

by Haley Mouser

Try Something New

Finding a routine amidst the fall craziness can be a daunting task. I hope you all have found that routine and are ready to fully enjoy the holiday and show season ahead. My fall took some extra getting used to this year. In August I moved 15 hours from home and started my freshman year at Butler Community College as an agribusiness major and livestock judging team member. Until the summer of 2021, this was not my plan. I knew I loved cattle, and I loved speaking. I decided to go all in, combining my passions, with the opportunity to judge. A million different questions and fears could have held me back, but here I am, barely 15 months later, living in El Dorado, Kan., in the midst of my freshman season on a collegiate livestock judging team.

Regardless of whether it's a life-changing or day-changing

decision, we all have a tendency to want to wait until we know more — until we have all the details, and we're sure. But as cliché as it might be, sometimes we just need to step out and say, "Yes," and embrace the uncertainty as potential for new experiences and growth. So, what is it you are waiting to try? Whether it's a competition, position, or an activity you want to become involved in, I encourage you to reevaluate what is holding you back.

Feeding opportunity

Each fall, by Nov. 1, you have the opportunity to participate in the National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) Fed Steer Shootout, an industry-leading competition. But as with all NJHA programs, it is much more than a competition. The process begins by sending one or more of your steers to HRC Feed Yards in Scott City, Kan. You will retain ownership of your animals, receive health reports during their time on feed, and upon harvest, see a carcass report complete with a paycheck.

Based on feedyard and grid performance, awards for overall champion and special recognitions will be presented at the American Hereford Association (AHA) Annual Meeting in Kansas City, Mo. Beyond seeing how your genetics perform and gaining industry experience and knowledge, there is an opportunity to attend a field day dedicated to gaining firsthand knowledge of the beef industry. The activities and educational content touch on a variety of topics including Certified Hereford Beef® standards, carcass fabrication, feedyard calculations, performance and Beef Quality Assurance certification. The field day provides an opportunity to step foot in a feedlot, see your steers, meet the owner and operators



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of the yard, and participate in a unique chance to view all facets of a feedyard and how it affects your cattle and genetics. The field day is open to everyone regardless of having a steer on feed or not, so be sure to set aside time each spring to attend and follow along with NJHA on social media to find out when to RSVP.

When I ran for the NJHA board of directors during the 2022 VitaFerm® Junior National Hereford Expo, I urged you all to become more involved in the NJHA — to step out of 'your lane' and experience what can only be gained through involvement.

When I sent my first steer to the NJHA Fed Steer Shootout in 2018, I did not know what to expect. But just like choosing my college plans, it was an opportunity I couldn't let slip through my fingers. It opened my eyes to parts of the beef industry that drive our nation, gave me the experience and knowledge necessary to understand the importance of my decisions as a cow-calf and seedstock producer, and above all, provided numerous connections and friendships. Juniors, take advantage of the opportunities provided; you never know what might spark your interest or ignite your passion. **HW**



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