

Juniors Raise the Bar in Columbus

by **Carrie Gilliam**, American Angus Association

When it comes to leadership, it's important to keep raising the bar. That expectation is what Angus youth learned while attending the 2012 Raising the Bar conference in Columbus, Ohio. National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) members met March 30-April 1 to participate in the premier leadership-training event.

"The Raising the Bar conferences give our junior members the opportunity to expand their horizons and truly 'raise the bar' on what they can accomplish," says Robin Ruff, American Angus Association director of junior activities.

Throughout the weekend, 23 Angus junior leaders, officers and advisors from eight state junior Angus associations participated in activities geared toward building stronger leaders and developing friendships. They toured Ohio State University and area Angus operations, heard from motivational speakers, participated in industry-related workshops — and made time for fun activities, including an evening at the Sky Zone indoor trampoline park.

"One of the best things a junior can gain from this experience is new friendships," Ruff says. "Together, they can learn, grow and prepare for a promising future in the Angus industry."

At the Ohio State University campus, participants toured the meat lab and animal science building, and visited with animal science professor Henry Zerby. He gave an overview



► Henry Zerby, animal science professor at Ohio State University, showed Raising the Bar participants an overview of meat science and led a hands-on activity for juniors to create their own ground beef, add spices and properly cook the beef.



PHOTOS BY ROBIN RUFF

► Raising the Bar participants visited Select Sires in Plain City, Ohio, and learned about its history and opportunities in a behind-the-scenes tour of the operation.

of meat science and led a hands-on activity for juniors to create their own ground beef, then add spices and properly cook the beef.

The Angus juniors also visited Select Sires in Plain City, Ohio, where they were given a behind-the-scenes look at the operation, its history and the opportunities Select Sires brings to the Angus industry. Juniors also viewed eight elite Select Sires bulls, including GAR Predestined.

Raising the Bar participants toured Maplecrest Farms of Hillsboro, Ohio, as well. There, juniors learned about production and donor practices, return on investments, showmanship and how to remain involved in the industry.

Keynote speakers encouraged juniors to be aware of challenges in the industry and be prepared to make a difference. Steve Moeller, Ohio State University, spoke on the issue of animal rights vs. animal welfare. He discussed the current struggles agriculture organizations are facing, and how junior members can inform and educate the public about what goes on in America's farms and ranches.

Marlene Eick, a leadership facilitator, explained the importance of leaving a legacy and what it means to have a positive leadership influence. The NJAA Board of Directors also presented workshops on the role of the American Angus Association, Certified Angus Beef LLC and selecting for expected progeny differences (EPDs).

About Raising the Bar

Now in its fifth year, the Raising the Bar conference continues to foster the development of Angus youth by hosting events in four regions across the country. The NJAA, with sponsorship from the Angus Foundation, has conducted Raising the Bar

conferences in cities such as Nashville, Tenn.; Ames, Iowa; and Stillwater, Okla.

The next Raising the Bar conference will begin Saturday, April 21, at the Grand Sierra Resort in Reno, Nev., in conjunction with the Western Regional Junior Angus Show. To register for the conference or for more information, contact Ruff at 816-383-5100 or rruff@angus.org; or visit www.angus.org/njaa.

The NJAA promotes the involvement of young people in raising Angus cattle, while also providing leadership and self-development opportunities for more than 6,000 active members nationwide. For more information about NJAA, visit www.angus.org/njaa.



Editor's Note: Carrie Gilliam is communications coordinator for the American Angus Association.

2012 Raising the Bar Attendees, Columbus, Ohio

Mark Alexander, Berryville, Va.
Morgan Alexander, Berryville, Va.
Emily Bannister, Kent, N.Y.
Cody Boden, Clear Brook, Va.
Jessica Clarke, Rocky Ridge, Md.
Taylor Clarke, Rocky Ridge, Md.
Shane Clary, Brodnax, Va.
Michaela Clowser, Milford, Neb.
Lindsey Grimes, Hillsboro, Ohio
Catie Hope, Berryville, Va.
Katherine Hopkins, Royalton, N.Y.
Caroline Miller, Lindsey, Ohio
Connor Orrock, Woodford, Va.
JanLee Rowlett, Hurricane Mills, Tenn.
Anna Scott, Douglas, Ga.
Katherine Throne, Lexington, Ga.
Morgan Wagner, Lockport, N.Y.
Drew Williams, Milan, Ga.
Sally Yon, Ridge Spring, S.C.