

The Good Shepherd

At the 2010 National Junior Angus Show, Temple Grandin talked about how cattlemen can reshape issues surrounding animal welfare.

by **Crystal Albers**

When noted animal handling expert Temple Grandin speaks at agriculture meetings, she normally addresses a sea of older farmers and ranchers — evidence of the increasing median age among the nation's agriculturalists. Earlier this summer, however, new faces comprised the audience.

Grandin talked to hundreds of eager youth, parents and other spectators gathered during the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) at the National Western Stock Show Complex in Denver, Colo. The presentation was sponsored by the Angus Foundation's Arkansas Activities Endowment Fund.

The Colorado State University professor known for her revolutionary livestock handling facility designs explained proper animal-handling techniques and how to provide low-stress environments. She also underscored the necessity of talking to people outside of agriculture about how farmers and ranchers provide proper health and care for their animals.

"We need to do it right, and show how we're doing it," she said. "There are a variety of different ways to do this. There's social networking, YouTube and other ways to share with the world the things that we do. More people need to be doing that kind of stuff.

"We need to open the door electronically. Clean up the house and stream it out to the Internet. And invite some folks out to your farm," she suggested during an interview with national agriculture news program *AgDay* following the presentation.

It's also vital to get youth involved in agriculture, Grandin said.

"It bothers me to see fewer and fewer people going into animal agriculture," Grandin said. "I'd like to see a lot more young people. One thing I really liked today [at the National Junior Angus Show] was seeing

young people going into animal agriculture. We have to reach out to young people."

That was the goal of bringing Grandin to the NJAS, says Susan McMahan Taylor, who helped create the Arkansas Activities Endowment Fund. The endowment is administered by the Angus Foundation and supports activities to benefit NJAS participants.

The Arkansas Activities Endowment Fund hosted random drawings in which winners received copies of Grandin's books during the NJAS. Attendees also visited the Arkansas Junior Angus Association booth throughout the week to learn more about Grandin's corrals and chute layouts. The group provided examples of Grandin's designs to use as templates to build LEGO® models of handling facilities.

"We wanted to offer a fun, educational activity that would teach Dr. Grandin's work in a visual way that all ages can understand," says McMahan Taylor. "We hope that our efforts increased awareness of Dr. Grandin's principles. If people think of Dr. Grandin's proper animal handling and the NJAS the next time they see LEGOs®, then we've made a connection for them."

Grandin has dedicated her life to bettering the livestock and food industries. She has published numerous technical reports, industry publications and books on proper livestock handling. An estimated 50% of the cattle in the U.S. and Canada are handled in equipment she designed. She's a best-selling author and was included in *TIME* Magazine's list of 100 most influential people.

She was also the subject of a critically



PHOTO BY CRYSTAL YOUNG

acclaimed HBO film, titled *Temple Grandin*, which depicts her life as an autistic and was nominated for 15 Emmy Awards. It took home several of the top honors, including Outstanding Made for Television Movie; Outstanding Lead Actress; Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Miniseries or Movie; Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Miniseries or Movie; and Outstanding Direction for a Miniseries, Movie or Dramatic Special.

Most recently, Grandin received the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) Lifetime Achievement Award, and she will be inducted into the National Cowgirl Hall of Fame in October.

"Using animals for food is an ethical thing to do, but we've got to do it right if we're going to survive," she said. "We've got to give these animals a decent life, and we've got to give them a painless death. We owe the animals respect."

Grandin said she encourages young people to become involved in the animal science industry. "If we don't expose young people to animal agriculture, how are they going to know if they're going to like it?"

Visit www.angus.org/pub/videos.aspx to watch further coverage of Grandin's interview at the NJAS.