

Taking the Global Stage



U.S. Hereford breeders gained a global perspective of Hereford cattle while attending the 2020 World Hereford Conference.



Team Hereford journeys to Queenstown, New Zealand, for the 2020 World Hereford Conference.

In the southern region of New Zealand's southern island, more than 400 Hereford delegates gathered for the 2020 World Hereford Conference, March 9-13, in Queenstown. Travelers from around the world, including Europe, South America, Australia and, of course, the U.S., ventured to the country home to "Kiwis" — which is both a nickname for people from New Zealand and the name of New Zealand's flightless, native bird.

Four days of sessions led by beef industry experts covered everything from genetics to grazing solutions. While the conference was based in Queenstown, conference attendees also visited two stud farms in Central Otago as well as the Wanaka A&P Show.

Six National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) members represented the U.S. on a global stage as competitors in the Young Breeders Competition and as OXO World Traveler scholarship recipients. Read more about their experiences in the ensuing pages.



Six NJHA members represented the U.S. in the Young Breeders Competition. Pictured (l to r) are: Abigail Spindle, Tyler Allan, Keayla Harr, Taylor Belle Matheny, Rylee Barber, Amy Cowan (AHA director of youth activities and foundation) and Hannah Williams.

Bonica passes the reins

Outgoing World Hereford Council (WHC) Secretary General Jose (Pepe) Bonica, Uruguay, recently attended his last World Hereford Conference, while representing the globe's Hereford breeders. In a meeting held in conjunction with the 2020 conference, WHC country delegates elected Larry Feeney of Ireland as the incoming secretary general.

During his eight-year, two-term tenure, which began Jan. 1, 2013, Bonica has attended council meetings in Canada, Montenegro, Uruguay and New Zealand. "There is always something to learn from somebody else," he says.

As a leader and life-long learner, Bonica is a huge proponent of face-to-face meetings, noting the value that stems from people meeting and shaking hands. Conversations and comradery draws Bonica to Hereford events around the world, including the Beef Improvement Federation Research Symposium and Convention in the U.S.

Bonica insists Hereford breeders must stick together to achieve results. He points out there are many global challenges cattle producers must address, primarily animal welfare concerns and finding ways to relate with people who live in cities.

In regards to addressing animal welfare, Bonica says Hereford breeders can universally promote the breed's disposition and good temperament. "You can allow your grandchildren to play with a Hereford bull without a handler with no fear at all," he notes. "That's something you don't know the price of until you become a grandfather."

For Hereford breeders worldwide, Bonica has two challenges: "Within your farm, you have to learn to study and to be updated with all new technologies. Outside your farm, you have to tell your story to people in the cities — it's your responsibility."

Bonica's perspectives stem from his world travels and his background living in both rural and urban communities. He grew up on his family's farm until he was 6 years old, moved to a local town for elementary school, and then ventured to Uruguay's capital city, Montevideo, to finish secondary studies and to attend university, where he studied agronomy.



Incoming World Hereford Council Secretary General Larry Feeney (I) of Ireland poses with outgoing Secretary General Jose (Pepe) Bonica of Uruguay. Feeney is the secretary for the Irish Hereford Breed Society, a post he has held for over 30 years.

Out of college he was offered a job on a rice farm, a commodity in which he had no experience. Following his dad's recommendation, he gave large-scale rice farming a shot and has been working in rice and cattle production ever since.

As the second smallest country in South America, Uruguay has one of the strongest agricultural markets on the continent. It is also home to many passionate cattlemen. In Uruguay, "cattle" does not refer to just any breed.

"When I say cattle, I mean Hereford," Bonica clarifies. "Hereford is the main breed in my country — it is extremely popular."

The Hereford Uruguay organization is supported by about 500 members, representing 10,000 animals per year. "The Hereford success in my country relies on the people," Bonica says. "We like to say, 'No breed is better than its breeders.'"

Bonica believes this motto holds true for Hereford breeders worldwide, and is confident in the breed's continued growth. He hopes he contributed to this success during his time as secretary general, and is thankful for the opportunities he was provided during his service.

"I'm very glad to say I have no regrets on what the Hereford breed has provided for me, and I hope I was able to give something in return," Bonica reflects. "I have been blessed with many friends within the Hereford family, and I hope to all always keep those friendships, at least in my heart."

continued on page 60...



Despite residing in various countries, attendees of the 2020 World Hereford Conference had one very similar interest — passion for the red and white breed.

Tyler Allan

The Young Breeders Competition provided me with enriching experiences, great new friends and a taste of culture previously unknown to me. During the conference, Team USA became close with the Team Australia Red because of our similar backgrounds, practices as well as mutual friendships through the Hereford breed.

Furthermore, Team USA was able to build a good professional connection with Becs Patterson

of Waikaka Genetics, where we helped get cattle ready for the show and exhibited her bull that won reserve champion. It was an awesome experience to hear the differences between operations in New Zealand and the U.S., as well as an honor to get to know the Waikaka crew and their exceptional Hereford cattle.

I would recommend this experience for anyone interested in networking with future breeders and industry leaders, or learning about cultures and agricultural practices that are different to their own.



NJHA members bonded with fellow junior Hereford representatives from all over the world. Pictured with Team USA is Team Australia Red.

Team USA takes third

Team USA traveled to Queenstown to compete in the Young Breeders Competition during the 2020 World Hereford Conference, Mar. 7–13. Abigail Spindle, Stanley, N.M.; Taylor Belle Matheny, Mays Lick, Ky.; Tyler Allan, Schulenburg, Texas; and Keayla Harr, Jeromesville, Ohio, were the National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) members representing the U.S.

Team USA brought home first place honors in the presentation module of

the competition with a speech about bridging the gap between urban and rural populations. The team's victory earned the opportunity to share their presentation with the 400 attendees at the World Hereford Conference. Spindle placed second overall in the judging contest and Matheny followed with a third overall placement. Allan placed fourth in the herdsmanship module, which was a combined score from the judging and showmanship contests.

"We were proud of how we finished the competition, but more importantly, we made friends from around the world and learned from and enjoyed each other's company more than we ever could have imagined," says Matheny, who is also the NJHA board chairman.

Nine teams representing seven countries competed at this year's event in New Zealand's southern island. Other contests included a quiz bowl, fence-building, agribusiness, meat cuts, animal health and genetic modules along with judging, fitting and showing competitions at the Wanaka A&P Hereford Show.

"This was a journey of a lifetime for these young adults and it was so neat to watch them network with the teams from across the globe as they competed and represented America on the world's stage. I look for this experience to open doors for future networking opportunities with Hereford breeders and junior members from other counties," says Amy Cowan, director of youth activities and foundation. **HW**



Team USA finished strong in the Young Breeders Competition, earning first in the presentation module and third-place overall, two points behind the first-place team, Australia Red.

Rylee Barber

The World Hereford Conference was an experience of a lifetime. From the breathtaking views to the world-renowned speakers, this trip was unforgettable. The conference was designed to educate Hereford cattle producers and to provide fellowship for all attendees, but I walked away with so much more. From Uruguay to Australia, there were many different countries represented and everyone attending had the same passion for Hereford cattle.

Many attendees greeted each other with warm welcomes and promises to catch up before the week was over. These relationships formed from past conferences and have continued to grow each year.

Traveling to New Zealand with some of my best friends by my side, making memories that will last a lifetime and getting to meet the worldwide Hereford family made the 2020 World Hereford Conference an unforgettable experience.

Keayla Harr

As I headed to New Zealand, I was excited to see Hereford cattle in a climate and environment that contrasts what we have in the U.S. During our trip, we saw various kinds of cattle and learned about New Zealand's grass-based system, in which many cattle are challenged to forage 365 days a year on native and improved pasture. This system once again proved the Hereford breed's ability to efficiently convert cellulose to high-quality protein.

The New Zealand cattle were big bodied and easy fleshing with very few structure or soundness issues. Many New Zealand breeders have heavily selected for pigment and dark red cattle, although added white markings were more prevalent than what we see in the states. Also noteworthy was the



Almost all cattle in New Zealand are entirely grass fed, which highlighted the breed's efficiency at converting forage to pounds.



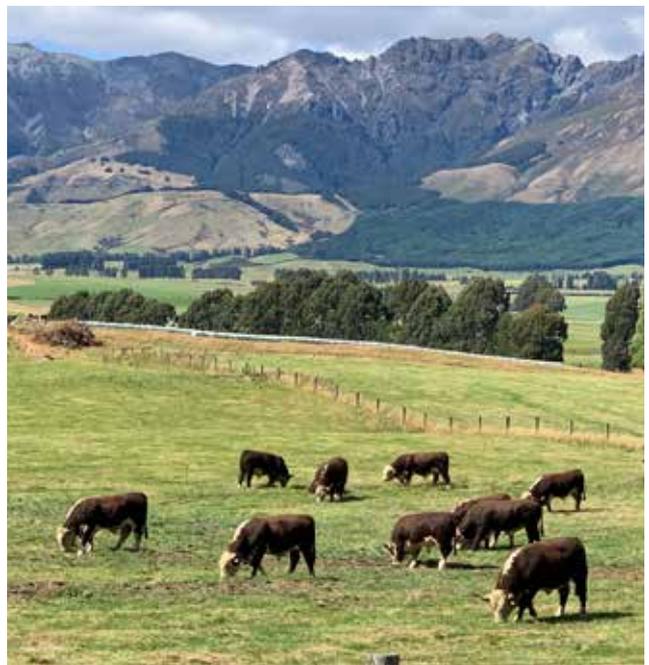
All NJHA members agree this experience provided them with lasting memories and a chance to bond with other Hereford breeders.

heavy emphasis on carcass merit, as many breeders retain ownership and market grass-finished steers into the Hereford Prime brand, which is New Zealand's popular branded beef program.

The bulls on display were stout and rugged, and many firms were preparing for upcoming winter sales in May and June. For the conference, breeders kept calves on cows, allowing us to see a lot of productive females with heavy calves about to wean at side. Most females were still in good body condition despite weaning off a high percentage of their body weight.

I can truly say I enjoyed every minute of my trip to the World Hereford Conference and the opportunity to represent Team USA in the Young Breeders Competition.

continued on page 62...



Taylor Belle Matheny

The trip of a lifetime. It sounds cliché, but it couldn't be a truer statement. This was the kind of trip that gives you a new perspective on life if you make the most of opportunities and challenge yourself to grow.

Tyler, Abby, Keayla and I grew up actively competing in contests through the NJHA. Naturally, this meant we each had a competitive side eager to get started in the Young Breeders Competition. Team USA took home first place in the presentation competition and later gave our presentation to all 400 World Hereford Conference attendees.

Team USA ended the competition in third place overall, and we were proud of how we finished the competition. More importantly, we made friends from around the world and learned and enjoyed each other's company more than we ever could have imagined. The Hereford breed prepared us for this competition, and we want to thank everyone for supporting us as we embarked on a lifechanging adventure.

Abigail Spindle

This spring, several members of Team Hereford traveled half way across the world to attend the World Hereford Conference and compete in the Young Breeders Competition. We are all extremely grateful for the opportunity to experience such a unique place and to learn about Herefords and agriculture in another environment.

Throughout all of our ranch visits and travel, the best part was the scenery and the views. The rugged mountains rose out of the ocean unlike anything we had ever seen. The scenic mountain ranges gave way to crystal-clear lakes, small meadows and rural farms and ranches.

Agriculture and tourism are the biggest industries in New Zealand. Nearly all of the country's livestock are grass fed, as producers do not use grain in livestock diets.

One of the most important parts of the Young Breeders Competition was connecting with youth from all around the globe over a common focus on Hereford cattle. There were nine teams competing from all corners of the globe. It was fun to get to know their different cultures, and it was interesting to hear all the different accents and dialects, as well.

Hannah Williams

This past year, I was awarded the OXO World Traveler Scholarship, which allowed me to represent the NJHA at a global event. I would like to thank the OXO family and Linda Swiercinsky for awarding me with this scholarship. Through this experience, I made several friends, met fellow Hereford breeders and explored new cultures.

The first leg of my trip began in Australia, where I toured 10 Hereford studs in three different territories. Australia recently suffered one of its largest droughts in history and it was difficult to hear how the drought had negatively affected producers. However, I was fortunate to be there right after some of the area's first rains, and the ranchers I spoke to were extremely emotional to receive the rainfall.

After a week in Australia, I flew to Queenstown, which is known as the adventure capital of the world. One of the highlights of touring Queenstown was traveling up a mountain in a gondola and getting to luge around the top. Our group also went on a shot-over jet boat on the river, which took us through the mountains and allowed us to see different scenery.

During the conference we saw some great cattle and learned about Merino sheep, as well. One of the highlights was getting to feel some of the finest wool in fleece and then also see it on the rams. The finest fleece can be worth upward of \$3,000 per pound. **HW**



Hereford juniors enjoyed touring New Zealand's world-famous views.