

## It's All About the People

No matter the situation, life is less about what you do and more about the people with whom you share your time.

This has been a summer of many firsts and new experiences for me. One of the most notable experiences was attending my first VitaFerm® Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE).

This year's JNHE was one of the largest and most competitive in history with more than 820 exhibitors showing more than 1,100 head throughout the week. In this issue of the Hereford World, you will find a full recap of the event beginning on Page 50 and some junior members who also experienced their first JNHE on Page 132.

Grace Jacobson, Hereford Publications, Inc., summer intern, was also a first-timer. She and I spent our days taking photos, interviewing National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) members and their families, and organizing information for this issue.

Each time we spoke to NJHA members about their JNHE experiences, a common theme rang out — the people make the difference.

This was incredibly evident watching any class walk through the ring, especially after champion drives. Once the classes were placed or the winners were slapped, exhibitors congratulated each other, and a crowd of supporters waited outside the showing to wrap junior members in a swarm of support.

It was easy to see how much this community means to Hereford juniors and their families. While I was not an exhibitor, I also felt an outpouring of support from our American Hereford Association (AHA) team throughout the show and the making of this month's issue.

I will admit, the JNHE experience and the weeks following were a steep learning curve. Every piece of information in these pages needs meticulous review. It takes many hands

to collect the words and photos, and it takes many sets of eyes to make sure we “cross the t's and dot the i's,” as the saying goes.

At the end of it all, each person who played a part in making the September issue possible, made all the difference in my life these last couple of months. A special thanks goes to our creative services coordinator, Samantha Albers, for leading Grace and me through much of the JNHE planning process and showing us the ropes throughout the week.

Grace also stepped up and made huge contributions to this issue. I speak for many when I say we will miss her can-do attitude and sense of humor. We wish her the best as she begins her final year at Kansas State University.

With that, Grace shares her take on the experience.

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## Family Matters

by *Grace Jacobson*

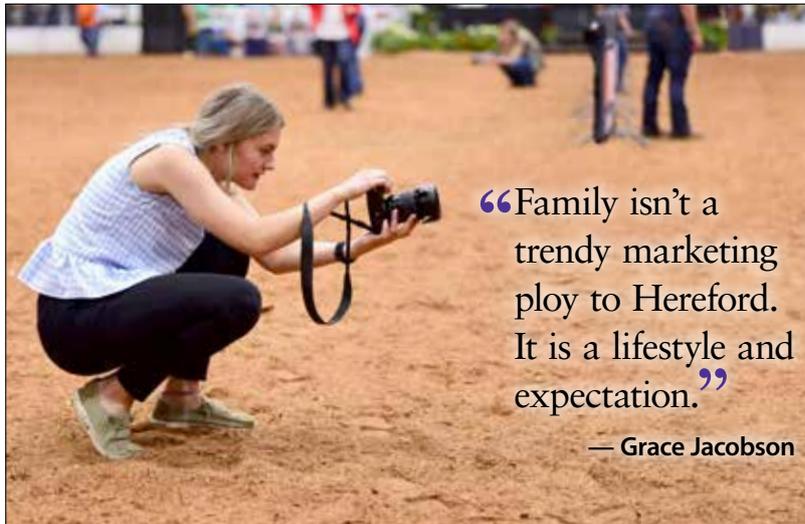
This fall I will enter into my final year at Kansas State University, where I have taken a number of marketing and strategic communication courses, so I would say I am pretty good at picking out a marketing gimmick when I see it.

A common marketing strategy of businesses and organizations is to refer to their customer base as a family. When I heard people say that Hereford wasn't just a breed, but a family, I will admit I was slightly cynical. Heck, the restaurant Olive Garden even says, “When you're here, you're family.” But, I don't want to listen to my waiter's political views during Christmas dinner.

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Grace Jacobson

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— Grace Jacobson

However, the AHA staff helped me feel right at home, and even their families went out of their way to tell me about how much I would love the Hereford association.

When I went to help at Cattlemen’s Congress in January, the staff

considered me as one of their own, not some intern that just showed up — they even treated me to an amazing dinner the first night. I came home from Oklahoma City excited for my summer internship and believing I might have found a second family.

When I finally arrived at the Kansas City, Mo. office, it felt like a family reunion. All the field staff and remote workers were in the office. There was good food and memories made. It truly felt like I had “come home to Hereford.”

Even the normal work days are filled with laughs and the comfort of working with people you enjoy. This is truly an association focused on people — from employee to producer.

During JNHE, it was amazing to hear the experiences of so many people with such diverse backgrounds within the breed. The people I talked to came from all over the country, ranging from ages 7 to 65 years old and with different operation types, but they all confirmed that Hereford is family.

Family isn’t a trendy marketing ploy to Hereford. It is a lifestyle and expectation. Thank you, Hereford, for welcoming this cynic into your family. You all are so much better than Olive Garden. **HW**