



# Building Our Future

Team sales contest at NJAS gives juniors hands-on, real-world experience.

by *JD Rosman, communications intern*

A group of Angus juniors in matching black button-downs are huddled ringside with their heifer in tow. The Texas intermediate sales team is perfecting their presentation before entering the arena — running through last-minute facts, scenarios, and reminders about their heifer's pedigree, maternal traits and genetic performance. There's also encouragement and laughter.

They have practiced many hours and traveled hundreds of miles to get here, and it

is evident that they have faith in one another. As the judges make eye contact and wave them in, it's time to make the sale.

"Good afternoon! I'm Railey Aragon with T4 Angus of Lubbock, Texas, and I'd like to introduce you to my associates: Dylan Denny, Kara Pinkerton and Kaydee Free," the first team member says as she begins their sales pitch.

The team sales competition at the 2016 National Junior Angus Show (NJAS)

challenges juniors to market an Angus female to a panel of three judges. Competing against seven other teams, T4 Angus comes armed with knowledge comparable to seasoned herdsmen and brandishes a sales pitch to match. The team of Texans showcases a conversational style and enthusiasm that quickly captivates the judges.

"Our outfit is located in the short-grass country of the Texas Panhandle," Aragon says. "As a third-generation Texas cattlemoan,

## TEAM SALES



► Indiana won first place in the senior division of team sales, taking home the Bob Laffin Award presented in memory of the late Angus breeder who was passionate for junior programs. Pictured are (from left) Clinton Laffin, Sharee Sankey, Josh Laffin, Bayler, Dustin and Jeana Sankey, all presenting; contestants **Serena Clock**, Marion; **Elizabeth Beer**, Milford; and **Sarah Innis**, Milroy; and Chris Sankey, presenting. Not pictured is Indiana team member **Karsyn Zenor**.



our family has weathered all types of conditions, not just weather, but economic, as well. We know the value a moderate-framed, good-doing Angus cow plays in the cattle industry today."

As time-tested cattlemen know, weather and environment play a role in the type of cattle that work in their operations. The Texas team has their bases covered when marketing this breeding animal.

"Weather has always been an issue in our part of the world," Aragon says. "While we have been blessed the last few years with adequate moisture and grazing conditions, we know the next drought could be just months away."

Free says they marketed their female as a young donor capable of producing superior bulls, replacement females and show prospects. The benefit with Texas-raised cattle, she says, is they can thrive anywhere due to the state's harsh conditions.

"I believe there are four traits that make up what I like to call the complete-package female: length, width, depth and structural soundness," Free says with the utmost assurance. "Gentlemen, she is the complete package."

As the pitch continues, each team member contributes significant data and information on the animal standing before them. With

knowledge comes power, and these juniors make a lasting impression on their audience during the attempt to win over prospective buyers.

"We are confident she can fit into your operation," Free says. "Today we are asking \$8,000 for this outstanding young donor. We believe that she can provide your operation with great EPDs (expected progeny differences), an outstanding pedigree and a fabulous phenotype."

Judges evaluate juniors on their content, ability to communicate, organization,

effectiveness of the pitch, overall knowledge and ultimately, whether they would choose to purchase the animal based on the team's pitch. The panel typically consists of local and regional Angus breeders, which creates a real-world situation for juniors, allowing them to network and build relationships with ranchers across the nation.

With the smoothness of a veteran politician, the sales team wraps up the presentation with an offer the buyer would be hard-pressed to refuse: "So if there are no

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## TEAM SALES



► Placing second in the senior division, representing Illinois, are (from left) **Keegan Cassidy**, Bloomington; **Laramie Chaffin**, Roodhouse; and **Sierra Day**, Cerro Gordo.



► Placing third in the senior division, representing Missouri, are (from left) **Chris Kahlenbeck**, Union; **Cooper Sadowsky**, Eagleville; **Anna Brightwell**, Carthage; and **Hannah Moyer**, Lamar.



► Winning the intermediate division, representing Texas, are (from left) **Kara Pinkerton**, Arp; **Kaydee Free**, Salado; **Dylan Denny**, Lubbock; and **Railey Aragon**, Moulton.



► Placing second in the intermediate division, representing Illinois, are (from left) **Matthew Decker** and **Lindsey Decker**, both of Philo; and **Eric Schafer**, Owaneco.



► Placing third in the intermediate division, representing Virginia, are (from left) **Jacob McCall** and **Zach McCall**, both of Greenville; **Gordon Clark**, Gretna; and **Mikayla St. Clair**, Berryville.



► Winning the junior division, representing Texas, are (from left) **Cailynn Aragon**, Moulton; **Jeremiah Steph**, Tatum; and **Cutter Pohlman** and **Colter Pohlman**, both of Hereford.



► Placing second in the junior division, representing Illinois, are (from left) **Paige Lemenager**, Hudson; **Lizzie Schafer**, Owaneco; and **Reed Naughton**, Atlanta.



► Placing third in the junior division, representing Kansas, are (from left) **Clay Pelton**, Paradise; **Kelsey Theis**, Leavenworth; and **Austin Woodrow**, Emporia.



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further questions, can we shake hands on this deal and put her to work in your operation?" Free asks.

### More than a contest

"What we learn here is going to take us to the next level and become future leaders," Free says. "It isn't just marketing animals, it isn't just marketing yourself even, it's learning those basic skills. It's setting a foundation for you to step into a brighter and more successful future."

At just 17 years old, Free admits she has much to learn about the Angus business. The team sales contest provides an avenue for learning and experience not only about the Angus business, but also critical leadership and public-speaking skills.

It provides an opportunity for the next generation to develop its untapped potential by discovering each junior's own strengths collaborating as part of a team. Confidence, sales experience and enthusiasm for the Angus breed are just a few of the takeaways juniors report from participating in the team sales contests.

As so many National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) members know, the friendships and bonds built transcend the miles that separate. The camaraderie is evident as the Texas team encourages one another, high-fiving as they leave the ring.

"Not going to lie, we knocked it out of the park," Free says with a beaming smile. "It's such a wonderful opportunity, but don't miss out on it because you are scared or you don't know what you are going to say. The only option to fail is to not try at all."

The lessons, friendships and connections created and developed in the association extend beyond the boundaries of the NJAA.



► Dylan Denny explains the positive attributes of the team's heifer to the panel of judges.

Preparing juniors for adult lessons creates a network of strong individuals and allows for opportunities to grow and succeed, Free says.

All of the hard work and dedicated time spent reviewing pedigrees and talking points will lead juniors down the path of success.

"It's that moment where you know you've put everything you can into it and you've put every thought and you've worked so hard to get there, and then it's over," Free says.

The Texas team claimed the champion title for the intermediate division, and the best is yet to come for these young Angus juniors.



### A chairman's take on the NJAS

While the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) serves as one of the largest junior breed shows in the nation, it is more than a cattle competition, says 2015-2016 National Junior Angus Board (NJAB) Chairman Alex Rogan.

"We are cultivating the next generation of Angus breeders here in Grand Island," Rogan says. "It really is a testament to the dedication these families have to raise their kids in a farming and ranching background."

"Educating [juniors] in agriculture and preparing them for the rest of their lives is what this show is truly about," he says.

At the NJAS, juniors have the opportunity to compete in a number of contests, including creative writing, photography, prepared and extemporaneous speaking, graphic design, team fitting, team marketing and the All-American *Certified Angus Beef*® Cook-Off. Whether contestants compete individually or as a team, the experiences help build future leaders and foster relationships by making lifelong connections.

Rogan says building relationships and growing as an individual is the real reason people come to the NJAS year after year: "It's not just about showing cattle. It's about meeting lifelong friends, developing as an agriculturalist and an Angus breeder."



► Learn more about the Texas intermediate sales team by clicking on the photo, or print readers can view the video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h7nZxQX3vQo>.