

# Role of a Queen

Angus queens take leadership roles while representing their states at the NJAS.

Story & photos by **Corinne Blender**

***I**t may not be a blue ribbon, but she smiled at me as if I'd won the whole show. Who is she? She's an Angus queen.*

Handing out ribbons as juniors exit the ring is one of the most visible roles that state Angus queens play while at the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS). While this role is important, these state ambassadors are also leaders in many other capacities.

"I definitely see the ladies express strong ideals of leadership — not only while they are working in the ring, but also while they are in the barn dressed in everyday work clothes," says Miss American Angus, Joanna Olson, Hereford, Texas. "They try to make new friends and reach out to other juniors by being mindful of their actions and setting positive examples as role models."

Many young ladies take on the responsibility of representing their states even when they aren't wearing their crowns.

"I am involved in many activities where I'll represent my state. In and out of the showing, state queens are ambassadors for their states. I believe my role is to promote Virginia and Angus cattle," says Kati Hereford, Virginia Angus Queen from Hamilton. "Queens are also role models to juniors and are responsible for representing themselves and their states."

Wearing the crown is an important part of a queen's role at the NJAS, but that doesn't mean she can't be involved in showing and educational contests.

"It was challenging to make it through the week because I pretty much did everything this year," says Kristen Oaks, Louisiana Angus Queen from Calhoun. Oaks brought four head to the show, participated as a voting delegate, and competed in a speaking contest and quiz bowl. "It was kind of hurry, hurry sometimes, but I don't regret it. I was glad that I did it, because I got to represent Louisiana in so many places."

## Working together

"I absolutely love working with other

state queens," says Olson, adding that she gains many new friends in the process. "Not only are they helpful in presenting awards, but I also have the opportunity to visit with the queens who come from different walks of life and have many experiences to share."

Meeting other junior members who recognize them as leaders is also a special experience.

A junior member she had never met asked a favor of Jordan Davis, Foss, Okla., at this year's NJAS. "He had written a speech about the Oklahoma flag, and he asked me to listen to him give his speech to practice," says the Oklahoma Angus Queen. "He is just a really neat kid, and he is really smart."

Olson says state queens play an important role by helping in the showing as well. Being a friendly face for those juniors who did well and for those who may be disappointed is a big part of being in the ring.

"The queens who sought the opportunity to work in the ring and to assist wherever they were needed are the ones who stand out in my mind as queens possessing great skills of leadership," Olson says. "They expressed their desire to be a leader through their willingness to help me as much as they could. They also gained experience that others look for when they need advice or words of encouragement."



► **Above:** State queens and their guests fill their plates with a traditional Kentucky breakfast, which includes grits and ham. The annual Queen's Brunch was held at Churchill Downs, home of the Kentucky Derby.

► **Right:** Miss American Angus Joanna Olson talks to state Angus queens about being a leader. Queens play an important leadership role while at the NJAS.



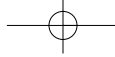


PHOTO BY TANYA PEEBLES

► Angus queens from across the nation are ambassadors for their states and for the Angus breed.

**Leadership skills**

Many Angus queens assume other leadership roles within their states. Davis is also second vice president for the Oklahoma Junior Angus Association. Her state is currently trying to get more members to become active in the association and at the NJAS.

“I try to make sure that all the kids know what is going on if we have a meeting coming up or if we are going to study for a contest,” Davis says, adding that she also helps them with their cattle.

Being a leader, whether you wear a crown or not, can be a difficult role, but Oaks recommends other juniors try it.

“Have your time devoted out,” she says. “You have to have your time evenly planned out because it’s something that’s not always an easy job.”

Many who wear their state crowns agree that it is worth the effort.

“A typical day for me can be kind of crazy. I start the morning early in order to get my cattle in and done hours before the show,” Hereford says. “Then I spend the day running back to the barns and then to the showing to help. Showing your cattle and helping in the ring on the same day is sometimes difficult, but it’s worth the work.”



► Kati Hereford, Virginia Angus Queen, hands ribbons to junior exhibitors as they exit the ring. Hereford and fellow state queens were leaders throughout the NJAS and helped out where they could.



► **Above:** Kristen Oaks (second from left), Louisiana Angus Queen, and Jordan Davis (second from right), Oklahoma Angus Queen, listen and ask questions at the candidate-delegate dinner. They were leaders outside of the showing for their states.

► **Right:** State queens take a moment to tour the Kentucky Derby Museum at Churchill Downs after brunch.

