

The Reign in Review: Hereford Nation's Youth



Hello! My name is Annah Dobson, and I am 19 years old, and the daughter of Roger and Rachelanne Dobson of Johnson Creek, Wis. I am currently a sophomore at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, studying agricultural marketing communications with a minor in agricultural business.

It's been just over 365 days since the first time I walked around the showing in Hale Arena. I was about to begin a year full of traveling, excitement and a brand-new level in the Hereford breed. This past year, I have had the opportunity to meet and to learn from many highly recognized breeders and staff members within the American Hereford Association. The national shows and guest appearances were some of the most notable moments during my time as National Hereford Queen. While these people have had a great amount of impact on me, the most rewarding part of my reign was interacting with the youth of this industry.

At every show, sale and agricultural event that I attended, the most enthusiastic and eager individuals to talk to were the young members. No matter the age, from pre-peeewe to senior, the excitement they displayed for their Hereford cattle was a constant reminder of why I love this breed. At the Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE) in Louisville, Ky., I was surrounded by more than 900 other young cattle enthusiasts. Throughout the many events I participated in, I had the pleasure of meeting so many of them from various states across the U.S.

I had the opportunity to plan one of these events — the annual Queen's Tea — at JNHE. During this, I met over 100 young ladies who all shared two common interests, cows and cookies. Together we decorated crown, cow and rose shaped cookies. While we decorated them, I learned about some of their cows, farms and towns and how they wanted to become a princess and the National Hereford Queen someday. Seeing and hearing their desire reminded me of the same dream I had when I was younger.

The second part of JNHE, and the most unforgettable portion of the year, was the pre-peeewe showmanship. If you've ever had the chance to watch some of the youngest members of our Association in the showing, you will understand why it is such a wonderful part of our week-long event. If you have not had this opportunity, then here is why this is an unforgettable moment of my year.

This showmanship class is one of the last events that happens during the JNHE, and I believe the reason is that the best is being saved for last. Every young showman that stepped foot into the ring did so with determination, focus and passion. No matter how big the animals were, these pre-peeewe's lead them around the ring with great pride. At the end of their class, I got to hand out a prize and take a picture with each and every one of them. Some of these showmen I had met already during the year, and they remembered who I was. I was able to share this moment with pre-peeewe's from my home state and that meant more to me than they will ever know.

While JNHE may have been the longest week of the year, it was definitely the most rewarding. I now see why so many people are encouraged by the youth of this industry. They are some of the brightest and most dedicated people around, and I am so blessed to have met many of them this year.

If I could give one lasting piece of advice to any young member, it

would be this: Follow your passion. Don't let others define you or your circumstances. All you have to do is believe in yourself and go for it.

— Annah Dobson

2017 National Hereford Queen

