

## Get in on The Grand Daddy of 'Em All

The VitaFerm® Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE) is one of the largest beef breed shows in the U.S., with exhibitors from across the country competing in the showring. Since it's one of the largest national junior cattle shows in the world, some might think exhibitors have nothing else to do but show cattle; however, that couldn't be further from the truth.

Throughout the week, JNHE hosts 12 different contests for participants of all ages as well as events and opportunities which encourage juniors to make friends, learn new skills and have fun.

Exhibitors can find descriptions, qualifications, rules and regulations for these JNHE contests and events at [Hereford.org](http://Hereford.org). There is a contest for everyone, such as the Certified Hereford Beef® Cook-Off, Hereford bowl, photography, speech, sales and promotional poster contests. Even though these contests don't involve live cattle, they provide fun and educational experiences for attendees to learn more about the Hereford breed and the beef industry.

Other events do include hands-on cattle experience, such as the livestock judging, team fitting and showmanship contests. Hundreds of junior members mark cards and sharpen their cattle evaluation skills during the judging contest. The team fitting contest fosters teamwork among state association members. The National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) hosts one of the most elite showmanship competitions in the country, where the top 10 exhibitors in each age division are selected after multiple rounds of competition.

Along with contests at JNHE, there are programs designed by the NJHA to help develop leadership and professional skills in young people to prepare them for whatever their next step may be. The first program for all ages is the Pen-to-Pen program. Pen-to-Pen is a mentorship program where younger members are paired with older ones who will mentor them during JNHE and exchange letters throughout the year. Pen-to-Pen participation encourages young people to make friends and network with the "Hereford family."

Bridging the Gap, an NJHA-sponsored career fair style event, allows industry professionals and college representatives to network and mingle with young people. As an event attendee last year, the number of potential careers the agricultural industry has to offer was eye-opening. Anyone in attendance can meet new people — and may even discover a new career path. Don't forget to bring some resumes!

While most of these JNHE events and competitions are scheduled for the middle of the week, NJHA will kick-off the week with lots of excitement. Opening ceremonies showcases all of the JNHE exhibitors in the showring and builds energy for the coming week. Following opening ceremonies is food and fun night and Cornhole for a Cause. These events allow everyone to get in on the action and enjoy the company of fellow Hereford enthusiasts. On top of all that, there will be a little friendly competition in the annual



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5K race to see who is the fastest in the barns.

JNHE is so much more than a cattle show; it's an opportunity to get to know fellow exhibitors and Hereford breeders. The NJHA strives to put on the best show possible while providing its members with opportunities to learn and create lifelong connections. Take advantage of the excitement and prepare for The Grand Daddy of 'Em All. **HW**

Logan McFatridge serves as the membership chair on the NJHA board of directors.