

## Going Places

As my summer draws to a close, I find myself reflecting on a very busy and productive, not to mention fun, couple of months. Whether it was working show cattle from dawn till dusk at home, feeling the anticipation leading up to the Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE) or experiencing a long bus ride at PRIDE (Program for Reaching Individuals Determined to Excel) Convention, I cannot help but think that I have learned a lot and gained a great deal of experience during these past three months.

I have interacted with old friends and met some new acquaintances at the JNHE, and I enjoyed seeing great cattle and great farms at PRIDE. As I write this, I am sitting in a car with three other board members en route to Canada to experience

the Hereford Bonanza, which is the Canadian equivalent of the JNHE. Needless to say, I have been busy these past few weeks, and, of course, I wouldn't trade them for anything.

As usual, the long bus rides during PRIDE consisted of many different movies and music. While I was contemplating why I hadn't gotten enough sleep the night before, someone put on one of my favorite movies, "Sister Act 2."

If you're not familiar, this movie stars Whoopi Goldberg and is about a Las Vegas showgirl who reassumes her fictitious role as a nun in order to teach a group of inner-city minority kids about music. In the movie Whoopi walks into the rowdy classroom and writes a quote on the blackboard. It reads, "If you want to be somebody, If you want to go somewhere, you better wake up and pay attention."

Somehow that quote struck a chord with me. Even though I had seen the movie many times before, I connected with it in a new way. I thought, "I have learned so much since JNHE and seen so many new and exciting things; I am now more aware of where this breed stands and what it has in store for the future."

I also pondered, "How can we wake up and pay attention to the great learning tools that this breed has to offer?" As juniors, if we want to be somebody or go anywhere in this business, we have to utilize programs such as the JNHE and PRIDE. By taking advantage of contests, many juniors have enhanced their knowledge of public speaking, beef facts and even the arts.

Adults and kids witnessed one of the largest cattle shows ever. Everyone had a chance to learn about nutrition during the Sure Champ seminar and fitting techniques from Stock Show University, and hopefully, picked up some showmanship tips from the top 10 senior showmen.

I should also mention the relationships and contacts we gain at this event. These are the people we will do business with when we get older, not to mention the people who will be lifelong friends and colleagues (and, yes, even spouses).


At PRIDE we visited cutting-edge Hereford programs, as well as top-notch technology and leadership seminars. Because we have no cattle at this event, I feel that we are better able to interact with one another, which creates a better atmosphere for learning.

We wrap up our time together by talking cattle and enjoying the famous PRIDE dance and dread the goodbyes that are soon to come, as we are likely not to see our Hereford family again until next year in Pennsylvania or at PRIDE.

Not only are these events important to juniors, these events are central to the success and continuation of the Hereford breed. The future of the American Hereford Association (AHA) is bright because of the hard work and involvement of National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) members.

These events also play a major role in the development of who we are as individuals. The hard work and determination pay off in the end in big ways. Even if you don't bring home a banner, you have a better appreciation for yourself and your project. The skills you have learned through your experience with Herefords will stick with you for years to come, making you somebody and opening many doors for you to go somewhere.

Take it from an older junior; wake up and take advantage of every opportunity that you can get your hands on as a junior member. Pay attention to anyone who gives you a sound piece of advice, and you will certainly be going places. **HW**



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