



► One hundred National Junior Angus Association members from 26 states attended the 2002 Leaders Engaged in Angus Development conference, “From St. Joe to Sacramento — On the Rail to Success,” in Sacramento, Calif.

Learning to Lead

National Junior Angus Association members discover leadership skills and beef industry knowledge at the 2002 LEAD conference.

Story and photos by **Courtney Wimmer**

The “Golden State” of California is an exceptional example of diversity. Within its borders are the highest and lowest elevations in the United States. The state is home to more than 33 million people. It also has the largest agricultural economy in the nation, equaling more than \$27.2 billion in 2000.

National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) members had an opportunity to witness the diversity in California Aug. 1-4 during the 10th annual Leaders Engaged in Angus Development (LEAD) conference, “From St. Joe to Sacramento — On the Rail to Success,” in Sacramento.

One hundred conference participants from 26 states traveled to Sacramento to discover new friends, visit with old ones, and learn more about Angus cattle and the beef industry.

Learning experience

Since 1993, when the first LEAD conference was held in Louisville, Ky., hundreds of juniors have benefited from the numerous workshops and speakers. North Carolina junior Angus member Karl Holshouser, Gold Hill, has attended six LEAD conferences during his junior career and, he says, he gains something from each one.

“You get to meet people from all over, and you can carry on friendships for life,” Holshouser says. “You learn about the beef industry, and you get to take leadership skills back home.”

First-time LEAD conference

participant Kirbe Schnoor, Chowchilla, Calif., attended the conference with her sister. “I thought it would be a good learning experience,” Schnoor says. “I met a lot of new people, and I learned more about the industry.”

With the help of icebreakers on the first day, juniors got to know each other’s names and faces with a few laughs in between. Thursday evening speakers included Terry Cotton, general manager of Angus Productions Inc. (API); Greg Lawley, California Department of Food and Agriculture; Tyler Byrd, Byrd Cattle Co.; and



Heather Kalino, events coordinator for equine and livestock events at the California Expo and state fair.

Byrd talked with the LEAD participants about marketing cattle and the importance of customer service. "If you are trying to build a business selling cattle, it must be built on honesty and integrity in the long run," Byrd advises. "No marketing or promotional program will replace a satisfied customer. They're easily the best promotional tool any business has."

Kalino stressed the importance of ethics in youth livestock projects. "When an individual or organization takes the initiative to ensure their programs are honest and ethical, they will be in a much stronger position in the eyes of the general public," she says. "You are the leaders of tomorrow and you need to be working toward that."

Thursday evening activities concluded with a skit by the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) Board of Directors titled, "The Angus Hunter," a parody of "The Crocodile Hunter."

Friday morning, participants cooled off in the meat department at Raley's Supermarket and Drug Center. Raley's has 150 stores in California, Nevada and New Mexico and sells *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) products.



► Assuming the role of an auctioneer, Scott Vernon, speaks to LEAD participants on the final day of the conference. Vernon led three workshops discussing leadership, motivation and teamwork.

"The reason we like CAB is the quality of the product," says Doug McHenry, director of meat operations at Raley's. "We need you to continue on with the breed because we believe it is the best beef we can buy."

The group then toured G Bar Angus, Stockton, and Five Star Land and Livestock, Wilton. A cherry orchard tour and hunting dog demonstration were items of interest at G Bar Angus. Mark and Abbie Nelson, owners of Five Star Land and Livestock, served lunch at their ranch.

Participants were then divided into four groups to learn more about the ranch and California agriculture.

Following the tours, NJAA members traveled to Raley Field, home of the Sacramento River Cats, a minor league baseball team, and then to Discovery Park to unwind after the busy day.

Leaders of tomorrow

John Dickinson, American Angus Association regional manager, and Scott Vernon, Vernon Communication, led workshops Saturday morning. Dickinson shared his past experience as a member of the NJAA. "Making new friends is probably one of the best byproducts of my experience in the NJAA," he says.

Mallory Trospen, Hamilton, Mo., says reuniting with friends she has met over the years is the main reason she attends LEAD conferences. "In the past couple years I have met a lot of new people," Trospen says. "I have friends from all over the United States, and it's just a lot of fun."

Vernon worked with participants to define leadership and to show attendees how to take that leadership home with them. "As members of the NJAA you are developing a road map to success," he says. "Without your leadership in the industry we may not have an industry in the future. When you find that leader within, you can help those who are without."

Participants learned a variety of skills during the junior Board workshops. One workshop, "What have you got to say?"



► Karl Holshouser, Gold Hill, N.C., participates in a workshop Saturday morning.



► From left, Kirbe Schnoor, Chowchilla, Calif.; Trever Kuipers, Onarga, Ill.; and Dustin Henningfeld, Burlington, Wis., discuss characteristics of a leader during a workshop. LEAD participants attended several workshops to gain skills they can use in their state junior associations.

taught members how important it is for them to be spokespeople for the beef industry. This workshop was one Holshouser found very useful. "Whether you want to admit it or not, we have to sell our industry. It's not going to sell itself," he says. "We've got to work together and stick together."

Other workshops discussed interview and résumé skills, the process of harvesting cattle, and even a little about dancing. Those dancing lessons were put to use Saturday night during the dinner and dance held at Pheasant Trek Angus, Wilton.

The workshops and speakers encouraged NJAA members to get other youth involved in their state junior Angus associations. This is one goal Trospen says she hopes to accomplish when she returns home. "I'm going to help try to gain more new members

in the Missouri association as well as in the national association, and to get more kids in Missouri to attend LEAD conference," Trospen says.

The final day of the conference began with the vocal talents of Claïressa Humphrey, Ozark, Ark.; and Holly Bellis, Orrick, Mo., during the morning devotional.

In the final workshop, Vernon sent participants on their way with advice for their journey through life. His final presentation discussed the characters in the classic book by L. Frank Baum, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, and what the NJAA members could learn from the story.

"If we take heart into our journey, we'll find the yellow brick road," Vernon says. "Enjoy the journey and when you do you will have success."

