

Board Reflections

Reflecting on the last three years as a member of the National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) board of directors is no easy chore in hand. There are so many moments to reflect about.

The last three years have been one heck of a ride. There are so many unexpected things that a person learns from being on the board. Board members make unexpected friends that become more like extended family, and they learn how to work through conflict while expanding their horizons outside of their comfort zones.

We hope that over the last three years, it is obvious that we have a passion for not only the cattle but also the great people in the Hereford industry. We hold both of them near and dear to our hearts. We were both very active in our state-level junior Hereford

associations along with other various extracurricular activities, which helped develop a base of leadership that we are continuing to build today.

Having the proper components of a solid foundation of a leader, we started to build up the strength and support to chase after a lifelong dream of being elected to wear that maroon jacket. Being elected in Kansas City in July 2011 was just the start of a once-in-a-lifetime adventure.

We developed real life skills from our vast number of meetings, fundraising events and social gatherings. These have provided us a better understanding of the way this industry works and how being a part of it can help in our future endeavors. In representing this board, we learned that we need to always keep a listening ear and that with a positive attitude and communication, we could accomplish anything that the board was collaborating on.

It would take a whole novel to recount all of the memorable experiences we had while on the board. From the point where we decided to run to the day of writing this article, our lives have changed immensely because of the NJHA board. We have experienced numerous national (and international) shows; we have built bonds with other breed associations through two Youth Beef Industry Congresses (YBIC); and we have learned important life skills that we thought were only possible at a senior level.

We also experienced our fair share of lighter moments, like laughing on long car rides to Texas or cramming 10 of us into Amanda's car because we only had one American Royal parking pass. We even found joy in just sitting in

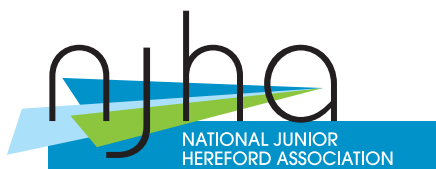
the barn or in a hotel room talking about Hereford cattle and friends.

As our time on the board draws to a close and our time in the junior association diminishes, we only have these memories to remind us of what it was like to have been so fortunate to be on this board and to give back to a breed that has given us so much

The NJHA has left several marks on us, and we look back to the leaders that have served before us and that have guided us in the right way. We also look to the leaders who have been serving and growing beside us these last few years. To our advisors — the Buchholzes, McMillans, Gobles and Copelands — and Amy Cowan and Bailey Clanton, we cannot thank you enough for the support, strength and inspiration you gave us to run. It is truly our honor to work alongside you and to benefit from your wisdom and experience.

We are so fortunate to have an association that believes in its youth like the American Hereford Association, and we are lucky to have such supportive staff like Craig Huffhines, Jack Ward, Joe Rickabaugh and all the fieldmen to guide us through our challenges.

In closing, we would just like to thank everyone who has given us encouragement and support over the past few years. We cannot express enough how much fun we have had these last three years and how much we have learned and developed. We owe it all to this great opportunity, and we are forever in debt to the NJHA for everything it has given to us, and we can only hope that we have represented it well and done it justice. **HW**



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