World's Perspective

The Best Seat in the House

by **Sydnee Shive**

Covering the JNHE every year is a pleasure.



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I've spent my fair share of time in the showring with a camera. I've watched countless grand drives and seen hundreds of exhibitors get the coveted handshake. Yet, the VitaFerm® Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE) remains one of my favorite events to cover each year.

I get a front row seat to all of the action with a camera in my hand, and it's such a pleasure. Watching National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) members accomplish their goals, create connections, have fun and make the most out of JNHE never gets old.

One of the best parts of my job is capturing the stories that make the Hereford breed so special, whether it's through a photo or a written article. The Hereford breed is built on tradition and rich with history. From the fifth-generation Hereford breeder to the first-time JNHE exhibitor, all the moments matter.

In this issue

The September issue is one of our largest issues of the year, right next to the July Herd Bull and Reference Edition. Each year, I eat, sleep and breathe the September issue after I leave JNHE and until we send it to print. It's one of the most rewarding issues the magazine team puts together. The JNHE is a huge, impactful event for NJHA members and their families, and playing a small role in telling JNHE's story is an honor.

JNHE coverage starts on Page 53. There are results, stories, recaps and more as you flip through the 66-page special section. Our Hereford Publications Inc. and AHA communications intern, Denver Drake, has several wonderful stories throughout the section.

Long-time AHA eastern region field representative, Tommy Coley, is retiring. There's no doubt in my mind that the Hereford breed wouldn't be the same without him, and I've really enjoyed working alongside him. He's one of the best. His story is on Page 32.

As of Sept. 1, the American Hereford Association is about 45 days away from hosting the World Hereford Conference for the first time since 1996. A preview of speakers and the schedule are on Page 44, and more about Team USA's Young Breeders Conference representatives is on Page 42. We can't wait to see Hereford enthusiasts from around the world in Kansas City, Mo.

Living the Dream

by **Denver Drake**

As I reflect on the last several months interning with the American Hereford Association (AHA), I'm struck by a deep sense of gratitude and wonder. Just last summer, I was stepping into the office as one of the youth activities interns, wide-eyed, eager, yet incredibly nervous. Now, here I am, back again. This time as the communications and Hereford Publications Inc. intern but continuing a journey I once only dreamed about during my freshman year at Texas Tech University. What began as a simple idealization, has evolved into so much more than I could have ever imagined.

Last year, from May through August, I had the incredible opportunity to be hands-on with some of the AHA's most impactful programs. Helping coordinate the 25th VitaFerm® Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE) and the Faces of Leadership conference wasn't just a job, it was an immersion into a community that values youth, leadership and tradition; everything that I believe so deeply in. The energy of those events, the passion of the families and youth involved, the connections I made. It left a lasting

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Denver Drake

impression on me that I will never forget nor take for granted.

When the summer ended, I was fortunate to continue contributing remotely, diving into graphic design, social media and feature writing for the Hereford Youth Foundation of America (HYFA). Being entrusted with telling the stories of the Hereford youth and the generous donors who support their dreams was an honor and a responsibility I held close. Later, the chance to return to Kansas City to assist with the Annual Meeting further deepened my appreciation for the organization's reach and impact.

This year, my internship started in May and will finish in December, a blessing that still feels surreal. I was back at JNHE, this time with a camera in tow, capturing the next generation of the industry grow and thrive, and now I'm preparing for the 2025 World Hereford Conference, which is a truly exciting milestone and once in a lifetime opportunity. I am constantly in total admiration of the level of skill I get to learn from and I'm soaking in every bit of it. This staff is truly the dream team.

I know the 13-year-old version of myself who begged my dad to buy the red-and-white cow would be speechless if she would have known the opportunities that would later come. Storytelling, design, event coordination and the youth of the cattle industry — these are some of my greatest passions and this internship has allowed me to bring them all together while teaching me so much more than I could've imagined. I mean talk about a dream come true. Most importantly, though, I have had the chance to give back to the industry that gave so much to me.

Every step of this journey reminds me why this experience means so much. It's not just about the work; it's about being part of something bigger. A legacy of a breed I fell in love with as a little girl, leadership and community. From the moment I first dreamed of interning here to the present, I still can't quite believe I've been given the chance not once, but twice.

I'm beyond thankful for the trust the AHA has placed in me, for the lessons I've learned, and for the incredible people I've met along the way. This internship has shaped my path in ways I never expected and I'm still in awe that I've been lucky enough to live out what was once just a dream. HW

