

## A Summer to Remember

by **Taylor Belle Matheny**

By the end of spring, I am always eager for warmer weather and the excitement summer brings. This year the start of summer meant a new face, added excitement and a new journey for the American Hereford Association (AHA) communications team. In May, Kelsey Vejraska, a Washington native and Oklahoma State University (OSU) alumna, began her career as the AHA audio-visual specialist.

Kelsey's arrival began a summer focused on telling the story of the Hereford breed. In June, we made the trip with Trey Befort, AHA director of commercial programs, to the western region to visit with producers who have seen the value in coming home to Hereford. We gathered content that will be essential in marketing the strengths of the breed in future campaigns. For five days we rode around looking at Hereford and Hereford-influenced cattle with cattlemen and women and captured a way of life many of you are fortunate to

live daily. Their testimonies prove Hereford cattle are an essential component of the beef industry.

Our next trip landed us at Colorado State University (CSU) and Olsen Ranches, Harrisburg, Neb., to capture content about the AHA's latest research with CSU focused on sustainability. The conversations we had with the team at CSU and Douglas Olsen were critical in developing the webinar AHA hosted on July 12. If you weren't able to watch the live presentation, I encourage you to

scan the QR code below to learn more about the project and access the recording. This trip added to our collection of assets that will be key to our marketing for the next fiscal year.

We rounded out the summer by traveling to my home state of Kentucky for a banner week. As you'll see in this issue of *Hereford World*, the Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE) is a top-notch event creating and educating future leaders of the agriculture industry. It is always impressive to see the passionate Hereford breeders traveling from near and far for the JNHE. Kelsey and I were both positively impacted by junior associations as kids, and it brings a new perspective to be on the team helping tell the story of the week. It truly has been a summer to remember, and one that reinvigorates us both as we create the message marketing the breed. From commercial producers to Hereford youth, we have visited with so many who find value in the Hereford breed. This fall we travel to another region to capture content and couldn't be more excited to tell the story from all angles of the industry. From our lens, the breed is headed in the right direction, and the testimonies speak volumes about the value in the white face. **HW**

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Taylor Belle Matheny (upper photo) and Kelsey Vejraska, lead the AHA charge to tell and show the Hereford story.