



NJHA DIRECTORS ELECTED

Delegates chose four new leaders to wear the maroon jacket.

National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) members elected new directors of the organization during the 2024 VitaFerm® Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE). The four newly elected NJHA directors were announced during the maroon jacket ceremony on July 11 after state delegate votes were counted. Directors serve a three-year term on a team of 12 directors.

After giving their retiring addresses, four board members passed their maroon jackets to the newly elected directors — Emma Ballinger, McKee, Ky.; Matt Bruns, North Platte, Neb.; Sarah Beth Callicott, Only, Tenn.; and Rylie Meinhardt, Onaga, Kan. The retiring board members include Tar Tut, Faribault, Minn.; Wesley Denton, Blue Rapids, Kan.; Lauren Jones, Darlington, Wis.; and Hannah Pearson, Oconto, Neb.

The 2024-25 NJHA officer team includes chairman, Logan McFatrige, Otterbein, Ind.; vice chairman, Haley Mouser, Tenstrike, Minn.; communications chair, Salem Sifford, Goldvein, Va.; membership chair, Lauren Gatz, Fairview, Kan.; fundraising chair, Sam Birdsall, Torrington, Wyo; and leadership chair, Harlee Watson, Flemingsburg, Ky. Also serving as directors are Kaylee McInvale, Cumby, Texas; and Isaac Rhode, Stewartville, Mo., alongside the four newly elected board members.

Newly elected directors

Emma Ballinger, McKee, Ky., is a sophomore at the University of Kentucky (UK), where she is majoring in marketing and community and leadership development. Ballinger has found success inside and outside the showing, serving as the Kentucky FFA state secretary,



Emma Ballinger

Kentucky Junior Hereford Association vice president and being named a UK Singletary Scholar.

“My goal as an NJHA director is to encourage participation, enhance educational opportunities and foster leadership and community service,” Ballinger says. “By working together, we can create an environment where every member feels valued and empowered to achieve their full potential.”

Matt Bruns, North Platte, Neb., is a junior at Kansas State University (K-State), majoring in animal sciences and industry with plans to pursue a career in livestock marketing and auctioneering. An active member of the NJHA and the Nebraska Junior Hereford Association, he has attended Hereford-sponsored leadership conferences and participated in the NJHA Fed Steer Shootout. At K-State, he sits on the Premier Farm Credit student board and is a member of the livestock judging team.



Matt Bruns

“Being an active and dedicated board member is important for me,” Bruns says. “Being a positive influence on younger members and serving as a role model is the most important part of being a director for the NJHA. It is my aspiration to serve the association and its members as others have done before me.”

Sarah Beth Callicott, Only, Tenn., is a sophomore at Tennessee Tech University, where she is majoring in agricultural education. Following college, she plans to teach high school agriculture. She wants to establish a show team at her future FFA program and focus on developing leadership skills through hands-on activities. Callicott plans to continue building her Hereford herd.



Sara Beth Callicott

“We have an opportunity to develop the future decision makers of the Hereford breed,” Callicott says. “By ensuring that they are well equipped to advance this organization, we are ensuring that the Hereford breed continues to excel. I not only want to help serve and advance this organization, but it is also very vital to me that I help junior members grow individually.”

Rylie Meinhardt, Onaga, Kan., is a freshman at K-State, majoring in animal sciences and industry with a communications option. Her roles in the Kansas Junior Hereford Association include serving as the vice president and secretary. She is hopeful these experiences and



Rylie Meinhardt



Emma Ballinger receives the maroon jacket of Lauren Jones, retiring communications chair.



Hannah Pearson, retiring leadership chair, hands off her maroon jacket to fellow Nebraska native, **Matt Bruns**.



Front row (l to r): **Kaylee McInvale**, Cumby, Texas; **Salem Sifford**, Goldvein, Va.; **Haley Mouser**, Tenstrike, Minn.; **Emma Ballinger**, Mckee, Ky.; **Harlee Watson**, Flemingsburg, Ky.; and **Lauren Gatz**, Fairview, Kan. Back row (l to r): **Matt Bruns**, North Platte, Neb.; **Isaac Rhode**, Stewartsville, Mo.; **Logan McFatridge**, Otterbein, Ind.; **Sam Birdsall**, Torrington, Wyo.; **Sarah Beth Callicott**, Only, Tenn.; and **Rylie Meinhardt**, Onaga, Kan.

the skills honed will serve her well on the NJHA board of directors.

“As I continue to write my story, I can’t wait to include a chapter as an NJHA director,” Meinhardt explains. “In this role, I recognize the importance of sharing my authentic self and skills to benefit the board.”

Other directors

Sam Birdsall, Torrington, Wyo., is a sophomore at K-State in agricultural economics with a specialty in finance. He is active in the Collegiate



Sam Birdsall

Cattlemen’s Club, the College of Agriculture’s student council and the Alpha Gamma Rho (AGR) fraternity. Through AGR, Birdsall helped plan and execute the Alpha Gamma Royal Preview Show. Birdsall has held various leadership roles in his state Hereford association, and he is currently the president of the Wyoming Junior Hereford Association. He has also been a member of the NJHA for 13 years.

Since Birdsall’s first JNHE in 2012, he has known that he wanted to serve on the board. Birdsall’s goal for his time on the board is to inspire junior Hereford members to dream more, learn more, do more and become more.

Lauren Gatz, Fairview, Kan., is a senior at K-State majoring in agricultural communications and journalism with minors in leadership studies and marketing. At K-State, Gatz is active in Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow (ACT), the K-State *Agriculturist* magazine and the Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority. Gatz interned with the Beef Improvement Federation over the summer and looks forward to continuing to be a beef industry advocate. She has been an NJHA member for 13 years. Gatz currently serves as the communications director for the Kansas Junior Hereford Association.



Lauren Gatz

Gatz’s goal as a junior board member is to help others find their place within the association and encourage them to take advantage of the opportunities the NJHA has to offer. She hopes to contribute to the development of the next generation of leaders and ensure the future success of the Hereford breed.



Sarah Beth Callicott dons the maroon jacket handed on by retiring chairman, Tar Tut.



Rylie Meinhardt gets the coveted maroon jacket from fellow Kansan and retiring vice chairman, Wesley Denton.

Logan McFatridge,

Otterbein, Ind., is a senior at Purdue University and is studying agribusiness. His future goals include a career in agricultural sales and marketing and taking over his family's Hereford herd. While at Purdue, McFatridge has been involved with the FarmHouse Fraternity and the livestock judging team. McFatridge interned at American Foods Group over the summer, where he worked in cattle procurement alongside the company's cattle buyers. McFatridge has been an active member of the Indiana Junior Hereford Association, attending the JNHE and competing in contests since 2010. He has held a leadership position in his state association for four years and placed in Hereford bowl, sales and livestock judging.

McFatridge plans to use his leadership skills to guide him on his maroon jacket journey, while inspiring younger members to one day don a maroon jacket themselves.

Kaylee McInvale, Cumby, Texas, is a recent graduate of Tarleton State University. McInvale will attend K-State and pursue a master's degree in animal sciences and industry.

McInvale has raised and shown cattle her entire life and holds memberships in several breed associations. She has been active in both the Texas Junior Horned and Polled Hereford Associations for 12 years and served as the 2020-2021 National Hereford Queen. She was inspired by the NJHA directors who wore a maroon jacket before her. McInvale hopes that during her time on the NJHA board she can inspire those around her to follow their dreams.

Haley Mouser, Tenstrike, Minn., recently graduated from Butler Community College with an associate degree in agribusiness. She was



Logan McFatridge

also a member of the livestock judging team. Mouser will attend South Dakota State University to continue judging livestock and study animal science. Mouser hopes to earn her doctorate degree while pursuing her passion for public speaking.

Since attending her first JNHE in 2016, her goal was to one day wear a maroon jacket. This led her to extensive involvement in all facets of the NJHA, including serving as the Minnesota Junior Hereford Breeders president and being named the NJHA Fed Steer Shootout Senior of the Year.

Her focus as a board member continues to be serving juniors and paying forward all that was given to her during her time in the NJHA.

Isaac Rhode, Stewartsville, Mo., is a senior at the University of Missouri (Mizzou) majoring in agriculture with an emphasis in animal science, agricultural business and agricultural leadership. At Mizzou, Rhode is involved in the AGR, Block and Bridle Club and Collegiate Farm Bureau. He has served in leadership roles for the Missouri Hereford Association, Missouri Junior Cattlemen's Association and Missouri Junior Angus Association. Rhode has also been recognized for his involvement in FFA on the state and national level.

This summer, he interned with Ag-Power, a John Deere dealership, where he gained valuable experience in production agriculture. He aims for a career working with livestock producers in sales or services and will continue raising purebred Hereford cattle with his family. Rhode's experience exhibiting at the JNHE more than a dozen times ignited his passion for the Hereford breed and the NJHA. His goal as an NJHA director is to help other junior members achieve their goals and dreams. His motto for life is, "Adapt to change in any situation."



Isaac Rhode

Salem Sifford, Goldvein, Va., is a junior at Virginia Tech majoring in dairy science with minors in agricultural business and animal and poultry sciences. At Virginia Tech, Sifford is active in Beef Leadership Council, Dairy Club, Alpha Zeta and Collegiate Young Farmers. She is also a member of the livestock judging team and has competed on the dairy judging team.

Sifford interned for the Virginia Cattlemen's Association, as well as for Virginia Cooperative Extension, over the summer. She is excited to serve as a voice for Virginia cattle producers and youth in the agricultural industry. Sifford has been a member of the NJHA for 13 years. Some of her fondest memories were made with the Hereford family.

She strives to be someone that young people can look up to. Her goal within the NJHA is to focus on encouraging juniors to work toward their goals with confidence and dedication.

Harlee Watson, Flemingsburg, Ky., is a freshman at Butler Community College where she majors in agribusiness and is a member of the livestock judging team. Watson is a recent graduate of Fleming County High School where she served as both the Fleming County and Licking River Region FFA president, as well as the student council vice president. Watson is heavily involved in the Kentucky Junior Cattlemen's Association and served on the board for several years.

Watson has been a member of the NJHA for 12 years and served for three years as the Kentucky Junior Hereford Association president. Watson's goal as a junior board member is to motivate juniors of all ages to get involved and have fun. She hopes to shine light on opportunities and help members develop their leadership skills to improve the Hereford breed and agricultural industry. **HW**



Salem Sifford



Kaylee McInvale



Harlee Watson



Haley Mouser