great respect for farmers in my home state who are encouraging students to participate in science fair and agricultural type projects which benefits us all," she explained.

"The Soybean Science Challenge provides an opportunity for Arkansas Junior High and High School students to participate in scientific research that can impact the State of Arkansas as well as the world. Soybean Science Challenge student researchers learn about this important commodity crop and its many uses including feeding the world, development of biofuels and sustainable products. The Soybean Science Challenge helps students develop an understanding of the challenges and complexities of modern farming," said Dr. Julie Robinson, Associate Professor and director of the program.

"The goal of the Arkansas Soybean Science Challenge is to engage students in "real-world" education to support soybean production and agricultural sustainability," said Gary Sitzer, a former member of the Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board. "The program also rewards scientific inquiry and discovery that supports the Arkansas Soybean Industry."

The Arkansas Soybean Science Challenge was launched in January 2014 to 9-12th grade science students and in 2021, added grades 6-8 for the Junior level award. Students who successfully completed the online course were eligible to have their original soybean-related research projects judged at the 2021 ISEF-affiliated Arkansas Science and Engineering Fairs.

Information on the 2021-2022 Arkansas Soybean Science Challenge will be available in summer 2021. For more information, contact Dr. Julie Robinson at jrobinson@uada.edu or Diedre Young at dyoung@uada.edu.

The Cooperative Extension Service is part of the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture.

Blake Smith, Salem High School, Salem, Arkansas; Teacher, Amanda Smith

Category: Environmental Science

Title: River Pollution

Abstract:

My topic is River Pollution. I picked this project because I swim in rivers a lot and don't know what's in them. I do not want myself or others to get sick from what's in the rivers. My Question is that if we cleaned the water and kept it clean would it change. My answer is no. My hypothesis states that it would not matter because we would have to clean wherever the water starts. And people are still going to put stuff in the water. For my experiment, I obtained a water tester kit; I got water from the river and put it in the tube. I put pills in the water to see if it would change colors. If it did, I would look in the handbook and see what that meant. I would graph it and put it in my science fair project. In my experiment, I was also picking up trash and making sure to graph it too. I would also graph how many cars there were. I learned that people

loved the river, but they do not love it enough to keep it clean. I found more and more trash each day.