

Illinois Takes Title in Team Fitting Competition



The team fitting champions from the state of Illinois pictured (l to r) are: **Haley Bickelhaupt**, Mount Carroll; **Kesler Collins**, Flanagan; and **Matt Johnson**, Cambridge. Also pictured are Gabrielle Glenister, assistant dean of Stock Show University (left); and Tom and Tammy Boatman, 2015 AHA Hereford Herdsmen of the Year and team fitting judges (right).

Teams from 24 state associations of the National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) demonstrated their fitting skills during the 16th Annual Vitaferm® Junior National Hereford Expo in Grand Island, Neb., June 29, competing in the Sullivan Supply and Stock Show University Team Fitting Contest.

Illinois took top honors with team members Kesler Collins, Flanagan;

Haley Bickelhaupt, Mount Carroll; and Matt Johnson, Cambridge.

The objective of the team fitting contest is to encourage team participation for the preparation of an animal for the showing. In this competition, a team of three has 45 minutes to fit a heifer for a panel of judges. One member of the team then shows the heifer.

Judges for the team fitting contest

were the 2015 American Hereford Association Hereford Herdsmen of the Year, Tom and Tammy Boatman, Rockford, Ill.

Tom says judging this competition wasn't easy, but they started with the basics. "You have to come in with a clean animal — that's first and foremost. And then we looked at all the little things like were all your combs in order and no teeth sticking up for a calf to step on."

The Boatmans also focused on how teams worked together. "Another thing we put a lot of emphasis on is the senior, or the older one of the three, taking charge," Tom explains. "We looked for good communication between those team members as they were working and keeping things organized."

Tom says the winning team's senior, Matt, did a great job communicating as they worked together. "They had a peewee (Kesler) pulling legs and clipping legs and a junior (Haley) clipping legs and doing the tail. They did a super job working as a team."

Texas came in second place in the fitting competition with team members: Judd Daniels, Dalhart; Mason Allan, Schulenburg; and Austin Breeding, Miami.

The third place title went to the Nebraska team consisting of Abby Stallbaumer, Oconto; Kassidy Bremer, Fullerton; and Quin Rutt, Campbell. **HW**



Team fitting contest winners pictured (l to r) are: first-place team members from Illinois: **Kesler Collins**, Flanagan; **Matt Johnson**, Cambridge; and **Haley Bickelhaupt**, Mount Carroll; second-place team members from the state of Texas: **Mason Allan**, Schulenburg; **Judd Daniels**, Dalhart; and **Austin Breeding**, Miami; third-place team members from Nebraska: **Kassidy Bremer**, Fullerton; **Quin Rutt**, Campbell; and **Abby Stallbaumer**, Oconto. Also pictured (far left) are 2015 AHA Hereford Herdsmen of the Year and team fitting contest judges Tammy and Tom Boatman, Rockford, Ill.