

Junior Board Attends YBIC

Junior beef leaders focus on their future at YBIC.

by *Shelia Stannard*

The National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) Board of Directors participated in the 2008 Youth Beef Industry Congress (YBIC) March 27-30 at the Purina Research and Conference Center at Gray Summit, Mo. The YBIC is a biennial event for all junior beef breed and state junior cattlemen's association boards. This year's event "Focused on My Future," challenged the 152 future beef industry leaders participating to think about career choices and provided them opportunities to learn about résumés and the interview process.

"We wanted to make this year's YBIC the most interactive in years, with a look into real-world career opportunities," said Chris Stephens, American Hereford Association (AHA) director of youth activities and YBIC planning chairman. "The speakers and tours allowed the participants to learn about themselves and the career opportunities in the beef industry while networking with others."

Young professionals who have extensive experience in the beef industry addressed the attendees in several interactive panels that covered building a career, livestock marketing and human resources. A "Been There, Done That" panel included Angie Denton, Blue Rapids, Kan.; Jarrod Gillig, Hereford, Texas; Kyle McMillan, Ohio, Ill.; and Chad Zehnder, Stanchfield, Minn., all of whom served on junior beef breed boards in the past. The panel discussed their diversified careers and how their involvement in junior breed organizations helped prepare them for their careers, as well as what they look for in hiring individuals. They stressed the importance of setting goals, interning, networking at events such as YBIC, diversifying their experiences, and sharing their passion and dedication to the industry.

"People are the most important part to animal agriculture," said McMillan, who earlier served on the Polled Hereford Council. He outlined six key steps to success. "Dedication and a sincere desire are critical to success today and tomorrow," he said.

A marketing panel discussed the importance of marketing livestock in a catchy way through a variety of media. Jared



►NJAA Directors participating in the 2008 YBIC include (seated, from left) Bridget Driscoll, Williamsburg, Iowa; Ann Blumer, Chesnee, S.C.; Rebecca Tokach, Saint Anthony, N.D., Foundation director; Kara Wilson, Orleans, Ind., communications director; Dana May, Mineral Point, Wis., membership director; Mallory Trospier, Hamilton, Mo.; (standing, from left) Walt Stinson, Talbott, Tenn.; Trey Davis, Doerun, Ga.; Justin Brosey, Hamilton, Ohio, chairman; Andrew Foster, Niles, Mich., vice chairman; Brandon Creamer, Montrose, Colo.; and Joe Epperly, Moneta, Va., leadership director.

Spader of Osborn & Barr and a lifelong Angus breeder defined marketing as "the intersection of psychology and commerce." Other panel members included Christy Couch Lee, National Swine Registry; Anita Vanderwert, Brownfield/Learfield Networks; and John Zeloski and Brant Gilbert, both with Purina.

A final panel discussion included tips on organizing a cover letter and résumé as well as preparing for a job interview. Panelists included human resources experts Jamie Meyer Rutledge, who works for Rubbermaid, and Karen Howard, Land O' Lakes Purina. Both encouraged the group to have outside and volunteer activities as well as experience. They said that knowing the company and asking questions in the interview process is important.



Diane Johnson, Fort Worth, Texas, also offered tips for preparing for a career. She obtained each participant's résumé in advance, critiqued them, offered advice and showed examples of exceptional work. She demonstrated handshaking and interview skills to the group as well. Johnson, the executive director of the Livestock Publications Council (LPC), offered three words of advice: "Consideration. Honesty. Respect."

In addition to participating with the interactive panels and

discussions, the youth had the opportunity to learn more about themselves and others through icebreakers and team-building activities. Kim Anderson, University of Georgia Fanning Institute, challenged the group to think about the importance of moving from a "competition" mind-set to one of "completion" that works best for an organization and the beef industry.

Other speakers who addressed the group included Mark Wellman, National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) field representative; Rod Nulik, Land O' Lakes Purina Feed LLC Cattle Business Group marketing manager; and Craig Huffhines, AHA executive vice president. Wellman gave a forecast of U.S. beef cattle numbers, including purebred cow numbers as well as fed cattle. He said the typical 10-year cattle cycle is a thing of the past. Nulik encouraged the youth to give back to others, stating that volunteering and affording others opportunities is very important in today's society. Finally, Huffhines challenged the group to face their fears in life by finding a mentor.

In addition to interacting with speakers, attendees toured segments of Purina's Research Farm, attended a hockey game and networked with others. YBIC strives to bring youth together working in the interest of the beef cattle industry and to provide them with further knowledge and understanding of all segments of the beef industry.

Designed for top individuals in the beef industry, the 2008 YBIC was sponsored by Purina Mills, the U.S. Beef Breeds Council and NCBA.