

Thank You for the Experience

by *Donna Fulton, AHW secretary*

While attending a junior heifer show several years ago, I attended a Sunday devotional service. The message delivered is one that comes to mind at every show we attend. The speaker said we should be thankful for the experiences we enjoy while participating in livestock-focused events, whether we win or not. It is the experience that builds our character and our determination. As livestock enthusiasts we should be thankful for the lessons we learn.

As I work with young people and train FFA teams to compete, I know how easy and exciting it can be to celebrate successful experiences. I also know how challenging it can be to discover the lessons learned when we fall short of our expectations.

My challenge to all juniors is to be thankful for the opportunity

to participate in local, state and national activities and to be a part of such as great organization as the American Hereford Association. Be thankful for the lifelong learning experiences you gain from livestock shows, public speaking, cook-offs and leadership training. More importantly, be thankful for the friends you meet, the breed you promote and the blessings you are granted every day.

I am thankful to have served as a member of the American Hereford Women board. I am extremely grateful for the experiences and the new friendships I have gained the past three years. I would invite any woman who supports the Hereford breed to take advantage of the experience. With this privilege comes the ability to impact juniors

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across our nation on a personal level. The experience will allow you to serve the youth of our breed in ways that will last a lifetime — for both you and them. **HW**

Hope for the Future

by *Cindy Lambert, NOP vice chairman*

This was the second Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE) that I have had the opportunity to attend. Tulsa, Okla., was wonderful. Even the weather cooperated for most of the week.

It is truly a pleasure to meet so many wonderful people and visit new places. Life is changing at an alarming rate. It is reassuring to be involved with the youth and witness their leadership qualities and what they have already contributed to our future.

After the JNHE, I went to the basement to put away my suitcase and stumbled across a box of old *Polled*

Hereford World issues. I sat down and found myself engrossed in nostalgia.

So much has changed from hairstyles to color photos and, of course, the style of cattle. Change is inevitable. I would like to think that our hairstyles have improved. I know frame score 5 and 6 cattle are far better for the industry than the previous score 9s.

Despite change one thing still stands strong and true — the dedication of Hereford breeders to evolve and produce the best. Efficiency and absolute quality stand out when you attend a show in awe

of the phenomenal animals and youth. The kids today are incredibly talented. A comment from a scholarship judge was, “some of these kids can be brain surgeons.”

Something that has not changed is that the junior national is still a great place to be in July.

What a pleasure to be a part of an organization that gives away \$4,000 in scholarships and a heifer. This year, Bob and Dolores Call, Cushing, Okla., donated the heifer to be given away. Julie Wiechert from Wisconsin was the recipient and was able to visit the Calls’ farm and pick her heifer the following day.

From basketball to pee-wee speeches, from Hereford Idol to scholarships, the JNHE is where one can see our future and have hope and pride. As our nation experiences change and uncertainty, Hereford youth give me hope, as they will be our next generation of leaders. **HW**

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Women's Forum on the Future Well Attended

by Della Ehlke, AHW treasurer and SPC member

Approximately 70 women attended the "Women's Forum on the Future" July 7 in Tulsa, Okla. The forum, organized by the strategic planning committee (SPC), followed the National Organization of Poll-ettes (NOP) breakfast.

Members of the SPC, which includes three representatives from both the NOP and the American Hereford Women (AHW), provided a basic outline of the purpose of the committee, their work to date and some general observations.

The committee has been meeting since January, discussing the possibility of combining the two women organizations into one national organization. All aspects of each organization were outlined side-by-side for ease in comparison. This recap was handed out to the group and committee members reviewed specific items.

Programs, bylaws, director elections and structure of each organization were compared and found to be very similar in many areas. In the event of combination of the two national organizations, the structure of state groups would not be affected. If combined, the new national organization would accept membership from and support all members of women state organizations.

A merger would not reduce any of the programs currently in place with both organizations; rather the hope would be that a stronger combined effort would, perhaps, result in expanded programs.

Both existing organizations would come into the partnership with about the same amount of money. Members of the SPC believe there are women in the Hereford community who would join and support a national organization but are not interested in the "drama" caused by a division.

Since many younger women are more involved "hands-on" in their cattle operations, we need to look to make sure that their voices are heard

and that the national organization meets their present-day needs.

It is the conclusion of the SPC that the similarities of the current organizations would allow for a fairly easy and seamless combination of the two. The SPC believes that the time is right for such a merger and is requesting feedback from members.

After the SPC presentation, discussion followed. Key points made were:

- We are all about the same thing — Hereford cattle and youth — and we are all friends; it is past time for us to work together.
- The first step toward being taken seriously by the men and the youth, with hopes of being part of an effective, collective leadership, is to put our differences behind us.
- The history and legacy of each of the organizations are important and need to be documented and preserved. However, we cannot live in the past; we must move ahead. The daughter of a founding member of the NOP echoed the sentiment on behalf of her mother that it was time to leave the past behind and form one organization.
- Given the overall negative attitude toward agriculture in general, not just on college campuses but everywhere, we have much bigger battles to fight than horned versus polled. We need to combine our efforts into a stronger, cohesive group.
- Women are out there wanting to be a part of what we are doing, but they don't want to be involved in the struggle between the two groups.
- An overwhelming majority of the comments made expressed a positive attitude toward combining the groups as soon as possible.

Some discussion ensued about potential reasons why earlier efforts

to join the groups had failed. Those who had experience with previous merger attempts agreed that the idea of a combined organization was voted down primarily because of fears of losing identity and history.

A quick show of hands would indicate that more than 75% of the people in the room owned both horned and polled Hereford cattle.

The bylaws of the two organizations vary in the manner in which combination could be approved. The decision could be made by a majority vote of the AHW board of directors, but it would make more sense to put it to a membership vote. The NOP bylaws would require the majority of members present at a meeting to vote to approve the measure.

The SPC noted it was important for careful consideration to be given to the appropriate process for voting on a merger, despite the minimum requirements of each organization's bylaws. Interactive discussion deliberated the pros and cons of voting via membership meeting, mail-in, proxy or delegates.

Before the group disbanded, attendees were asked to write down their opinion — "yes" or "no" to a combined organization. Of those in attendance, 61 responded "yes" to furthering the pursuit of one combined organization and five responded "no."

Based on the response received, the SPC will proceed with drafting a proposed set of bylaws and mission statement, propose a manner in which to populate a new board, and explore logo and name possibilities.

Comments are encouraged by calling one of the SPC members or comment at www.barnaisle.blogspot.com. **HW**

SPC Members

Cheryl Evans, AHW chair
Susan Gebhart, NOP chair
Betsy Beck, NOP
Mary Ann Berg, NOP
Deb Carlson, AHW
Della Ehlke, AHW