

Awe Inspiring



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NJHA members, families and those who support them set the bar even higher.

Banners in the Bluegrass — the 2022 VitaFerm® Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE) — in Louisville Ky., was an incredible event. You will find full coverage in this issue of the *Hereford World*. There were 775 exhibitors representing 39 states. I am always awed by the quality of kids, parents and breeders who support this event each year.

Families make an amazing commitment, supporting the passion of junior members to compete in the show, learn through other contests and activities, and connect with others from across the nation who share the same passion. I visited with one mother who traveled with her family 2,300 miles one way to attend.

The quality of cattle was exceptionally strong, and they were shown and presented by some of the best you will ever see. The showmanship competition is just a treat to watch; these kids are so well schooled in how to present their animals. It is an amazing feat to make it through a heat into a semi-final and then finish in the top 10.

Activities beyond the ring might be even more impressive. Speeches, sales, the Hereford Bowl, Certified Hereford Beef® Cook-Off, photography and future professionals continue to build junior members' skill sets and position them for success as they advocate for our industry.

Some of these contests took on a new look in recent years. For instance, many of these contests now begin online via Zoom. I am not sure many of us had even heard of Zoom three years ago, but this technology now enables remote collaboration for everything from classroom work to job interviews and staff meetings to all of the rest. This is another example of how the National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) is preparing members for future success. I commend the NJHA board of directors for adjusting to the new normal.

Likewise, the NJHA board of directors established Bridging the Gap to provide junior members more opportunities by connecting them with colleges and industry leaders. One industry partner shared this sincere message: "Great set of young adults who are serious about furthering their opportunities."

Sharing a legacy

The American Hereford Association (AHA) and NHJA have been able to connect with industry partners over the years who share similar values and goals. BioZyme, Inc. is one of these trusted partners.

Bob Norton, BioZyme, Inc. CEO passed unexpectedly this spring. He was truly a great person who always had an inspirational message for youth. Bob was passionate about Hereford youth, and he served on the board of the Hereford Youth Foundation of America (HYFA). The HYFA board honored his legacy at Banners in the Bluegrass with the Bob Norton Excellence Award. The award will be given each year to a former NJHA member who shares the work ethic and enthusiasm for life that Bob represented. The inaugural award was presented to Cody Jensen, Courtland, Kan. Cody is very deserving of this honor. He has a tremendous work ethic and serving attitude towards the industry and the people within the industry. Congratulations, Cody.

And congratulations to the junior members and their families and friends who support them. Also, congratulations to the Kentucky Hereford Association, NJHA board of directors, AHA Board of Directors, AHA staff, interns, ambassadors and all of the breeders and industry partners who supported the event. It really does take a village to pull off this event. It was a huge success. Thanks to all involved. We will see you at the 2023 JNHE in Madison, Wis. **HW**