

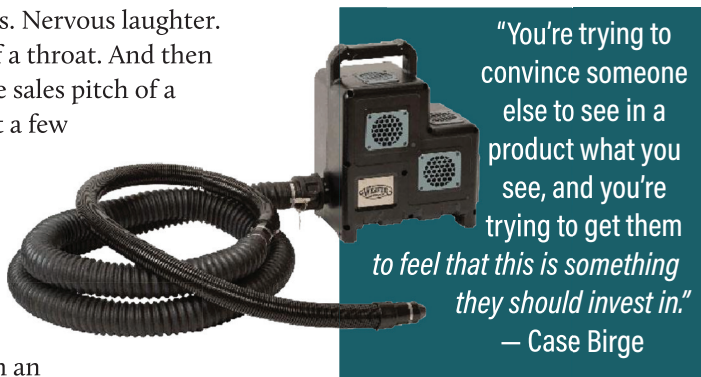
Shark Tank: NJAA Edition

National Junior Angus Association members participate in the Angus version of the TV show Shark Tank.

by Megan Silveira, assistant editor

Sweaty palms. Nervous laughter. The clearing of a throat. And then it happens. The sales pitch of a lifetime. In just a few short minutes, the team has a once-in-a-life opportunity to impress a panel of three judges and gain an investment to propel them into the future.

While the Team Marketing Contest hosted at the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) is not quite as intense as the hit TV show *Shark Tank*, the thrill of the sale is certainly the same for the National Junior



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— Case Birge

Angus Association (NJAA) members participating in the event.

“I think what you see on *Shark Tank* is near about exactly what the Team Marketing competition is,” says Case Birge, 20-year-old NJAA member from Alabama.

This year made Birge’s first time participating in the Team Marketing competition.

“You’re trying to convince someone else to see in a product what you see, and you’re trying to get them to feel that this is something they should invest in,” he explains.

Each year, competitors are given a marketing scenario. NJAA team members then have the opportunity to build a sales pitch they will present to judges during the NJAS in hopes of gaining a few new investors.

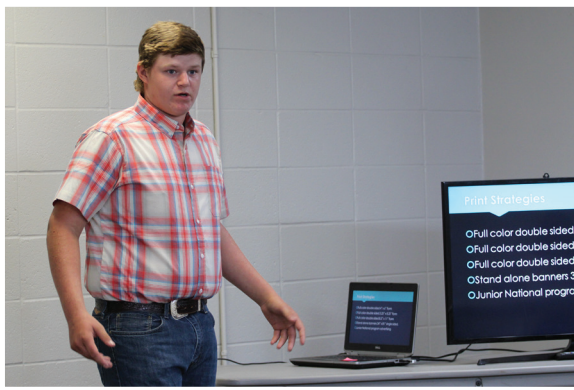
Finalizing the sale

This year’s product to pitch was the ProAir™ Blower by contest sponsor Weaver Livestock.

NJAA members were tasked with utilizing innovative methods of technology to strategically and successfully market the blower to existing and potential customers through various communication channels.

The challenge grows, however, as the junior Angus breeders have to carry out this plan within a \$20,000 budget and a six-month timeline.

While the contest itself might sound intimidating, Birge’s teammate says he could not wait to try his hand at the event. Georgia native and NJAA member Henry Throne may be 15 years old, but he gladly tackled the challenge of helping this Weaver product reach its peak potential for consumer awareness and adoption. Throne says he and Birge worked together to ensure they had a solid



Henry Throne explains the advertising options and prices he and Birge set for their marketing plan.

promotional plan for the blower.

“We created a plan to get this product out to others so that they can enjoy using it,” Throne explains. From marketing ventures and the creation of publicity images to potential posts to be made across all social media platforms, Throne says he and Birge did all they could to prepare before facing the judges.

Both Angus juniors played a role in the development of their presentation. They created a visual aid to display their marketing plans, strategies and budget. And they wrote a script containing a few key lines they needed to address when selling their plans to the judges.

“We made sure that we both did the same amount of work,” Throne says in regard to the days leading up to the event.

In preparing to make their sales pitch, the team learned to adapt to each other’s communication styles to create an effective presentation.

“We learned to bounce ideas back and forth. Henry said some things, and I said some things, and then there was a little bit that was scripted,” Birge adds.

The team made every effort to sell both themselves and the product — all that was left to do was hope the sharks took the bait.

The real prize

The competition itself holds appeal for NJAA members and their home state associations, but Birge says competing in Team Marketing is about more than just the win.



Missouri’s senior team consisting of (from left) Levi Blankenship, Gibbs; Holly Sinning, Mansfield; and Linsey Rogers, Conway, made the winning pitch to the judging panel.

“I like learning about products that I haven’t used before,” he says.

Before the contest, Birge had not had a chance to truly understand what made the ProAir Blower unique. As an Angus breeder, Birge says he is always looking for new ways to be efficient and effective when it comes to cattle management. This year’s contest focus allowed him to gain insight on an up-and-coming product within the industry.

For Throne, the NJAS contests are all about the experience. He says he always jumps at the opportunity to represent his state association on the national level. Throne says he loves to work with new people and is grateful for the opportunity to work with a fellow Angus breeder from another state.

Despite both Birge and Throne participating in Team

Marketing at the NJAS for the first time, they enjoyed the experience and think they grew in their ability to work as a team and communicate with others. Throne says the thrill of trying something new, experiencing new events at the NJAS, working with new people and learning about new products combined to create an amazing experience.

Birge says they both took away a lot from the event and are eager to continue growing as cattlemen and individual salesmen.

“I enjoy going out there and having fun with it and experiencing the different things you can do in agriculture,” he concludes. **AJ**