

Reflections

by Matt McCurdy and Wade Perks, retiring NJHA directors

Serving as a National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) board member has been one of the most beneficial learning and growing experiences of my life.

Most importantly I have had fun, met hundreds of new friends and learned so much along the way.

There are endless opportunities available for those who serve as NJHA directors. Being on the board has allowed me to travel all over the country to various leadership conferences and national Hereford events. By working at these national events I have been able to observe how they are pulled off from start to finish. It has given me a greater respect for the people at the American Hereford Association (AHA) who work behind the scenes.

Growing as a leader is one of the benefits of serving on the board. Not only have I learned how to grow individually but also how to be involved with a team of leaders. I feel that our board and our association are

the most unified of any breed. This bond is what has kept us on the forefront of the industry and I urge juniors to keep on the unity track because that is what will help us progress for many years to come. The NJHA board is truly a Hereford family.

As I look back on my term as a director, what comes to mind the most are the friends I made. I have had the opportunity to meet many people from all over the country who came from different walks of life. I enjoy talking and spending time with these people at shows and sales. Many of them have become my very good friends and, in some instances, business partners. I feel like these friends have not only made me a better director but a better cattleman and person as well.

If you are questioning running for the NJHA board, don't hesitate because it will truly be a life-changing experience.

Thanks for the memories,

Matt

As I reflect on my service on the NJHA board my mind is overwhelmed with so many great memories. Many of my fondest memories are associated with a few common themes: enthusiasm, friendship and excitement. These words describe the essence of what makes the NJHA so great.

Enthusiasm: I believe that if you were to attend another breed's junior event, you would be hard pressed to find as many kids eager to be there and energized about the cattle they are showing. I am filled with confidence when I walk through the barns knowing that there are members out there wanting to continue into the future with the same kind of determination and enthusiasm for the breed.

Friendship: To me going to the state preview show, the Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE) or PRIDE Convention was not just about going to learn or exhibit. It was about attending because I enjoyed the people. I viewed these as opportunities to bond with people my own age and be among others who were interested in cattle and shared my same passion.

Excitement: The future of the NJHA is bright. What the Hereford Youth Foundation of America (HYFA) has done is amazing, and the commitment the board has put forward to ensure this future for our young members cannot be matched.

The entire Hereford membership is one giant family. How many other people can feel like they could be dropped off almost anywhere in the U.S. and within an hour, or in some areas much less, find a fellow breeder or friend? We are all bound by a tight woven fabric that makes this breed great, and it will continue on for generations to come, starting with the juniors. I will never forget my term as a junior board member. It will always be a monumental part of my life. Thank you for allowing me this great pleasure. Continue being enthusiastic about the breed, making new acquaintances and being excited for the future!

With all the best,

Wade

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