

Our Greatest Asset, Our Greatest Investment



Craig Huffhines

If you are a parent, most likely you will invest heavily and, at times, beyond your means in the various activities and opportunities that affect the development of your children. Athletics, music lessons, scouting and livestock shows are but a few of the long list of activities that we all enjoy with our kids.

We spend hundreds to thousands of dollars to see that our children experience and develop life skills such as communication, socializing, networking, commitment and work ethic along with other gifts they will take with them throughout their lives.

The Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE) is one of the most remarkable opportunities that those of you in the Hereford business have to expose your children or grandchildren to life lessons. This year, more than

600 exhibitors from more than 40 states migrated to Kansas City, Mo., to spend a week competing in various contests and livestock exhibitions at the American Royal Complex. A mini vacation this was not, but a major investment in your kids it certainly was.

In the past we've tried to quantify the monetary cost behind this great event, including the event itself, the travel expense that each family invests in, not to mention the livestock costs and expenses, and the truck and trailer equipment used in transporting cattle thousands of miles around the country. Let's just say it's a big number.

But there are other people, besides the parents, who see the value in what this great event does for youth, and they are corporate and breeder sponsors. This year, three corporate sponsors stepped up to help offset the JNHE costs and offer educational support.

Bob Norton, BioZyme Inc. president, has committed more than \$30,000 toward the event for the second year in a row. VitaFerm®, a division of BioZyme, under Bob's leadership, has become an enormous supporter of the Hereford youth program.

When asked about VitaFerm's contribution, Bob will admit that there is a certain amount of benevolence that's tied to supporting a program such as the JNHE, but

make no mistake about it he will tell you that it is also good business.

Traditionally, some of the most prolific industry leaders have come out of the Hereford youth program. The Hereford youth program is one of the strongest organized youth livestock organizations in the country. As a title sponsor, Bob knows he has a captive audience of young people and their parents who will have an opportunity to learn more about his company and the wonderful innovative nutritional products it offers.

Crosby and Mariner Kemper agree with this philosophy. The father-son team running UMB Bank, one of the largest regional banks in the Midwest based out of Kansas City, have been long-time supporters of youth in agriculture. In June American Hereford Association (AHA) staff met with the Kemper team to inquire as to their interest in underwriting the facility costs at the American Royal Complex.

Crosby was one of the largest financial supporters of the National FFA Convention when it was in Kansas City, and in the mid-1990s, he founded the most successful collegiate agribusiness organization in the country, Agriculture Future of America.

It took all of about 25 minutes for Crosby and his bright young executive son, Mariner, to decide to support the JNHE event to the tune of \$96,000. Mariner commented that of all of the employees they have hired at UMB Bank, the most value they

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AHA Director candidates

The American Hereford Association (AHA) nominating committee has announced the following slate of candidates who will vie for positions on the AHA Board during the Annual Meeting in November. Candidates include:

David Breiner, Alma, Kan.

Paul Funk, Copperas Cove, Texas

Jimmy Johnson, Clinton, Okla.

John Ridder, Callaway, Neb.

Jay Wright, Morgan, Texas

The nominating committee would also like to inform the membership that there is still one slot open within the slate. Additional nominations can be made from the floor during the Annual Meeting. If additional nominations are made by Sept. 10, the committee will consider adding them to the slate before the Annual Meeting. **HW**

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get comes from young adults who have come from a rural agriculture background. Their work ethic, their character, everything about them professionally starts at a higher level.

Fort Dodge Animal Health, based in Overland Park, Kan., also stepped up this year as an educational sponsor. Again, the Hereford youth organization draws the attention of some of the brightest minds in the corporate animal health arena because it's good business.

After several years have passed, many of these young people will forget who had the champion and reserve champion heifer at the 2008

JNHE, but they will never forget the experiences they had. The event will have an impact and an influence on their lives.

Today there are a number of professionals making great contributions within the beef industry who came up through the American Junior Hereford Association and the National Junior Polled Hereford Council and participated in expos and junior nationals. They include Dan Moser, Kansas State University animal scientist and professor; Mark Allan, molecular geneticist at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Meat Animal Research Center in Clay

Center, Neb.; Bob Weaber, animal breeding scientist at the University of Missouri; and Michael Kelsey, Nebraska Cattlemen's Association CEO, to name a few.

The influence we have talked about is why corporate America deems our Hereford youth program to be good business.

Congratulations to all of you parents, breeder sponsors and corporate backers for your wonderful investment in our most precious asset — our youth. **HW**