

Leaving the Comfort Zone

Another JNHE in the books.

Up until about a month ago, I had never, ever flown on an airplane. I'd always found a way around it — whether it was driving, carpooling with a friend or just not going.

I was terrified. How was the trip through airport security for the first time going to go? Did I pack the wrong things? Was I going to be able to find my gate? What if the turbulence on the plane was bad? When I landed, how would I navigate the Denver airport, one of the largest airports in the world? These were all questions I had as I prepared to get on a plane for the first time.

I went through security and found my gate, and I remember thinking to myself, “That was easy.” And then, the plane left the runway, cars became little black specks and the ground below looked like mismatched green squares for as far as I could see, and I couldn't help smiling. I was in the air, and it was fine. Fun, even.

Then, I landed in Denver. I followed the signs, hopped on the train, picked up my bag and found my ride, all in 30 minutes flat. Flying out of Denver a few days later was just as easy. I got out of my comfort zone and found something I would do again and again.

Summer junior nationals, like the VitaFerm® Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE), are meant for leaving comfort zones behind. Whether it's entering the showing for the first time, participating in new contests, introducing themselves to a new friend or setting a goal for the next year, JNHE attendees find ways to get out of their comfort zones and become better for it.

In this issue

As tradition goes, the September *Hereford World* is all about JNHE. You'll find coverage from the event beginning on Page 53. The “Mad Dash to the Hereford Bash” was a show to remember, with the first-ever selection of the top five bred-and-owned females.

Riley Greiten, the American Hereford Association and Hereford Publications Inc. communications intern, wrote several fabulous stories; they can be found throughout the magazine. Our team loved having her in the office, and we will miss her tremendously.

Events like the JNHE are one of my favorite parts of the summer. Dreams come true inside and outside the showing, when youth leave their comfort zones behind.

As the saying goes, “Great things never come from comfort zones.”



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The Hereford Family

by *Riley Greiten*

The “Hereford family” is a phrase I've heard quite a bit this summer. When I began my internship, I didn't know what this new term meant. But, over the last 12 weeks, I've lived the mantra, and I'm leaving Kansas City, Mo., knowing exactly what it means.

As a Texas native, moving to the Midwest this summer was a change for me. Growing up, I had always hoped to intern for a large cattle breed organization one day. Now having the opportunity, I couldn't be more grateful for the people I have met, worked with and learned from.

One of the many highlights of my internship was attending the VitaFerm® Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE). Throughout this week, I saw and experienced what the “Hereford family” meant. Walking through the barns one afternoon I noticed an exhibitor clipping her heifer. When I stopped to take a photo, I was greeted by the exhibitor's family. Her mom

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Riley Greiten

came up to me and began asking me who I was. I explained my internship and what I was doing at the JNHE. Her first question after my explanation was, “How’s your internship going?” followed by, “How are you enjoying Wisconsin?” which I quickly responded with how amazing the weather was. At the end of our

conversation the exhibitor’s mom said, “We are happy to have you this summer.”

I had never met this woman or any of her family before, but in a few short minutes of conversing with her, I understood the “Hereford family.” Without knowing who I was, she took the time to get to know me and asked

about my time with the American Hereford Association (AHA).

Later in my week at the JNHE I had the opportunity to sit down with the National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) retiring board members. When interviewing these four individuals, I heard about their experiences as NJHA directors. In my interview with Lauren McMillan, she said something that has been on my mind since leaving Wisconsin.

“At one point you were hoping to be where you are right now,” McMillan explained.

As I leave Kansas City and embark on my final semester at Texas Tech University, the question of, “What’s next?” is lingering in my mind. McMillan’s words stopped me in my tracks and reminded me to look up and be thankful for where I am right now. Leaving the AHA, I am grateful for this experience and my newfound understanding of the “Hereford family.” **HW**