

# Becoming the Best

*Through educational clinics, the National Junior Angus Show offers junior members an opportunity to expand their industry knowledge.*

*by Megan Silveira, editorial intern*

The green shavings are in place, the cattle in their stalls, the exhibitors eager. Anticipation for the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) built up over the year as National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) members awaited the moment they could step back into the show ring.

But the NJAS is more than just your average cattle show. Designed with NJAA members in mind, this week-long event offers more than an opportunity to compete at

the end of a halter.

Every NJAA member aims to become the best showman. But those worthy of the title are well-rounded cattlemen and women. The NJAS also broadens the knowledge of its youth by hosting several educational clinics throughout the week, helping juniors become the best they can be.

## Andis educational clinic

What do barbers, dog groomers, veterinarians and cattle fitters all have in common? Kirk Stierwalt from Andis revealed the common denominator between these professionals was their use of clippers and blades from Andis.

From prizes given to NJAA members to advice on how to properly care for equipment, Stierwalt used the clinic to test and expand the knowledge of listeners young and old.

But Stierwalt was more than just a spokesperson for Andis. With experience in the livestock industry, he certainly understands the importance of a good set of clippers.

"I remember back when it all started with the sheep head," he recalls. Adding the industry used to be dominated by males and driven by adults. Those "little clippers" we all know and love today changed the fitting industry.

"When the little clippers came into play, it was awesome for the industry," Stierwalt says.



These hand-held, and sometimes cordless, devices allowed for fitters to perfect the little details and revolutionized the cattle industry to where women and young children were eagerly learning to fit a calf.

Andis is a family-run business with a past showing hogs, sheep and cattle, making them a company capable of understanding what livestock people expect and need from their equipment.

Since 1987, the company has been hosting clinics. While Andis can no longer host the clinics at private homes, the company still aims to teach others about proper use and care of fitting equipment.

Andis currently produces 750,000

clipper blades a month, and with the advice Stierwalt provided to all the young fitters at NJAS, the company will continue to produce clippers and blades for years to come.

## Weaver Leather Livestock educational clinic

While the thrill of the show ring is known to all NJAA competitors, there is a lot of work happening behind the scenes before an animal is ready to be presented. Show cattle are accustomed to long periods in the chute getting "primed" before heading to the ring.

Weaver Leather Supply knows the importance of fitting a calf to perfection and aimed to help NJAA members learn to complete their process on their own. Weaver Leather hosted a fitting clinic Sunday afternoon, presented by Stierwalt.

NJAA exhibitors observed the pros fit a calf right in front of them. And if the live demonstration wasn't educational enough, Stierwalt went over the dos and don'ts of fitting after the action was complete.

## Compeer Financial educational clinic

Taking a break from fitting, Heidi Smith and Keelyn Swanson from Compeer Financial wrapped up Sunday's share of educational clinics by informing NJAA members about their future work force.

The women dedicated a portion of their presentation to revealing their backgrounds and how the agricultural industry shaped them into who they are today.

With tips and tricks on how NJAA members could put their best foot forward in and out of the show ring, the women reminded young producers they would serve as agricultural advocates for the rest of their lives.

No matter where the junior exhibitors will seek a career, Smith and Swanson assured them their résumés could decide their fate. Résumés often create first impressions with potential employers, so the information listed on the single sheet of paper needs to leave a lasting impact.

Both speakers stressed the importance of NJAA members creating a unique and personal layout for their resumes. Templates are strictly forbidden in the work force.

The duo offered a few other tips to the young cattlemen and women gathered around the ring, suggesting résumés only take up one sheet of paper and include only the most relevant of their accomplishments and experiences.

Breaking up the presentation with a few videos drew laughter from the crowd, Smith and Swanson reminded the NJAA members the future of the cattle industry was in their hands.

With a great résumé and a confident smile, all present at the clinic equipped themselves with the

knowledge and skills to find success in the future.

## EPD educational clinic

With the stadium full of NJAA exhibitors ready to judge a few classes of Angus cattle, Kelli Retallick, Angus Genetics Inc. (AGI) director of genetic service, picked up the microphone to help young cattlemen and women better understand expected progeny differences (EPDs).

The exhibitors were anxious to start placing classes. With EPD classes in store for the young judges, Retallick offered a few reminders about genetic data.



“When we talk about EPDs, we’re talking about added genetic variance,” Retallick says. “That’s just another fancy word for figuring out what’s heritable.”

She went on to explain how livestock either gain characteristics from their genetics or their environment. EPDs help cattlemen discover which traits are controlled by genetics.

EPDs are created by studying the genetic information of animals from blood, hair or tissue samples. With these samples, ranchers can examine the genetic makeup of their animals and the heritability of desirable traits.

Retallick says carcass traits, like weaning weight, have been shown to be more heritable than maternal traits, such as milking ability.

While EPDs do not equal actual

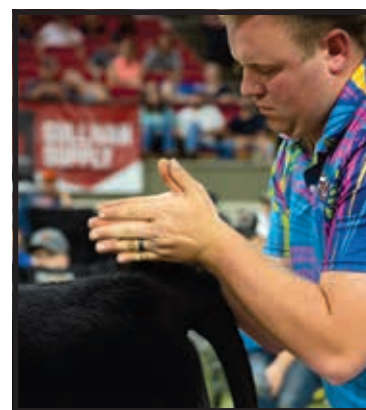
performance, they can help breeders predict which genes will be passed on to the next generation. Beyond breeding decisions, EPDs can be utilized in judging competitions to put a \$ Value on the profitability of animals, which can then be compared to the competition.

Retallick reminded NJAA members EPDs cannot be compared amongst different breeds of cattle, but can be used to estimate how an animal will perform as a sire or dam compared to others within the breed.

## Stock Show University educational clinic

Sullivan Supply and Taylor Harrison, Stock Show University manager, gathered a group of aspiring showmen. With a live demonstration, Harrison allowed NJAA members to watch professional fitters work their magic.

Sprinkling tips and tricks into the demonstration, Harrison ensured the junior exhibitors would be able to get their calves presentable for the judge in the remaining days of the NJAS.



From properly caring for fitting equipment to using Sullivan's products correctly, all who attended Harrison's presentation are one step closer to becoming the fitter they aspire to be. 🏆