

Celebrating a Hereford Tradition

The week of July 7-14 more than 600 junior Hereford exhibitors from 36 states plus Canada exhibited 1,082 Herefords at the National Western Complex in Denver during the Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE). Great weather and competition were accompanied by the formation of many great, new friendships. The success of the JNHE can largely be attributed to the western states' planning committee. The efforts of these individuals, including the time they took away from their own businesses and ranches to put into the planning of the 2007 JNHE, successfully made the week a true Hereford celebration.

"A Hereford Celebration" was the theme for the week and the event lived up to the hype! Juniors celebrated the Hereford legacy that goes hand-in-hand with the National Western Complex and the high-quality Herefords they exhibited. While celebrating the past, we also looked to the future with the implementation of a mentoring program. First-time JNHE participants were paired with more experienced participants

throughout the week. The first-time exhibitors learned the layout of the JNHE and ways to take full advantage of the week while the seasoned exhibitors gained the experience of being teachers and leaders. This program helped foster new friendships and enriched the JNHE experience for many.

Junior members competed in many contests from showmanship to 3-on-3 basketball to the speech contest, learning and using skills that will help them throughout their lives. Even though these events do not always attract the same attention as the cattle shows, it doesn't diminish the effort put into them by the participants, as demonstrated by the high level of competition. Juniors prepare months in advance to get their speeches just right or to get their team marketing effort in sync, and while we honor the winners and celebrate their accomplishments, each participant can take pride in the effort put forth on these projects and the leadership experiences gained.

The most anticipated events of the week for many are the cattle shows. For four days many classes of high-quality Hereford cattle were paraded before the judges and evaluated, and finally, the champions were named. It was truly a spectacular sight for many Hereford enthusiasts who turned out to take in the show. None of this would have been possible without the support of the sponsors, participants, parents and grandparents, and the planning that was required to make this show the great event it was.

VitaFerm® was the title sponsor of the JNHE, and its generous support enabled us to have a



The NJHA Mentor Program was new at this year's JNHE. Protégés pictured (front row, l to r) are: Colin Miller, Council Hill, Okla.; Brody Rogers, Hamilton, Texas; and Melinda Braun, Columbia, Ill. Second row (l to r) are: Levi Brandt, Redmond, Ore.; Cooper Alexander, Redmond, Ore.; Zack Hartzell, Redmond, Ore.; Cody Pieper, Palco, Kan.; and Justin Moser, Westmoreland, Kan. Back row (l to r) are: Rysten Shurtz, Minidoka, Idaho; Lathan Nichols, Ringwood, Okla., Remington Shurtz, Minidoka, Idaho; and Jessica Slone, W. Manchester, Ohio, NJHA secretary.

great, successful week. Another special thank you goes to our hosts from the western states. These individuals were mostly in the background, behind the scenes, but their countless hours of planning and work made the event what it was.

Thanks to all of the sponsors whose support, regardless of the level, did not go unnoticed. A note of appreciation goes to all of the American Hereford Association (AHA) staff and fieldmen for their support and help before and during Expo. I also want to thank my fellow board members, the National Organization of Poll-ettes and the American Hereford Women for their planning and running of contests and the time they gave throughout the week. And finally, a big THANKYOU to the parents and grandparents, who support their children every day and provide them the opportunities to be a part of great events like the JNHE.

The great success of this JNHE was the result of people who had the drive to make it that way, and I congratulate you and thank you for your efforts.

I am proud to invite you to my home state for the 2008 JNHE. It will be at the American Royal Complex in Kansas City, Mo., July 12-19. **HW**

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