

The Scoop on Herdsmanship

Judges give tips to score well in the herdsmanship contest.

Story & candid by *Kasey Miller*

Presentation, presentation, presentation. This word is important enough to be said three times when concerning a cattle show. The first presentation is obviously about the presentation of the cattle and what it takes to exhibit them in their best light. The second is the presentation of the showman in a clean-cut, calm and respectful manner to show their cattle well. The third, and often forgotten presentation, is the presentation of the stalls in the barn. At the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS), the herdsmanship contest makes sure the stalls aren't forgotten.

The contest is the only contest where participants don't have to enter specifically, and the contest participants are judged as a state instead of as individuals. Any cattle entered are automatically on the state's team. States are broken into divisions depending on how many cattle are entered — 15 head or fewer, 16-30 head, 31-45 head, 46-60 head and 61 head and more.

"Herdsmanship is important because it brings states together to achieve a goal. The kids unify and use teamwork to keep the stalls clean, no matter their age, whether they are 9 or 21," says Robin Ruff, American Angus Association director of junior activities.

Aisle displays

Herdsmanship judges Scott and Jennifer



► Judges like to see uniformity and continuity in state stalls. Maryland's display is well-kept, organized and well-documented.

Hoffschneider, Arlington, Neb., share what they looked for when judging stalls throughout the week of the 2012 NJAS, providing tips for competitions to come. They have had eight years of experience at the NJAS and many years of showing cattle.

The first thing they look at, says Jennifer, are clean and orderly aisles. Keep the aisles swept and the beds even, because bed edges

that are not swept look sloppy. She adds that they like to see stalls that aren't broken up by stall panels in the middle of the state aisle, because they break up the uniformity. Granted, some panels around bulls or cow-calf pairs make sense, but generally, presenting the whole aisle as one stall conveys a sense of camaraderie.

Cattle should be clean and rinsed, Scott



► Maryland won the herdsmanship division for 46-60 head. Judges say they like to see the display reflect the show theme.



BACKDROP PHOTOS COURTESY AMERICAN ANGUS ASS'N



► Missouri won the herdsmanship division for 61 head or more. The Missouri juniors and adults will be hosting the National Junior Angus Show in 2013.

mentions, especially after they show. He understands that people get busy with multiple cattle on show day, but he likes to see cattle washed out as soon as they can be after they leave the ring.

Beds behind the cattle should also be kept clean, and beds should be smooth. Once you clean up after a calf, smooth the bed again, don't just leave a dip in the bark.

Scott recommends hiding electric cords under the bedding so they aren't a tripping hazard. As an added bonus, it gives the stall a cleaner appearance. Keep the blower hoses wrapped around the blowers when not in use. They can be stretched out along the back of the bed, as long as they are orderly and consistent.

Depending on the size of the state display, the Hoffschneiders encourage juniors to keep tack areas in a centralized location. Some states have one, two or three tack areas. Also, keep chairs in the tack area.

Jennifer says she knows it is important to water the cattle, but the buckets don't need

to stay behind the cattle the whole time. Keep the buckets out of the way when they aren't being used.

Herdsmanship scorecard

Aisle and bedding — 30 points

Cleanliness
General appearance

Animals — 30

Cleaned and groomed
Number of animals

Equipment, boxes, signs, etc. — 10

Attractive and well-arranged
General appearance

Person tending cattle (youth) — 20

Neat appearance
Knowledgeable
Friendly
Teamwork
Enthusiasm

Promotions of state, association, Angus or beef — 10

General appearance

Consistent stall cards are important. Scott mentions that a few states this year had different stall cards down their aisle. That breaks up the uniformity of the aisle. Having curtains behind the cards is purely a personal preference. The judges say they do look nice, but the biggest factor is a state's uniformity and consistency with stall cards.

Displays are 10% of the herdsmanship score, but not all states have them, explain the judges. They recommend all states create a display, but they say to keep in mind that the display doesn't have to be incredibly fancy. The Hoffschneiders like to see the state name displayed prominently.

"It is important to see the display and know which state it is at a glance," says Jennifer.

Scott adds, "In my opinion, just because the display is simple, it doesn't mean it will receive a lower score. More-elaborate displays do not necessarily score the highest."

For states without a display, they

CONTINUED ON PAGE 96



► Louisiana won the division for 31-45 head. Creativity is always a plus in state displays.

IN A LEAGUE OF OUR OWN

The Scoop on Herdsmanship CONTINUED FROM PAGE 95

recommend juniors walk around the other displays to get ideas, because in addition to docking their herdsmanship score, it is much easier to identify the state with a display. Scott says exhibitors can tell which states do well on herdsmanship, and other exhibitors can walk down those aisles to get ideas for ways to improve.

The judges look at the aisles multiple times during the week, and states that do well are consistent throughout the week, not just when juniors see the judges coming with clipboards.

Junior involvement

Judges look for juniors, not the parents, doing the work when they go through the aisles. The Hoffschneiders say that many juniors realize when the judges are going through, and laugh when saying they were offered quite a bit of food while judging.



► New York won the division for 15 head or less.



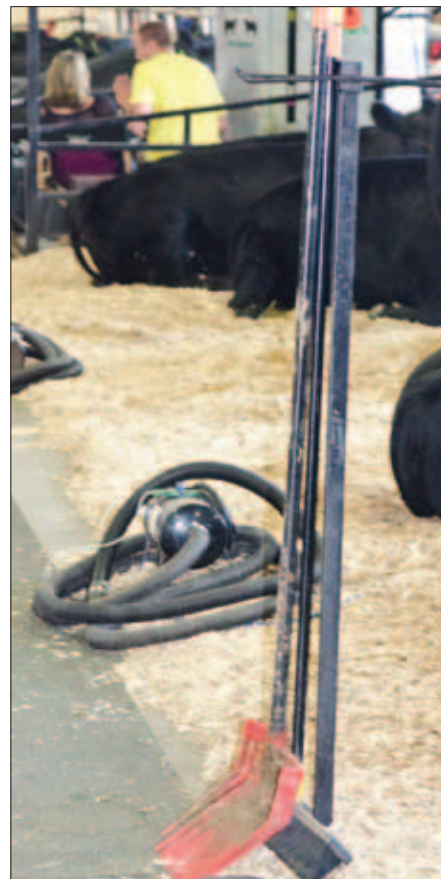
► Avoid tripping people or animals and keep the bed eye-appealing by hiding extension cords under bedding.

Jennifer chuckles and says, at one stall, “I got offered to join them for dinner that night.”

In all seriousness, they like to see effort from the juniors when they judge the aisles. The juniors should look nice and be attentive and courteous. They said they would rather see juniors get up and get to work once they see the judges coming (if there is still work to be done), rather than stay sitting as if thinking “Oh well, it’s too late.”

They said that Angus juniors are good at this, but recommend saying hello and being friendly when the judges go through. Juniors don’t need to be intimidated, and it’s not necessarily a “hands off” competition. As anyone can tell you, there is always work to be done in the barn.

This presentation in the barn is part of the bigger picture. “When you think about what this represents with the whole of agriculture



► Judges recommend keeping tools organized and easily accessible. Keep blower hoses wrapped and out of the way.

advocacy, you don’t know who’s walking through the barn. Kids need to think about that,” says Jennifer. It all comes down to presentation, presentation, presentation.



► Michigan won the division for 16-30 head. Judges say they like the state name to be prominently displayed.

