

Under the Western Sky

History unfolds at the 2001 NJAS.

by James Fisher

The 2001 “Under the Western Sky” edition of the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) will be listed as one of the historic events to shape the future of the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA).

What makes this event historic? Is it simply that this is the first time the NJAS has been this far west? Will we remember the individuals and the state associations — both junior and adult — from 10 states who joined together to make the 2001 NJAS happen? Did the juniors who participated in the cattle show, contests and competitions, and the families who joined them in these endeavors, make this show unique?

When the evaluation is complete and the history is written, I believe we will see that

it was a combination of all those individual pieces coming together that will make the 2001 event a turning point in the history of the NJAA.

Broad participation

“Under the Western Sky” was the perfect theme for the 2001 NJAS. Junior Angus members, their parents and families from Maine, California, Florida, Washington, Montana, Texas and all points between gathered in Denver, Colo., to play their part in the world’s largest single-breed beef cattle show and the contests and competitions associated with it.

It was multiple states working together. State boundaries disappeared when creating committees to plan and to coordinate each detail that built

to the culmination of this weeklong event.

It was the new friendships that were made and the old friendships that were renewed. It was the spirit of competition, individuals giving their best to the contest.

It was the humility and excitement that was exhibited by the individuals who won classes or placed in the contests, either as individuals or as members of a team. It was the dignity, grace and maturity that was exhibited by the juniors when they placed down in the class or contest — junior members realizing it was not the blue ribbon or the championship, but the knowledge and experience gained from the competition that will help prepare them for life’s challenges.

It was the tears shed in realizing a goal or dream for their junior career or for their child. It was watching the leadership and the example given by the NJAA Board of Directors as they worked tirelessly throughout the week, always working to make sure the junior members had a positive experience.

It was the planning committee members, the Association staff and regional managers working together to make sure that each detail for each event was orchestrated well and flowed like clockwork, never missing a beat.

Showing character

The various events and activities that make up the NJAS are what give it a personality and life all its own. The cattle show is the backbone of the competition and gives us a reason for gathering. But it is the contests, competition and, most importantly, the fellowship outside the showing that builds the character of the individuals involved.

For these reasons, thousands of people gather each year to celebrate the youth of the Angus breed. It is all of this that causes hundreds of farms, ranches and businesses to invest in the future of these young people by donating to and sponsoring events at the NJAS.

Volunteers heartily donate their time and experience in coordinating, hosting, planning and executing this wonderful event. It is all of this that causes parents to use their vacation time to support their children in this endeavor.

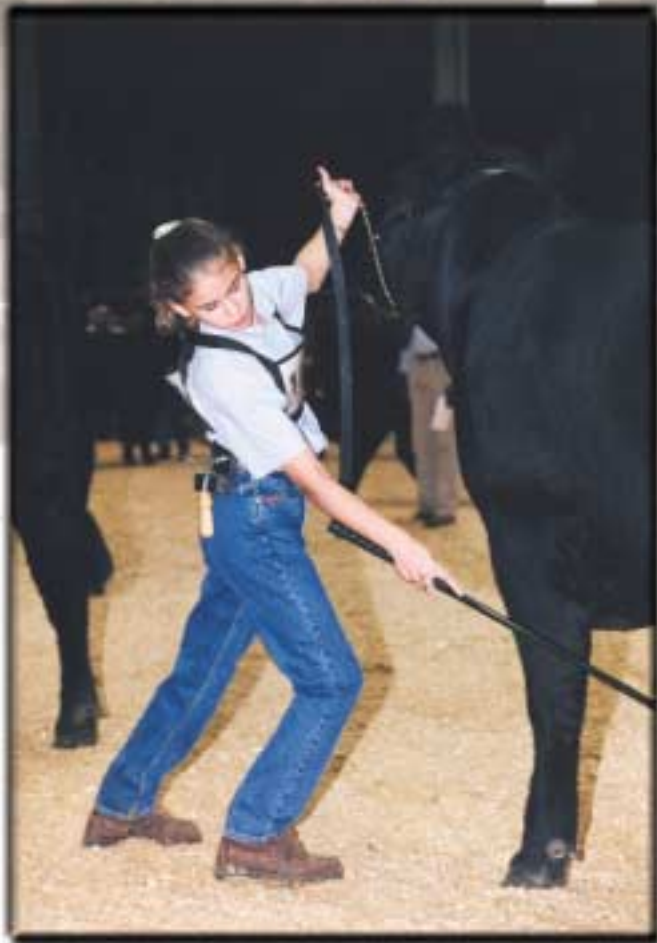


► The cattle show is the backbone of the competition and gives Angus enthusiasts — young and old — a reason for gathering. But it is the contests, competition and, most importantly, the fellowship outside the showing that builds the character of the individuals involved. cb

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► Junior Angus members from 35 states exhibited 981 head of cattle at this year's National Junior Angus Show in Denver, Colo. cb

It is because of this that industry representatives volunteer their time to judge the various contests and competitions at the event. It is all of this that causes the American Angus Auxiliary, its Board of Directors and membership to make the support of the junior Angus programs one of its priorities.

It is all of this that causes the Association Board of Directors to make this one of the premier events that the Association sponsors each year.

Learn through involvement

"What will your child be tomorrow?" was a question asked on an ad that ran in 1957 promoting involvement in the Association's junior programs. This question is one that we still ask as we look at the world around us and think about the many opportunities, as well as the temptations, that are placed

before young people today.

It is my belief that, if your children choose to be involved in the NJAA, their future and the future of agriculture, the beef industry and specifically the Angus breed will be brighter and better because of it.

Your children will be better because they have learned to grow by both winning and losing. They learn to be responsible and to work as a team. They learn that family is important, and they learn that giving of themselves for another brings the greatest reward of all.

A special thank-you goes to everyone who gave of themselves to make the 2001 "Under the Western Sky" NJAS a great success.



Editor's note: James Fisher is director of activities and junior activities for the American Angus Association.

Note: The following coverage of the 2001 National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) in Denver, Colo., contains the photography of several Angus staff. Credit goes to Corinne Blender, *Angus Journal* intern; Angie Denton, Angus Productions Inc. Web marketing director; Keri Geffert, American Angus Association public relations intern; Shelia Stannard, assistant director of communications and public relations; and Lance Ziesch, *Angus Journal* editorial assistant.

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