Foundation's Focus

Leadership Takes Center Stage

by **Amy Cowan**

After returning from the recent Faces of Leadership conference and wrapping up a memorable VitaFerm® Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE), I am more impressed than ever by the young leaders our association and foundation are building. The Hereford Youth Foundation of America (HYFA) is truly becoming the gateway to leadership for the next generation, and there is no stopping us now.

We live in a busy world filled with countless choices and opportunities for young people and their families, yet year after year, you choose Hereford and all the experiences the National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) provides. "Thank you" hardly seems enough for making Hereford a priority and being part of leadership in action at our many events.

This summer has been nothing short of unforgettable. I've been fortunate to have a front-row seat as junior members stepped onto the leadership stage, learning different leadership styles, refining their skills and preparing to guide this nation's future, no matter their career path or industry.

Leadership lessons are woven into every NJHA program. But one message resonates year after year, conference after conference, and that is the power of connections and the vital role networking plays. In my mind, there's nothing more important for our young people than helping them build strong networks. That begins at an early age, from the NJHA Meet-Up, powered by our good friends at Sure Champ®, to the Bridging the Gap College and Career Fair for older members, a crowd favorite for attendees, industry partners and universities alike.

The NJHA board, both those who handed off their maroon jackets in Louisville, Ky., and those who put them on for the first time, remains at the heart of HYFA's leadership pillar. I couldn't be prouder of this group. Each season, they pour their hearts into guiding younger members, whether they're stepping into the showring for the first time or attending events like the Building On Leadership Development (BOLD) conference, Fed Steer Shootout Field Day or Faces of Leadership. Thanks to our incredible donors, HYFA has been able to invest in developing the board, and watching their growth is a testament to the impact of that commitment.

Fast forward to this fall, HYFA's leadership will shine on an international stage when we welcome 11 teams to compete in the Young Breeders Competition, held in conjunction with the World Hereford Conference. Once again, this would not be possible without our donors, who are making this global experience a reality.

I'm especially excited to announce HYFA's newest fund — the Cottonwood Springs Global Leadership and Education Endowment, established by Tim and Nancy Keilty, to support international leadership opportunities. After decades of dedicated service on the HYFA board, Nancy retired this past year, but not before ensuring young breeders will have the resources to represent America at the World Hereford Conference this fall in Kansas City, Mo., and for generations to come as the event travels the globe.

Meet the Team USA members on Page 42 of this issue. HYFA is proud to support our young people as they take center stage in October. I hope you'll join us in cheering on the red, white and blue, and continue to be part of this incredible leadership journey. HW

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