



Star Spangled Juniors

Reflecting on a spectacular week in Kansas City.



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Kids from agriculture are the greatest. Summer flies by as they work in their home operations, play sports and participate in other activities, including livestock projects and events like the VitaFerm® Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE).

This year's JNHE at the American Royal in Kansas City, Mo., more than lived up to its billing as the "Hereford Spectacular." More than 800 exhibitors from 40 states and Canada participated in various events throughout the week and showed 1,156 head of cattle. You will find a full recap of the show in this edition of *Hereford World*, but these are among my favorite highlights.

Patience and perseverance

It starts with a great American Hereford Association (AHA) staff and a great National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) board who work tirelessly throughout the year to plan and organize an event that provides exhibitors and their families with an atmosphere filled with fun, fellowship, and of course, competition.

Our junior members are so impressive. Watch them in action and it's obvious their skill sets are advanced well beyond most of those at their same age. They have confidence beyond their years, which provides them a clear advantage as they pursue adult careers.

Moving in equipment and checking in cattle and exhibitors all comprise a long, intensive process that always requires patience. The staff, the junior board and an impressive group of ambassadors, and the American Royal staff and volunteers worked hard to help exhibitors get settled and ready for the week's events. Then it was time for meetings, contests and all of the rest.

Special thanks goes to Neogen for sponsoring the free DNA test on any animal at the JNHE. The Neogen team worked with AHA staff to explain the process of requesting a

DNA test, as well as techniques to collect DNA samples correctly. They were on hand to answer any questions from exhibitors and their families. Each of these samples was submitted to the lab. Participating juniors will receive parentage, if available, genomic-enhanced expected progeny differences (GE-EPDs) and results for any abnormalities except MD. We will work with Neogen to continue providing this opportunity at future editions of JNHE. I encourage each of you to take advantage.

Competition and commitment

As the week moved along, the shows were very competitive, with impressive showmanship talent and cattle quality from top to bottom. Show days get long, but they are worth every moment — getting to watch juniors and their competitive skills bloom, while also demonstrating the highest standards of sportsmanship.

There was plenty of fun, in addition to all of the shows and contests.

For instance, it was inspiring to see crowds up and down the trade show, as well as the incredible turnout for the tailgate party and the Certified Hereford Beef® (CHB) hamburger feed. Thanks to the states for supporting the tailgate, and a special shout-out to the AHA staff for feeding *Certified Hereford Beef* hamburgers to more than 1,500 juniors and their parents.

Appropriately, this year's JNHE unfolded during the week of Independence Day, celebrating the birth of our country and how it was built through hard work and determination. NJHA members continue to exemplify similar ethics, grit and tenacity.

Lastly, how about the "The Star-Spangled Banner" sung by Cassidy Bremer of Iowa and "God Bless America" performed by Wisconsin's Lauren Jones and her mother, Kim? Well done! **HW**