



## *Auctioneers' Debut*

*The art of the auction, an almost long-lost form of selling featuring live bids, an auctioneer working the crowd into a frenzy of bidding and buying.*

*The auctioneering contest made its debut at this year's National Junior Angus Show.*

*by Chloé Fowler, Angus Communications*

Hosted to encourage juniors to explore the career opportunities of an auctioneer, the first year of the auctioneering contest was a crowd pleaser for both contestants and

audience. The business of these fast-talking cattlemen was introduced to the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) membership at last year's National Junior

Angus Show (NJAS) through an auctioneering clinic. The Association quickly realized the interest for the contest filled the room.

Divided into three levels of

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competition — juniors (8-13), intermediates (14-17) and seniors (18-21) — each age group sold different items. The juniors sold two lots of cattle, intermediate sold three and seniors sold five. Each lot ranged in complexity. Some contained bred heifers and semen packages, while others were simply video sale lots.

Given two weeks to prepare, each contestant had ample time to conduct any research they felt would be necessary to coax a bid from one of the bidders planted in the audience.

Connor Cook, Huntley, Mont., stole the show in the junior division while Weston Svoboda, Sargent, Neb., topped the intermediates and Cale Hinrichsen, Westmoreland, Kan., won in senior division. The Association is considering including an overall auctioneer award next year to highlight the top contestant regardless of division.

These first-place winners successfully sold the lots placed in front of them and found effective ways to work the crowd while putting their personal stamp on the auctioneering process. They were well aware of the crowd, paid attention to the climbing bids and kept a good pace as the auction successfully flowed between bids.

## The judges

Judges for this contest each had



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a background in the Angus breed, as well as the auction barn. Brian Curless is currently the reigning 2017 World Livestock Auctioneering Champion and has his own herd of Angus cattle. Also on the panel was Dan Naughton, an experienced auctioneer who raises Angus cattle and hogs in central Illinois. Rounding out the judges was Paul Handsaker, who boasts almost 30 years of



*Junior contestants, aged 8-13, sold two lots of cattle, while intermediates sold three and seniors sold five.*

experience raising Angus cattle and sitting behind the auction block.

The judges say they were amazed by the poise and confidence each contestant displayed when stepping up to the microphone, especially at a new and uncharted contest.

“The quality of the contestants was fantastic. Every one of those kids was sharp as a tack and just

absolutely attacked the contest,” Curless says. “I was extremely impressed by each of them.”

Curless says he hopes this contest will encourage juniors to become more involved and others will get just as excited about it after watching the first contest in Madison.

“I hope that we will get twice as many kids in it next year,” he adds.

Handsaker emphasizes the importance of these contests because they encourage juniors who do not have cattle to continue to participate at the show.

“A lot of these contests you can come, enjoy, make great friendships and don’t need to have cattle to participate,” he says. “This is what makes contests like these so special, because having cattle to show is not a prerequisite to taking advantage of the opportunities offered to these juniors.”

The advice offered from each judge to improve for the coming year is simple: practice.

“When we look at these juniors

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that ranged in age from 8 to 21, they all had a lot of confidence,” Curless says. “However, they all still need to practice. It’s no different if you are 8 years old in your first contest or a world champion. Every one needs to practice every day.”

The judges say they are excited to see these juniors return next year as well as new faces of those who did not participate this year.

**Leading the way**

The National Junior Angus Association Board (NJAB), presented this competition to promote different careers within the agricultural industry.

“The junior board did a great job, and this is a great aspect to bring to



the juniors involved,” Naughton says. “We are using this in our industry, the auction method and marketing way. They are buying their show cattle that way, so might as well bring them in to experience it.”

Even in its infancy, this contest is making an impact for both the youth and the industry of Angus.

“The auction business is as popular today around the world as it has ever been,” Curless adds. “There is

nothing that will help our auction business any more than getting youth involved in it.”

Naughton encourages juniors to get involved in all the contests, to put their fears and doubts behind them.

“Just get up in front of people and be confident in what you are doing, no matter the contest,” Naughton says.

The NJAB and the Association are always looking for ways to improve the junior experience, at the annual NJAS and throughout the year. On this golden anniversary of the NJAS, the auctioneering contest left its mark and is a much anticipated event for 2019 and many years to follow.



Winning the junior division is Conner Cook, Huntley Mont., first. Not pictured are Drew Mickey, Taylorville, Ill., second; and Marc Tommell, Fonda, N.Y., third.



Winning the intermediate division are (from left) Paden Gilbert, Oldfield, Mo., second; and Weston Svoboda, Burwell, Neb., first.

Winning the senior division are (from left) Jayne Bannister, Kent, N.Y., third; and Cale Hinrichsen, Westmoreland, Kan., first. Not pictured is Jessie Schoessow, Mequon, Wis., second.

