

Building Leaders in the Lone Star State

The BOLD conference offers an elite leadership opportunity for Hereford juniors.

“It’s about doing the little things that lead to the championship and empowering others around us, so that when we rise, we raise everyone around us.”

World champion rodeo athlete Tyson Durfey posed that challenge to National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) members attending the Building On Leadership Development (BOLD) conference in Desdemona, Texas, April 4-7.

BOLD has quickly become an NJHA staple. It is designed for college-aged junior Hereford members seeking opportunities to expand their leadership skills.

Durfey kicked off this year’s event and left a lasting impact on the

attendees with his story of overcoming adversity and continuing to push himself and his brand to do better and be better. His inspiration acted as a catalyst for juniors to push themselves during the conference.

The conference focuses on improving personal leadership, providing career opportunities and cultivating lifelong relationships. This elite event welcomes only a small number of junior members who must apply and be selected to attend, representing their respective states.

BOLD is graciously hosted by Gary and Kathy Buchholz, GKB Cattle, at their Hi Point Ranch. The GKB Cattle Youth Endowment, established in 2023, has made many different opportunities possible within the NJHA over the past year, including

the selection of the top five overall bred-and-owned females at the VitaFerm® Junior National Hereford Expo and the growth and success of the BOLD conference, building a pipeline of future leaders.

Along with inspirational speakers and workshops, BOLD featured a panel of career professionals from GKB Cattle, PepsiCo, Priefert and Purina Animal Nutrition. Attendees participated in a variety of leadership and career-building activities, including resume writing and mock job interviews. They received personal mentorship throughout the conference.

A first-hand look at the Desdemona, Texas, operations of GKB Cattle was offered to the 2024 BOLD leadership conference attendees, led by Gary Buchholz, GKB Cattle.





Front row (l to r) are: Gary and Kathy Buchholz, GKB Cattle; Elaina Walsh, Godfrey, Ill.; Ryah Snedden, Maricopa, Calif.; Harlee Watson, Flemingsburg, Ky.; Carolyn Johnson, Harwood, Texas; Sadie Holman, Hebron, Ohio; Hannah Pearson, Oconto, Neb.; Maddie Weaber, Wamego, Kan.; Kerrigan Bauserman, Strasburg, Va.; Lauren Jones, Darlington, Wis.; Haley Mouser, Tenstrike, Minn.; Savay Sexton, Cost, Texas; Matt Bruns, North Platte, Neb.; Cash Spindle, Moriarty, N.M.; and Denton Stapleton, Clinton, Ill. Back row (l to r) are: Wesley Denton, Blue Rapids, Kan.; Sydney Espenscheid-Stolee, Centerville, Iowa; Brooke Aue, Auburndale, Wis.; Gavin Rhode, Stewartville, Mo.; Logan McFatrige, Otterbein, Ind.; Tar Tut, Faribault, Minn.; Simon Shepard, Altamont, Ill.; Cally Miller, El Dorado, Kan.; Teagan Wunschel, Plymouth, Calif.; Sarah Beth Callicott, Only, Tenn.; Naomi Sinnamon, Kokomo, Ind.; Cady Pieper, Zurich, Kan.; Suzanne Matheny, NJHA advisor; Katie Colyer, HYFA board of directors; Amy Cowan, AHA director of youth activities and foundation; and Bailey Clanton, AHA national shows coordinator and youth activities assistant.

“I saw myself change over the days, especially with the focus on our internal leadership and how our mindset is so influential to who we are as a leader,” says Maddie Weaber, Wamego, Kan., one of 20 BOLD conference attendees in the 2024 class.

The impact Weaber mentions is an example of personal growth yielded by leadership workshops hosted by the NJHA board of directors. Workshops included “Looking Internal at Your Leadership,” “Yourself as a Leader Moving Forward” and “What are You Doing with Your Leadership?”



Gary and Kathy Buchholz, GKB Cattle, took part in the career roundtables, having personal conversations with the juniors in attendance at the conference.

Capitalizing on the strength of the NJHA board of directors, these workshops were designed, curated and led by junior board members. Their presentations showcased their leadership skills and their ability to act as mentors to their own peers.

“Be BOLD, be you and prepare yourself for the future,” encouraged Logan McFatrige, NJHA membership chair.

Jon DeClerck, Purina cattle specialist, was very involved in this year’s conference. He is passionate about youth in the industry and encouraged attendees to be leaders. DeClerck acted as the opening and closing speaker of the NJHA board-led workshops, summarizing leadership and pushing the juniors to look inward at their different leadership styles and techniques. The following morning, he also sat in as an industry expert during career roundtables, providing insight into his career path and current position at Purina.

Weaber listened intently to DeClerck’s graduate school experience and advice for her as she embarks on a similar career path. “We all talked about what we want to do with our lives, and he was able to use his experience in the field to give us recommendations for how we



Jon DeClerck, Purina cattle specialist, worked closely with the 20 attendees of the 2024 BOLD leadership conference, assisting them in honing their individual leadership skills and specialties.

could go about doing what we want to do,” Weaber says.

Tyler Norvell, managing partner of Norvell Consulting LLC, Oklahoma City, stressed the importance of self-awareness as young leaders look beyond themselves to embrace the opportunity and responsibility of being agricultural advocates.

Norvell, who also serves as executive director of the Oklahoma Youth Expo and Cattlemen’s Congress, explained, “To whom much is given, much is expected. You’ve been given a huge opportunity this weekend. This is incredible, what you’ve been given the opportunity to do, and shame on you if you don’t take advantage of it.” **HW**