

Hereford Family Shines

Congratulations JNHE participants.

If you ever need a jolt of hope and enthusiasm, spend some time at the VitaFerm® Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE), which celebrated its silver anniversary in Grand Island, Neb., in July. It was indeed “The Grand Daddy of ‘Em All.”



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Members of the National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) are so impressive. Their skills are notably advanced compared to many of the same age. They have confidence beyond their years, which provides them with a clear advantage as they pursue adult careers.

The cattle shows were deep in quality from end to end. It was rewarding to see class after class walk into the ring with quality cattle that were presented and shown so well. The bred-and-owned show is always a highlight as juniors exhibit heifers they’ve bred, grown and developed. It has been made even more special with the generosity of the GKB Cattle Youth Endowment and the selection of the top five.

A huge shoutout goes to participants and sponsors of the Sullivan Supply team fitting and showmanship contests. The skills these juniors demonstrate are just amazing. More than 400 spectators were on hand to watch the senior showmanship finals. Countless others watched virtually via Walton Webcasting.

The show days get long, but it is worth every moment to see the competitive skills of these youth.

Sowing future success

The five-day JNHE is packed full of many opportunities for juniors to build relationships, network and compete.

For instance, Bridging the Gap, the future professionals contest and Pen-to-Pen are all fairly new additions. Each of these activities is specifically designed to allow juniors of all ages to network and build skills and contacts.

There was plenty of fun throughout the week. It was great to see crowds up and down the trade show. What an incredible turnout and state support for the tailgate party and the Certified Hereford Beef® (CHB) tri tip feed.

Thanks to the American Hereford Association (AHA) staff for serving CHB to more than 1,500 attendees, including the junior members and their parents.

Thanks to so many

Sometimes, we take for granted how much opportunity is available to juniors through the JNHE and other NJHA events. I hope everyone understands how these opportunities help juniors develop leadership skills that will benefit their lives and careers.

Likewise, it can be too easy to overlook the commitment made by so many to make possible an unmatched caliber event like the JNHE.

First, are the NJHA families who dedicate themselves to supporting their own juniors and those of others during long hours of learning and preparation. It’s always inspiring to walk around the JNHE barns and see how families work together to make sure the juniors are prepared for their speech, sales presentation, judging contest, Hereford bowl and other events. While one group works with the juniors, others are preparing and organizing meals.

Next are the non-family volunteers. Think about how many people it takes to direct traffic and accommodate nearly 1,300 head of cattle and around 800 exhibitors and participants throughout the week.

Then there are the many sponsors whose generous investment of time and other resources provide juniors with so many opportunities. As an example, NEOGEN sponsored free DNA tests for JNHE entries. Juniors will receive parentage if available, genomic-enhanced expected progeny differences (GE-EPDs) and all abnormality results except Mandibulofacial Dysostosis (MD).

Finally, none of this would be possible without the direction of NJHA leadership and the lion-hearted extra efforts of AHA staff, interns and ambassadors.

Bottom line, it was an incredible week. Congratulations and thanks to everyone involved. **HW**