

by *Taylor Belle Matheny*

The VitaFerm® Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE) is an event like none other, and this year it was special by being at the historic National Western Complex in Denver. Watching Hereford cattle make their way from the Yards to the Hill each day reminded me of the opportunity I am fortunate enough to have as a member of such a historic breed.

More than showing

Over the course of my life, I have grown up around the Hereford breed and, when I was old enough, became a member of the National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA). This year I walked through the showring at the JNHE for the last time and heard my

name called as a retiring member. There are so many things I have learned throughout my time as a member, and I will carry them throughout the rest of my life.

Competing in contests, meeting friends and taking on leadership roles prepared me for college and a career. As members of the junior board, your directors help with the contests, and this year I was a timer for the peewee and junior sales talks. As the first participants made their way into the room and began giving their sales pitches, I was completely blown away by the talent of our juniors. The quality continued throughout the day, and I left the room proud of the members of the NJHA.

Throughout the week, I continued to watch juniors carry themselves in and out of the showring. From the observations I made at the JNHE, our breed has a positive future because of the juniors who are striving to excel in all aspects of our association. This is a testament to what the NJHA offers its members and the preparation it provides them for life.

Leading the way

The excitement of summer did not stop after Herefords on the Hill, as juniors made their way to Lincoln, Neb., for Faces of Leadership. Year after year an exceptional group of juniors come to Faces of Leadership eager to learn, to grow their skills and to network with other passionate young Hereford breeders.

This year was a year like we have never planned before because of the help of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) and the Engler Entrepreneurship program. Juniors were able to participate

in the entrepreneurship program and to develop solutions to a problem in the industry.

After the young entrepreneurs delivered their Pitch Projects, we toured the animal science department at UNL. Having this opportunity allowed juniors to understand meat fabrication, meat palatability and processed meats. To round off a great week, we went to Dunlap, Iowa, to the Sullivan Supply headquarters to hear the story of a true entrepreneur, John Sullivan.

Faces of Leadership is made possible because of the Coley-Malir Leadership Endowment started by Rick and Bonnie Coley-Malir, who are passionate supporters of Hereford youth. Their commitment to the next generation and the Hereford Youth Foundation of America continues to make this a unique event for our membership.

I am proud I get to serve this association and am eager to see where the next year takes us. One takeaway I have from this summer is the NJHA has a talented group of young salesmen and women ready to take on the industry. Looking forward to the 2020 JNHE, I am excited to sit in on sales talks once again to see new and old faces competing in an educational contest with so many life lessons.

Before we know it, 2020 will be here and that means we get to head to Louisville, Ky., for Banners in the Bluegrass July 11-18, 2020, and to Columbus, Ohio, for Faces of Leadership July 28-Aug. 1, 2020. I am excited to head east for my last JNHE on the board and to welcome you to my home state of Kentucky. **HW**



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