

Preparation Is the Key to Success

We have always been told the Hereford industry creates leaders. The National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) offers a multitude of different leadership opportunities like events and contests that help us to hone our skills. Growing up in the South Dakota and Kentucky junior Hereford associations, we participated in many of these opportunities, and they all helped prepare us for our ultimate goal of one day running for the NJHA board of directors.

As we prepared for the NJHA board election, we studied all of the *Hereford World* issues cover to cover. We prepared our speeches for the roundtable and membership meeting nights. We worked on our interview skills in mock interviews.

Practice makes perfect. At the time, receiving that maroon jacket was our ultimate goal, and we were prepared to succeed.

Changing goals

While we were both fortunate enough to receive a maroon jacket, little did we know our goals were about to change. Once we were on the board, our preparation for success consisted of late nights writing articles, selling sponsorships for the Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE), communicating with other board members and working as a team. We were now working toward the success of the entire NJHA.

The past three years have been a whirlwind and seem to have gone by with the blink of an eye. We have traveled to multiple destinations, made some life-long friends and viewed some great cattle. It has been an unforgettable experience, and we know that we will take the lessons learned with us for the rest of our lives.

Over the past three years, we have accomplished a great deal. As candidates, both of us felt that the Faces of Leadership Conference needed to grow. This conference offers an opportunity to network with other junior breeders from across the country, to improve leadership skills and to provide the chance to see some of the most prestigious Hereford operations in

the country. In 2016 more than 80 members from 22 states attended the conference. It was a once-in-a-lifetime kind of a trip. Now, with the help of the Rick Malir and Bonnie Coley-Malir leadership endowment, we look forward to the continued growth of the Faces of Leadership Conference and tomorrow's industry leaders.

We are also proud to say that the membership has seen significant growth over the past few years. The last fiscal year produced a 5% increase in NJHA membership, breaking the 3,000 member mark and bringing the total of junior members to 3,057.

We also saw a 7% increase in entries at this past year's JNHE in Madison, Wis. More than 900 youth from 41 states exhibited 1,547 head of Hereford cattle. The JNHE is our favorite week of the year, and we have seen so much growth. We can't wait to see what the future holds for this amazing event and look forward to an unforgettable 2017 JNHE in Louisville, Ky.

Setting up for success

While working for the NJHA, we were also constantly trying to grow as individuals. As we approached graduation in May of 2016, we knew we could rely on the skills we had learned while being on the junior board to help us through our years in college and to land our first positions out of school.



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Austin Cole accepted a job managing Triple C Hereford and Black Hereford Farm in northern Alabama after graduation in May of 2016. He enjoys being able to continue his love and passion for the Hereford breed and to expand his knowledge of the industry. Being a director on the board has helped him network with other cattle producers and allowed him the opportunity to ask for advice and tips when needed.



During our time on the board, we have learned the importance of teamwork and time management in achieving our group goals. Additionally, we became knowledgeable of the skills required to be leaders and role models for the industry: focus, decisiveness, authenticity, empowerment, persistence and positivity.

Most importantly, though, our time on the junior board taught us how to have dedication to a cause bigger than just ourselves. Our time on the junior board prepared us for success in the real world.

So as young, successful adults, we would like to thank our families for all of their support. We truly couldn't have had the opportunity to be a part of the junior board without the help and support of our parents and siblings. We will be forever grateful.

Also, we would like to send out a huge thank you to the American Hereford Association staff Bailey Clanton and Amy Cowan, along with NJHA advisors Cliff and Pat Copeland, Kyle and Jodi McMillan, Andy and Betsy Beck and Max Stotz. Success of the association would not be possible without your dedication to the organization.

Lastly, thank you to the entire membership. You are the reason we have grown in the last three years. The past members and leaders have shaped the organization into what it is today, and your preparation has led the NJHA to success. We are proud to have been a part of it. **HW**

Since graduation in May of 2016, **Kelsey Powell** has been employed at Forum Communications as a multimedia marketing coordinator. She loves being able to communicate with businesses of all sizes and help them achieve their goals through advertising. The opportunity to serve as a director has opened so many doors for Kelsey, and she strongly encourages juniors to run. Kelsey says, "The only regrets individuals will have in life are the risks they don't take."

