

A Denver to Remember

The National Western Stock Show (NWSS) in Denver is one of my favorite stock shows. From the skywalk view of the Yards, the excitement in the Yards on display bull day, the wonderful hospitality in the Hereford suite, the packed house for the Mile High Night Sale, and the intense competition in the bull and female shows, this show is like none other!

The icing on the cake this year was the 60-degree sunny weather. I have attended the NWSS as both an exhibitor and a spectator several times prior to serving on the National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) board of directors, but this year having the honor of wearing the maroon jacket and being involved in all the Hereford activities made it the best one yet.



I had been counting down the days to when I got to reunite with my fellow boardies, and on Wednesday we all arrived in the Mile High City. That night one of our fearless leaders (Bailey) took us to dinner at Buffalo Wild Wings. That wasn't Keysto's first choice, but our chairman learned quickly that when going to dinner with five women, he wasn't going to win.

Thursday morning, we got up, put on our khakis and our jackets, crammed ourselves into the vehicle, and headed to the stock show. In the car we got our job assignments for the morning and grabbed a muffin and a Mountain Dew, and to the Hill we went.

It was a very exciting morning in the barns. Breeders were busy feeding, finishing washing, and, if they were showing bulls, anxiously awaiting the time to start fitting. Keysto, Amanda and I had the privilege of working with Jack Ward weighing bulls.

Lots of little kids on field trips and moms with strollers made this a little exciting at times and made us thankful for the great disposition of Herefords. We managed to get the bulls weighed, and we made it to the showing in time to grab a sandwich and to watch the grand drive.

Right after the bull show was the junior show, and we hit the ring for one of my favorite jobs — ringman! It's hard work, but each of us takes this job very seriously as we know

how much hard work and dedication is invested in a show heifer.

Friday was the show in the Yards, and, boy, it was a beautiful day. I enjoyed walking through the Yards, visiting with fellow Hereford breeders, snacking in the Hereford suite and enjoying the sunshine. Once the open Angus show was over, we headed to the Hill to set up for the Mile High Night Sale.

It was all hands on deck to get all the displays set up for the sale cattle, but we got it done just in time. It is really hard to describe the excitement in the arena leading up to the start of the sale. I was at the sale last year, but being involved in getting the arena ready and then being in the ring for the sale of the Lot 1 heifer with my fellow board members was an unforgettable experience. It made me very proud to be a Hereford breeder.

Saturday was female show day. I had the wonderful opportunity to help at the picture backdrop, and I really enjoyed it. It was fun to help get the "perfect picture" and to share with my fellow Hereford breeders and friends the excitement of a successful show. One of the perks of this job was a ringside spot for watching the show and getting an up close look at the new national champions.

Sunday, I flew back to Illinois, tired but with some wonderful memories of my first Denver show as an NJHA board member. I really enjoyed being involved in the many Hereford activities at the NWSS and working with great people like my fellow board members, the American Hereford Association staff and fieldmen, and Hereford breeders. If you have ever considered running for the NJHA board, I have two words for you — do it! **HW**

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