

2021-2022 National Hereford Queen: A Family Tradition

Lauren Gatz is a legacy National Hereford Queen proud to continue the Hereford tradition.

Lauren Gatz was filled with a nearly overwhelming sense of gratitude as she was crowned the 2021-2022 National Hereford Queen. The Fairview, Kan., native recalls looking around the crowd at the American Royal in Kansas City, Mo., after the coronation and seeing a sea of familiar faces from her home state offering their congratulations and support.

“Being the National Hereford Queen means getting to give back to an organization that has shaped me into the woman I am today,” Lauren says. “The Hereford Queen Program has built a tremendous legacy and a strong reputation that I am honored to uphold. Being a legacy queen and getting to share this historic title with my mom (the 1992 National Polled Hereford Queen) makes it all the more special. I am so excited to start my journey as the National Hereford Queen in Louisville in just a few weeks.”

Age: 18

Parents: Taylor and Jennifer Gatz

Siblings: Jordan Gatz, Kansas State University (K-State) sophomore, and McKenna Gatz, Sabetha High School freshman

College and degree program: K-State, agricultural communications and journalism

Extracurricular activities and hobbies: K-State Block and Bridle, Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow and the Kappa Kappa Gamma Sorority. Lauren



National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) membership: 11 years

Family history in the Hereford business: Lauren’s parents grew up raising and showing cattle, and they wanted to provide their family with the same experiences. Her family first became involved with the breed when her mom and uncle started showing and raising Herefords as part of the junior program in the ’80s. Since then, Lauren and her siblings have continued the family’s Hereford legacy. “I hope to continue the tradition of raising Hereford cattle with my own family one day,” she says.

also serves as a communications assistant for the K-State Department of Animal Sciences and Industry and remains an active member of 4-H. She enjoys spending time with friends and family, showing livestock, sewing, baking and watching home improvement shows.

Titles prior to National Hereford Queen: Kansas Hereford Princess (2019-2020) and Kansas Hereford Queen (2020-2021)

When did your sights become set on the crown? “I set my sights on the crown at a young age,” Lauren says. “My mom was the 1992 National Polled Hereford Queen, and I can recall wearing my mom’s crown around my grandma’s house when I was little.”

Who inspired you to run for National Hereford Queen? Lauren was inspired seeing photos of her mom wearing white while serving as the National Polled Hereford Queen, but she was also inspired by several past Hereford Queens. During her first Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE) in 2011, Lauren was paired with future National Hereford Queen Amanda Bacon in the



mentorship program. “I remember how big of an impact Amanda had on me as a shy, 7-year-old,” Lauren says. “She took me under her wing, encouraged me to go out and make new friends, and always made me feel included even beyond being her mentee. After that experience, I realized the queen program was so much more than a title and knew I wanted to make that same impact on other junior Hereford members.”

What advice do you have for future princesses running for the National Hereford Queen title?

Lauren says, just be yourself. Even if the process seems long or overwhelming, be confident in your own abilities. “Just enjoy the experience and lean on the people that are there to support you. Take it all in, and don’t forget to have fun,” she reminds.

What are your goals as the new National Hereford Queen?

“My goal as the National Hereford Queen is to continue upholding the strong legacy of the queens before me,” Lauren says. She hopes to serve as a positive role model, educator and advocate for the breed, while promoting Hereford genetics to purebred and commercial producers alike. “The family and the reputation that comes with the Hereford breed and the National Hereford Queen program are second to none,” Lauren says. “I look forward to meeting new people and promoting the Hereford breed as I travel to shows and sales across the country.”

What makes the Hereford breed special to you?

The people make the Hereford breed special to Lauren. “I have made the best friends and have become a member of the best Hereford family because of my involvement in the breed,” she says. “I have grown up in this breed and developed so much love for these red-and-white-faced cattle over the years. I wouldn’t trade it for anything.”

Describe your experience running for National Hereford Queen:

After being crowned Kansas Hereford Queen during the Cattlemen’s Congress in Oklahoma City, rather than the Kansas Hereford’s annual meeting due to COVID-19, Lauren began to work. The Kansas



Queen created study guides and poured over past issues of the *Hereford World* magazine to bolster her breed and industry knowledge. She met the other state queen candidates during JNHE and enjoyed assisting in the ring and visiting with young girls during the annual Queen’s Tea. After JNHE, with a full understanding of the queen candidate

guidelines and requirements, Lauren called upon several industry mentors to help her prepare for the National Hereford Queen contest at the American Royal.

“Throughout the process, I tried my best to stay true to who I am and represent myself to the best of my ability. I enjoyed getting to know the other girls and spending time doing some fun things like a gift exchange at the Hereford House in Kansas City,” she says.

While the moment she was crowned the 2021-2022 National Hereford Queen still seems surreal, the experience has already left a lasting impact.

“Running for the National Hereford Queen was a great experience. It has strengthened my confidence and helped me grow in my knowledge of the breed. I’ve also learned a lot about myself and grown in my communication skills,” Lauren says. “Most importantly, I’ve met many new friends that I hope to remain in contact with and look forward to seeing at Hereford events in the future.” **HW**



Seven candidates competed for the 2022 National Hereford Queen title in Kansas City, Mo. Pictured (l to r) are: 2020-21 National Hereford Queen Kaylee McInvale, Lockney, Texas; 2021-22 National Hereford Queen Lauren Gatz, Fairview, Kan.; First Runner-Up Madison Sifford, Goldvein, Va.; Second Runner-Up Jenna Smith, Newton, Iowa; and Miss Congeniality Josie Correll, Cleveland, N.C.