

International Visitor

Jasmine Nixon of Australia spent her summer touring the American beef cattle industry with several Angus stops along the way.

by **Mathew Elliott**

Some families just had to cross a county or state line to get to this year's National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) in Denver, Colo. Others crossed a few more state lines and maybe even a time zone change or two, while exhibitors from Canada traveled across an international border. But, Jasmine Nixon crossed the Pacific Ocean and an International Dateline while traveling from Roslyn, New South Wales, Australia, to this year's NJAS.

While Nixon wasn't exhibiting any cattle at the show, she was there to take in everything that she could about the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) and the American cattle industry.

"I was able to come to America on a scholarship I won for being named

Herdsmen of the Year at the National Angus Youth Roundup in South Wales," Nixon says.

The scholarship Nixon was awarded gives participants the opportunity to design their own beef study of North America. Being heavily involved with the junior Angus program in South Australia, Nixon chose to start her tour at the NJAS.

"This scholarship creates opportunity for those who don't have the means to travel and explore the cattle industry outside of Australia, and I'm thankful for that," Nixon says.

National Angus Youth Roundup to NJAS

Nixon is in her second term as Angus youth leader in Australia. There one of her responsibilities includes helping organize the



PHOTOS BY CRYSTAL YOUNG

► Jasmine Nixon poses for a photo during the LEAD conference in Nashville, Tenn.

National Angus Youth Roundup. An event that Nixon says is similar to the NJAS, with even some of the events being similar.

"We have an industry day where industry professionals come in and speak to us," Nixon says. "We also have a contest day where we have contests similar to those here, such as the junior judging contest and other activities."

According to Nixon, the National Angus Youth Roundup is the biggest single-breed show in Australia.

"The show is continually growing," Nixon says. "We have approximately 150 competitors, which is nothing like the NJAS, but we are growing."

After attending the NJAS, Nixon says she would like to bring back several contests like the All-American *Certified Angus Beef*® Cook-Off and other team contests.

Being involved in organizing and running the National Angus Youth Roundup in Australia, Nixon knows how much behind-the-scenes effort goes into an event like the NJAS.

"I didn't understand how much work went into putting an event like ours or the national junior show here until I got on the committee in Australia," Nixon says. "I've got a good look at things happening behind the scenes here, and know the work that goes on to make this successful."



PHOTO BY MATHEW ELLIOTT

► Nixon speaks to *The Scoop* news team at this year's NJAS in Denver, Colo.

With 971 Angus cattle exhibited, 18 different contests and more than 600 juniors involved, Nixon watched how everything seemed to run according to plan.

“Any time you have that many kids and cattle involved, things can get pretty crazy,” Nixon says. “I am very impressed with the professionalism and how smoothly this event is going.”

North American beef tour

Nixon’s tour wasn’t limited to the NJAS. She traveled throughout Colorado, Iowa, Wyoming, Nebraska, Missouri and Kentucky. Her final stop was at the Leaders Engaged in Angus Development (LEAD) Conference in Nashville, Tenn.

The tour stopped at a variety of registered Angus ranches, feedlots, heifer development facilities and the Trans Ova Genetics corporate headquarters.

“I noticed a lot of differences as I moved east,” Nixon says. “That’s the beauty of the beef cow; she can fit to meet so many different conditions.”

Nixon also says the Australian beef cow is similar due to differences in Australia’s climates and target markets.

She says Australia’s beef market is just beginning to develop niche branded programs, and that most of these programs are still in the developmental or early stages of functioning.

“Australia needs to continue to educate our consumer,” Nixon says. “We have the Meat and Livestock Australia, which is very similar to the Beef Checkoff Program here. Their goal is to provide the producers with the information to improve their operations, and to provide the consumer the information to stay well-educated.”

Australia also has a mandatory identification system set up. The National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) was started in 1999 to meet European Union (EU) requirements for cattle exports. Since then it has expanded to enable cattle, sheep and goats to be traced from property of birth to slaughter for the purposes of biosecurity, meat safety, product integrity and market access.

A stop in Saint Joseph

As she made her way east, Nixon stopped by the American Angus Association headquarters in Saint Joseph, Mo., for a tour. Crystal Young, assistant director of public relations, gave Nixon the tour and spent the day answering any questions she had.

“Jasmine was very interested in the involvement of our NJAA junior board,” says

Young. “With their junior board in Australia, they do not get elected; if a junior wants to be on the board, they just volunteer. Jasmine wants their juniors to realize the leadership opportunities that can go along with being on a junior board.”

Nixon was impressed with the artwork, history and size of the Association headquarters, noting the number of employees compared to the Australian Angus Association, Young says. “She was also extremely impressed by the one-day turnaround time for registrations, saying that was ‘just phenomenal.’”

LEAD

One of Nixon’s final Angus stops was to attend the LEAD Conference. Nixon was one of four international attendees this year at LEAD.

“Jasmine was a regular attendee at the LEAD Conference this year,” says Robin Ruff, American Angus Association director of youth activities. “She roomed with other juniors and went to all the workshops learning about everything from evaluating cattle to defending the cattle industry.”

While attending LEAD in Nashville, Nixon also got to see several different types of American agriculture like the Elliott and Sons tobacco farm as well as visiting the Country Music Hall of Fame, Music Row, Ryman Auditorium and Nashville Shores.

“Jasmine just took it all in, and asked a lot of questions along the way,” Ruff says.

The American trip was not all fun and exploration for Nixon, who is a current

full-time student. While on her tour of the American beef industry, she was listening to lectures on podcasts to keep up with her schoolwork. The trip will provide Nixon with credits toward the 24 weeks of practical experience in the industry, which is required for her graduation.

While finding time to do her schoolwork has been a challenge, Nixon appreciates all of the experiences that the trip afforded her.

“I encourage anyone who has an opportunity to travel and learn to take it,” Nixon says. “You must recognize opportunities like these. Go out and learn some different production practices. Take them home with you, some practices might not work for you, but there might be something that will. You never know until you go see.”

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► **Above:** LEAD had many workshops and tours. Nixon participates in a team building activity.



PHOTO BY SHAUNA ROSE HERMEL

► **Left:** Nixon met Kathy Tokach during the NJAS and later visited Tokach Angus Ranch, Saint Anthony, N.D., while touring U.S. Cattle herds.