

The End Is Only the Beginning

It is hard to believe that a year ago I was coming home with a new, shiny crown, the crown box and the white Hereford queen banner. I had continuously studied and practiced for months to prepare myself for the competition in which I was about to partake, and all of my hard work paid off. I had finally reached my goal — my dream — of becoming the next National Hereford Queen.

Now, a year later, I sit writing my last National Hereford Queen article. I sit and reflect on the past year I have spent serving as the National Hereford Queen. All the memories of waking up early to get to the show arena to set up awards or all the late evenings trying to take that last backdrop photo. There was even the time I was delayed in Chicago for two hours the night before the junior show in Denver, then running on three hours of sleep. These are all memories which have kept the National Hereford Queen position interesting during my reign, and I wouldn't trade them for the world.

I traveled to all of the national Hereford shows, including the North American International Livestock Expo, the Western States Hereford Show, the National Western Stock Show, the Fort Worth Stock Show and the Keystone International Livestock Expo, and back to Kansas City to pass off the crown at the American Royal. I also attended the Junior National Hereford Expo, which was held in Grand Island, Neb. While in Grand Island, I got to share Bundt cakes with family, friends and the future of our queen program, and I had a very successful queen basket and service project, which I called Herefords Helping Heroes. Not only did I attend national shows, but I had the opportunity to help represent my state by attending Buckeye Hereford events. I was even given the chance to attend Boyd's Beef Cattle annual Hereford sale and Perks annual sale and mature cow dispersal.

During my time of serving, I have made so many great connections and lifelong friendships that have had a huge influence on my life. I went from not knowing my place in this organization to being part of the biggest family. When people say the Hereford organization is nothing but a large family, that is not a lie, and I have had the great honor to serve this family for the last year. I have become a role model for young juniors, just as past queens were for me. Spending so much time with Bailey Clanton and the junior board, I have come to feel like a younger sibling to them.

These are the connections you can't find anywhere else. I can walk through the cattle barn and spend hours talking to breeders from all states. I know I will always have these people in my life. This experience is one I won't soon forget. I am forever blessed that I had the opportunity to serve the Hereford breed this past year. This breed and organization have been nothing but amazing to my family and me. Now that the road of royalty has come to an end, I know this is only the beginning to the next chapter in my life. Being National Hereford Queen has opened up so many doors and opportunities for me in the future, and I look forward to the path I will travel next.

— **Abbygail Pitstick**,
2018 National Hereford Queen

