

# Leadership Begins with Youth



Craig Huffhines

In July the Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE) was in Denver at the National Western Complex. Attending the event were more than 600 young people from 36 states and Canada who exhibited 1,082 cattle entries. I was so encouraged by the talent base of young people participating in the event. Many of these young people will soon be active leaders in our industry, bringing fresh talent, bright minds and new perspectives about our industry and our lifestyles.

To put this leadership issue into perspective, most geneticists claim it takes between two to three generations of calf crops before a herd can realize the major benefit of a selection decision within a herd, and possibly a much longer time than that depending on the accuracy of bulls they use. That is a minimum of five to seven years. Many of the young people involved in our youth program, particularly those about to graduate high school or those in the middle of their undergraduate college education, will be entering the job market, making farm and ranch business decisions and potentially voicing an opinion regarding the direction of our industry long before that five to seven year period that it takes to make genetic progress take effect.

Case in point, just two years ago Wade Perks from Rockford, Ill., served as president of the National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA). In July I received a call from Wade representing *The Cattleman* magazine

in Texas asking me for a Hereford breed advertising contract for the fall bull sale season. Wade, along with others his age, are already working, influencing and contributing to the industry.

The point of all of this discussion is to bring to your attention the importance of our Hereford youth program. The American Hereford Association (AHA) spends a great deal of staffing time, energy and expense in cooperation with state adult leaders, breeder volunteers, breeders who are financial contributors and corporate sponsors, to make the JNHE one of the most rewarding experiences a young Hereford breeder can have.

It is not the hardware, ribbons, trophies and awards that make the difference in the young person's life. What's important is the experience, the relationships and leadership skills that develop, and the emboldened affinity for the Hereford product and the understanding of what the Hereford breed represents to the U.S. beef industry.

Thank you to all of the breeders who led the organization of this year's awesome event. The multi-state coordination worked extremely well. In addition, thank you to breeders and corporate sponsors that invested in the youth program. It goes without saying that your money could not be invested in a better place than in the development of Hereford youth.

**Annual Meeting update**  
Speaking of leadership, the AHA will be holding

its Annual Membership Meeting in Kansas City on Oct. 22. Six candidates will vie to serve on the AHA Board of Directors. Three new board positions will be filled replacing retiring AHA President Jack Evans, along with directors, Steve Folkman and Lavette Teeter.

This election is as important as investing in the youth program. The elected candidates will each serve a four-year term, which is a time frame that could expose them to a great deal of business change within our industry.

Which of these candidates will best be able to navigate the gates of change involving the evolutionary explosion of genomic research, the new wave of electronic marketing, industry consolidation, global relationships with trade partners, multi-breed consortiums, national animal identification strategy, and supply chain challenges of a growing branded beef supply?

The following are the proposed candidates who will be nominated by Dale Venhuizen, chairman of the nominating committee:

**Whitey Hunt**, Madison, Ga.  
**Jerry Huth**, Oakfield, Wis.  
**Jim Milligan**, Kings, Ill.  
**Glenn Oleen**, Falun, Kan.  
**John Ridder**, Callaway, Neb.  
**John Woolfolk**, Jackson, Tenn.

Look for more information about these candidates and the Annual Meeting on Page 86. See you in Kansas City. **HW**



Bob Norton, Biozyme Inc. president, congratulates winners and compliments the NJHA for a wonderful week during the JNHE awards banquet. Vita Ferm®, a product line of BioZyme, was the JNHE title sponsor.