



PHOTO BY MAYZIE PURVIANCE

# THE FLIP SIDE OF THE VOTE

Voting delegate Sarah Millikan gives a walk-through of the NJAA Board of Directors election process.

by *Mayzie Purviance*, editorial intern

**I**t's time for the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) Annual Meeting, and the foyer at the Sheraton Hotel in Des Moines, Iowa, is full of junior members who are anxious, excited and exhausted from days spent at the Iowa State Fairgrounds. Each of these junior members is advocating for the NJAA, and one junior member stands out.

## Joining the NJAA

Sarah Millikan joined the NJAA in 2014 when she was 13 years old and eased into junior activities at the state level. She is currently serving as the reporter for the Ohio Junior Angus Association.

Millikan is an upcoming sophomore at Patrick Henry High School in Northwestern

Ohio and participates in golf and track in addition to serving as the secretary for her FFA chapter. She is active in her local 4-H club, which has led Millikan to become a member of her county's junior fair board. Within the fair board, she helps host, plan and volunteer at her county fair.

She started her show career as soon as she joined the organization and has shown at the North American International Livestock Exposition (NAILE), the Ohio State Fair, the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) and her county fair. Millikan and her younger sister, Hannah, participate in the Beef Exhibitor Show Total (BEST) sponsored by the Ohio Cattlemen's Association. BEST is a program that showcases Ohio junior beef exhibitors for their participation and places them through

a series of sanctioned cattle shows and showmanship competitions.

For the NJAS, Millikan and her family journeyed more than 800 miles. Leaving at 8 p.m., they made it to Des Moines around 4 a.m. — just in time to feed their cattle.

Millikan attended her first NJAS last summer in Grand Island, Neb. Still a little green to the NJAA, she participated in the mentoring program her first year.

"Last year I did the mentoring program, and Corbin Cowles (2017 NJAA Board Director) was my mentor. He was so much fun to be around and really showed me the ropes," she says. "I met *some* people, but this year I decided to participate a little more and made so many stronger connections."

This year, in addition to entering the

► In electing candidates for the National Junior Angus Board, Sarah Millikan said she was looking for a wide variety of personalities and people who could work together as a team.

showing, Millikan opted to participate in team fitting, livestock judging and the photography contest, as well as serve as an NJAA voting delegate.

## Delegacy

As a delegate, Millikan is responsible for helping select six new directors for the National Junior Angus Board (NJAB). Each will serve a two-year term — the first year serving as a director and the second year serving as an officer.

Being a director comes with great responsibility. Board members are expected to develop and carry out programs and events to serve the junior members and advocate for the Angus breed. Members of the board help, organize and attend various events in which junior members participate. The NJAB directors serve as representatives for the thousands of junior members who are involved with the Angus breed, and the delegates who elect them are determining the future of the junior board for two years.

Voting delegates attend the NJAA annual meeting and the candidate-delegate dinner during the NJAS. The candidates give a prepared speech, answer industry and character questions, and then participate in roundtable discussions with each of the delegates.

Until the night of the annual dinner, the delegates are not officially introduced to the candidates. Millikan says she thinks it's great that the candidates don't know exactly who is voting. This way they mingle with many of the junior members and are able to share their ideas with more than just the delegates.



PHOTO BY JD ROSMAN

► Delegates interview National Junior Angus Board candidates in groups during roundtable discussions at the candidate-delegate dinner.

According to Millikan, the best part of the process is the roundtable discussions. She says it was great to get each candidate with a small group of people and ask them questions about their campaign. The candidates seem a little more relaxed in this setting, and they're easier to talk to, she adds.

When asked what she was looking for in a potential director, Millikan says she is looking for a wide variety of personalities and people who can work together as a team. She is looking for candidates who want to make an already great association bigger, better and more active for junior members.

When questioned if she planned to run

when she was eligible to, she grinned and answered with a giggle, "How did you know?" Millikan continued to talk about her future plans within the industry and she spoke of her start in the NJAA, saying she felt left out at first, but once she entered the mentor program and met other members, she found her niche.

"A lot of these kids grow up coming into the Association when they're born, and they get to know people from a really young age," says Millikan. "I felt like I missed out on that a little bit, and it was kind of hard at first for me to join the Angus community. I feel like when I run for a position on the board, I'll advocate for these kids who are 13 or 14 years old that still are trying to fit in and learn the ropes. I feel like I'll gear my connection toward them to make them feel more welcome."

The room starts to clear and junior members start to file into the dining hall.

"It's something that every kid should get to experience," she says. "You meet people that you know you're going to make a connection with forever, and it helps teach you how to balance professionalism and fun."

How great is it that there is something out there like the NJAA that allows junior members to gain professional experience while doing something they love? That's what the National Junior Angus Show is all about: From the numerous contests in and outside of the showing to playing cards with your buddies in the barn, the NJAS promotes a good time accompanied by professional development every summer.



PHOTO BY JD ROSMAN

► The National Junior Angus Board candidates give a prepared speech, answer industry and character questions, and then participate in roundtable discussions with each of the delegates.

