

# Honored Herdsman

*Wesley Johnson was honored with the Junior Herdsman award at the 2018 National Junior Angus Show in July. The coveted award is given to a junior member displaying attention to his or her livestock, as well as to fellow Angus members.*

*by Chloé Fowler, Angus Communications, and Lindsay King, assistant editor*

★ ★ ★ 50<sup>TH</sup> NATIONAL JUNIOR ANGUS SHOW • 1969—2018 ★ ★ ★

Competitors spend countless hours preparing for the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS). The extreme level of competition is truly unmatched. Each year, one junior rises to the top, displaying incredible dedication and effort in the care of their animals, other juniors, the show ring, and beyond.

National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) members each year vote to honor one individual as Junior Herdsman of the Year. Wesley Johnson was honored this year. The Pipestone, Minn., junior made the trek to Wisconsin with seven entries: a bred-and-owned (B&O) cow-calf pair, four B&O heifers, and two owned heifers.

He attended his first NJAS in 2008 in Des Moines, Iowa. Ten years later, his childhood dream of wearing the prestigious herdsman's belt buckle is fulfilled.

This award, and the recognition accompanying it, showcase more

## JUNIOR HERDSMAN



*The 2018 Junior Herdsman of the Year is Wesley Johnson, Pipestone, Minn.*

than just Johnson's qualities in the show ring. It speaks volumes about his work ethic and morals in the barn, even when nobody is watching.

Juniors young and old are always watching, deciding who is worthy of this award. There is no speech, no presentation or campaign to argue their case to their peers. Throughout

the NJAS, juniors vote for the showman who best exemplifies the qualities of a true herdsman.

"If you think about it, this is even more of an honor to receive at the 50th anniversary show," Johnson says. "I was shocked, I never expected to receive the greatest award out there."

At the golden anniversary of the NJAS, the competition was steeper and stakes were higher. The pressure never touched Johnson, he simply did what he knew how to do: care for his cattle and fellow juniors to the best of his abilities. Johnson recognizes this is easily the title more people vie for year in and out than any other.

"People from all across the nation recognize your hard work, and give you a chance," Johnson says. "It's more than just winning, but seeing the growth in myself into the person I am today, and knowing that other people have seen this as well."

At 20 years old, Johnson left Madison, and his final NJAS, in the rearview mirror as a showman for the last time. The bittersweet taste in his mouth just a touch more bearable as he towed home his herdsmanship

*"Set the example in everything you do. You never know who is watching. It's the moment when you think no one's there, that you are in the spotlight." — Kirt "Doc" Prather*


buckle, a lifetime of memories and a trailer full of Angus cattle.

“I am just excited I was able to go out with a bang in my last year at nationals,” Johnson adds.

Chosen out of 873 exhibitors,

Johnson encourages his peers not to strive for this award, but to simply put their best foot forward, no matter who is looking. The muted form of judging and secret selection of the outstanding herdsman lends itself to

maintaining the highest standards of integrity and morals.

State groups are also recognized for their herdsmanship as a group throughout the week. Winners are recognized below. 

## HERDSMANSHIP



*The Wisconsin Jr. Angus Ass'n won the division for states with 61 head or more. Not pictured are junior Angus associations from Missouri, second; and Kansas, third.*



*The Texas Jr. Angus Ass'n won the division for states with 46-60 head. Not pictured are junior Angus associations from Oklahoma, second; and Minnesota, third.*



*The California Jr. Angus Ass'n won the division for states with 31-45 head.*



*The Tennessee Jr. Angus Ass'n won the division for states with 16-30 head. Not pictured are junior Angus associations from Pennsylvania, second; and South Dakota, third.*

*The Colorado Jr. Angus Ass'n won the division for states with 15 head or fewer. Not pictured are junior Angus associations from Washington, second; and Florida, third.*

