



Educating for the Future

Informative sessions hosted at the National Junior Angus Show provide a learning atmosphere for all exhibitors.

by Kaci Foraker, editorial intern

Before any showmen led their entries on the green shavings at the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS), Angus juniors built upon their knowledge of the cattle industry by attending educational sessions. Ribbons and trophies are handed out at the end of the weeklong show, but the unmaterialistic knowledge gained sticks with attendees for years to come.

Stands were filled on Monday and Tuesday as the clinics commenced. Youth were able to engage with presenters during many of the sessions through mini contests or question and answer challenges.

Juniors learned from industry professionals about topics covering cattle fitting, selection criteria and proper identification methods.

Weaver Leather Livestock

Filling the stands of the exercise arena, the Weaver Leather Livestock educational clinic drew quite a crowd. Youth and their parents participated in a short game of barn family feud featuring the most used terms in the show barn.

Longtime cattleman Kirk Stierwalt led the session covering the basics of showing cattle. He dived into simple but important showmanship tips he

has accumulated through his years of hands-on experience.

Stierwalt encourages juniors to show with a black show halter that has a lead extending down to the knee of the animal. Dedicating a certain halter and show stick to only be used on show day will help exhibitors have a proper appearance in the ring.

He also advised exhibitors how to walk their animal into a correct feet placement and how important a junior's demeanor is while in the ring. Knowing your skills and your cattle's composition before entering the show ring will allow juniors to find success, Stierwalt says.



Kirk Stierwalt describes how to properly set up a heifer.



“I recommend setting cattle up and taking a photo every month,” Stierwalt says. “A lot of times if you are feeding for depth, weight gain or some other goal, showmen can miss the changes their program is having on the animal. From a photo you can see all of that.”

Stierwalt and his crew highlighted Weaver products that would help juniors improve their skills and directed youth to find more info by visiting their booth.

Neogen GeneSeek

Phenotype and genotype go hand in hand when selecting cattle for next year’s show string or a replacement female for a commercial operation. Neogen GeneSeek Operations teamed up with Kelli Retallick from Angus Genetics Inc. (AGI) to inform youth about the possibilities of genomics before the cattle judging contest started at the NJAS.

Comparing the champion bull at the National Western Stock Show (NWSS) from 1964 to the winner in 2018, Retallick explained how AGI scientifically defined selection decisions that have evolved the Angus industry.

“Genomics, through something like Angus GSSM, tends to help us make genetic progress a little bit faster,” Retallick says. “We can get more information on those animals that haven’t had any calves or progeny, and we can gain information for [breeders] to make better decisions down the road.”

She continued to describe the 20 different expected progeny differences (EPDs) and six different dollar values indexes (\$Values) that are available for registered

Angus cattle. Retallick recounted how genomic tests can provide accurate information to aid in advancements made in each generational turnover.

Sullivan Supply

Pitting the top junior fitters against each other, Sullivan Supply hosted the ultimate fitting challenge. John Sullivan, founder of Sullivan Supply, officiated the competition held within their educational clinic.

Juniors cheered as free supplies were handed out and the two teams were introduced. Team Fitzgerald, lead by Bryce Fitzgerald, entered the ring wearing matching Sullivan’s Blue Monkey T-shirts and the second group, Team Van Zee, was conducted by Rowdi Van Zee and decked out in bright-colored Flare shirts.

As Sullivan started the time clock, both teams went to work grooming and fitting. With the crowd’s attention, he described the techniques and products each team used to achieve a desired look that would find favor in the show ring.

Fitzgerald’s team was found victorious at the end of the 25-minute competition, but the true win was for the youth who were able to apply what they learned back in the barn.

Priefert/Datamars proper identification

For the final educational clinic, Priefert and Datamars sponsored a session about types of identification used for cattle. Cattle care and



working with the animal at home are important parts of preparing for a show, but correctly registering an animal for the show is just as vital.

Using a Priefert cattle chute, American Angus Association Regional Managers Alex Tolbert and Casey Jentz explained how an animal is identified during show check-in.

Tolbert noted that if an animal is brought to check-in without the identifying marks that were indicated on the registration, the animal might be disqualified from the show. An error made before the show could put an exhibitor’s chance of entering in jeopardy.

Freeze branding, hot branding and tattooing were all addressed at the clinic by Tolbert and Jentz. Juniors left with the competency to have their cattle prepared for the show before check-in and a few had freebies from the Angus Brand store.

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