



# Feeding the Future

## NJHA Fed Steer Shootout provides cattle feeding insight.

Nearly 100 young people learned more about taking their Hereford-influenced genetics from gate to plate during the National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) Fed Steer Shootout (FSS) Field Day April 2. HRC Feed Yards at Scott City, Kan., hosted the event, which included an educational program covering topics from feeding cattle to meat processing and fabrication.

HRC also feeds the FSS cattle — a record-busting 200 steers from 75 NJHA members in 17 states.

“The growth in the feedout programs provided by the American Hereford Association (AHA) is exciting to see and is a great testament to the progressiveness of Hereford breeders across the country,” says Trey Befort, AHA director of commercial programs. “These programs provide a great avenue for participants to gain a better understanding of the cattle feeding industry while collecting valuable data to benchmark genetic merit and make improvements.”

FSS entries will be harvested this summer. Participating NJHA members will receive feedlot and carcass data this fall.

“I think the biggest part of it is getting to test your own genetics. There are not very many opportunities for smaller producers to put their cattle on a feed trial and get real-world results back. From that aspect, it has a lot of benefits for a lot of operations,” says Trevor Johnson, NJHA member and FSS Field Day attendee. “The programs that the Shootout offers, whether

that be the online programs or the field day here at the feedyards ... it gives young people a great opportunity to get involved and see the side of the industry that you often don't get to see.”

### Making the grade

Demonstrations by Cargill, Inc., focused on carcass fabrication and processing, encouraging junior members, ages 7-22, to learn more about the packing side of the beef industry.



Nearly 100 Fed Steer Shootout Field Day participants gathered at HRC Feed Yards to learn more about the cattle feeding and beef industries.

During these demonstrations, NJHA members were able to see firsthand the difference between USDA Yield Grade 1 and Yield Grade 5 carcasses.

“We were very purposeful in saying, ‘Hey, what is something that the kids aren’t normally used to seeing?’ says Jarrod Gillig, Cargill Protein North America’s president of business operations and supply chain. “This way, the kids can understand what it truly takes to make a sellable steak item.”

Parents and adults in the AHA Hereford Feedout Program also participated in these workshops, encouraging in-depth conversations and questions about the fabrication process, labor issues, supply and demand, and other issues affecting this sector of the supply chain.

Over lunch, NJHA members participated in career panels with representatives from Cargill, Merck Animal Health and Certified Hereford Beef®, discussing careers ranging from fabrication manager and sales representative to marketing coordinator positions. The diverse age range provided thought-provoking questions coupled with age-appropriate explanations. Adult participants received an in-depth market report from Tanner Aherin, CattleFax analyst.

Following lunch, participants toured HRC Feed Yards’ facility and were able to view their cattle on feed. This allowed them to see how their genetics are performing in the feedyard. As Gillig mentioned in his presentation, genetics, cattle care and preparation all play key roles in success.

“Are you taking your cattle to their genetic potential?” he asks. “Then it becomes the feedlot manager’s goal to maximize that genetic potential, so when it moves to us at Cargill, we can evaluate it and see how it grades.”

### Entering for opportunities

Young people can enter individual pens of three or pens of five cattle to be fed and processed as part of the FSS program.

Entries are judged based on the cattle’s performance and profitability and the young person’s industry knowledge and participation in educational opportunities. Winning entries are recognized at the AHA Annual Meeting in Kansas City, Mo. Additionally, junior members maximize their cattle’s marketing potential by gaining access to U.S. Premium Beef’s leading marketing grids, including *Certified Hereford Beef*.

Outside of the numerous opportunities for young people to evaluate their genetics, learn about the feeding industry, market fat cattle on a lucrative grid and win prizes, the FSS prepares young cattlemen and women for future challenges.

“Everybody involved in the beef industry has a role in feeding the world, and it is a very important role,” says Lee Mayo, HRC Feed Yards general manager. “I think we can teach that to these young people and have them take some ownership in that responsibility moving forward.”

Entries for the 2023 FSS must be submitted by Nov. 1, 2022, and delivered to the feedyard during the first part of December. **HW**



NJHA members attending the FSS Field Day enjoyed demonstrations by Cargill, Inc., focused on carcass fabrication and processing as well as lively discussions on the cattle feeding industry and beef demand.