

## The Next Generation

by *Luke Daniels*

As my service as part of the National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) board of directors begins to close, I cannot express how fortunate and blessed I am to have been given this opportunity. Before my candidacy, I did not fully understand how beneficial this experience and gaining different perspectives would be. I'll be the first to tell you I owe it all to the best junior breed association in the industry.

I set the bar high when I ran for the board. I wasn't sure it was possible for a first-generation Hereford breeder from the panhandle of Texas to be elected. Now, this experience serves as the cornerstone of many larger ambitions I hold within the Hereford breed.



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If nothing else, I hope every member of the NJHA knows that the sky really is the limit and now is the perfect time to start. You may be thinking to yourself, "Luke, you can't be serious." But, I genuinely mean that now is the perfect time, and I will tell you why.

I know, you know — everyone our age and generation knows — the adversity we have faced. I was born a week after 9/11 and graduated high school during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Now a college sophomore, current events are full of volatile government talk, a crashed economy and war overseas. And I think I speak on behalf of every cattleman in my area when I say we are desperate for rain. But aside from the domestic \$5 diesel and events across the pond in Europe, you probably haven't been given the opportunity to hear that NASA made oxygen on Mars or that analysts built software that is revolutionizing the fight against human trafficking and abuse. Those are just two non-political, positive current events of many, which occurred in previous months.

**Generation ready for a challenge**

Among many things, my generation is tasked with feeding an additional billion people by 2050 and closing the gap of a growing political divide. If junior members asked me for the best advice, I'd say you are better for going through every hardship you face.



Luke Daniels, retiring NJHA Director

I have seen firsthand, among my peers, the power of consistent, unwavering persistence and perseverance. With the resilience infused in us by being raised in the agricultural industry, I would put our generation up against any.

As the urban population continues to grow, and the percentage of agriculturalists dwindles, everything we have faced at such a young age has only prepared our innovative generation to tackle the decades to come. Even amidst the world's current chaotic atmosphere, now is the perfect time to chase your dreams. Set the bar high and constantly raise your standards and your goals.

To our elders and mentors reading, my hat goes off to you. You've shaped, molded and provided the best guidance to arguably the most diverse and interesting generation yet; something that isn't easy to do at times. I want to assure you that your selfless counsel means the industry is landing in good hands going forward.

Sitting down to write this article, I was distraught thinking about closing this chapter. But I am quick to remind myself that I still have a lot left to accomplish. Words can't express how grateful I am to the NJHA and its members for allowing me to be a set of eyes and ears. Rest assured; I will always represent the breed that has given me so much.

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## One Heck of a Support System

by *Bailey Morrell*

Agriculturalists tend to be some of the more stubborn — I mean independent — individuals. We believe we can fix our problems without help from others. But after two decades in the industry, I have learned people in agriculture will also give you the shirt off their back at a moment's notice. You see, agriculturalists face many of the same challenges.

In the past three years that I have been on the National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) board of directors, our country's farmers and ranchers have faced wildfires, droughts, tornadoes and ice storms. We have lived through a global pandemic and trade barriers that collapsed markets. Let's not forget \$5 diesel (if we are lucky), a war in Europe, and any personal or family issues we may be facing. Reflecting on those challenges, my question is: How are we all still standing? My guess is resiliency.

### Helping hands

Agriculture is a close-knit family and an incredible support system. Members often refer to our "Hereford family," and I believe that describes our breed well. You see it shine through constantly, whether it is GKB Cattle and their operation offering support to Texas ranchers battling wildfires, or those exhibitors and their families hauling cattle and tack to Denver for their fellow showmen who were in a wreck

on their way to the 2019 Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE).

On a personal note, my family and I were traveling home from the 2016 JNHE when we were caught in a terrible storm in Montana. My heifer, my mother, grandma and I were all incredibly shaken up. I called a good friend of mine, past NJHA member Emilee Holt from Idaho, and asked if she had a contact at her prior junior college in Casper, Wyo., where we could layover and let the cattle out. Not only did she have the judging coach's number for me in less than 20 minutes, but the people at Casper had water and a pen ready for us when we pulled in late that night. I could not have been more thankful for my Hereford family that night.

Those are just a few of the stories and moments that resonate with me, but I am sure you have your own stories. Flat tires, hauling cattle for a friend or chasing the neighbors' cattle through orchards before finally getting them back through a gate into their own pasture — I'm sure I cannot be the only person who has experienced these hurdles.

### Supporting one another

Whether you have been on the giving or receiving end of kindness in this industry, I hope you can find it in yourself to ask for or give help to someone else in the future. Not only do neighbors help neighbors, but this industry supports one another. As numbers of those employed in agriculture continue to dwindle, we must be even stronger. Who else is going to feed the growing billions of people in this world?

As an industry, we need to continue working together to survive the many obstacles thrown



*Bailey Morrell, retiring NJHA Communications Chair*

at us daily. I encourage you to lean on the support system the agriculture industry provides as we move through these challenging times. Our industry is one that steps up when help is needed and offers support when there isn't anything more to do.

Honestly, I am proud to be a part of the Hereford family, the cattle industry and agriculture, knowing there will always be a support system just a phone call away. Hereford family, thank you for helping me grow into the person I am today. I am forever grateful for the people and friendships this industry has shown me. **HW**