

NJAA Members Learn to LEAD

Juniors attend the annual LEAD Conference in Saint Louis, Mo.

The 2011 Leaders Engaged in Angus Development (LEAD) Conference, themed “Meat Me in St. Louie,” Aug. 4-7 in Saint Louis, Mo., brought together 144 Angus juniors from 33 states and Canada.

The leadership conference, sponsored by the Angus Foundation is designed for youth, ages 14-21, to participate in team-building and leadership activities organized by the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) Board.

“Each year at the LEAD Conference, it amazes me to watch these kids grow into young adults, and this year was no exception,” says Robin Ruff, American Angus Association® director of junior activities. “The juniors developed teamwork and leadership skills in Saint Louis that they will use for the rest of their lives.”

The junior board, elected during the 2011 National Junior Angus Show (NJAS), started the conference with activities that taught LEAD participants the importance of working in teams, while having the opportunity to meet other attendees.

Other skill-building workshops provided by the junior board and officers included: Angus Jeopardy, an Angus-themed trivia game; Are You Hired or Fired, resume building and thank you writing; Defend It and End It, video commercials produced to defend the beef industry; and Are You More Than a Showman, industry questions themed after the *Are You Smarter than a 5th Grader* television series.

Professional speaker and best-selling author Justin Lookadoo of McKinney, Texas, returned to LEAD Conference by popular demand. In his second appearance at LEAD, Lookadoo addressed participants and created a human twister game to teach juniors teamwork skills.

Agricultural speaker and host of *Cattlemen to Cattlemen*, Kevin Ochsner challenged juniors to model their lives like an auction — to raise their hands and make decisions. Kevin also touched on the importance of building lifelong friendships through NJAA involvement and participation in leadership conferences such as LEAD.

Team-building facilitator Crystal Warnock, asked participants why it is important for the American Angus Association® and the

beef industry to use teamwork. Juniors then solved this question with a brainstorming session and built a human squeeze chute in teams.

The conference also included extensive tours of the Purina Research Farm, Gray Summit, Mo.; and Sydenstricker Genetics, Mexico, Mo.

While at Purina, juniors toured various livestock research facilities and participated in interactive workshops for body condition scoring, cattle metabolism, cattle feeding, ruminant nutrition and equine studies — all while hearing from top livestock industry professionals.

Sydenstricker Genetics hosted NJAA youth at their John Deere location and Angus farm. The tour included a chuck wagon meal and entertainment provided by cowboy poet Del Shields.

While at the Sydenstricker Empire Club, Certified Angus Beef LLC Assistant Vice President Mark McCully educated juniors on how to become better advocates for agriculture and the beef industry. He encouraged youth to share agriculture’s positive stories.

LEAD attendees visited the Museum of Westward Expansion and took the journey to the top of the Gateway Arch, where they looked over the Mississippi River and the city of Saint Louis.

In accordance with the baseball-themed leadership conference, attendees then traveled to Saint Louis Cardinals-Busch Stadium. NJAA youth ate a baseball-themed lunch in the Champions Club, received a behind-the-scenes tour of the stadium, and had a few minutes to tour dugouts and take pictures on the famous baseball field.

LEAD attendees then let their imagination run wild at the Saint Louis City Museum. There, juniors

were able to climb, crawl and feel their way through a playground of recycled materials. As a highlight of the conference, junior members enjoyed numerous exhibits featuring a variety of entertaining obstacles.

The LEAD Conference is offered on an annual basis, and the Angus Foundation sponsors the event. For more information about LEAD, contact the NJAA at 816-383-5100 or visit www.angus.org/njaa.



Photo by Crystal Young, American Angus Association.

These juniors represented Missouri at the 2011 LEAD (Leaders Engaged in Angus Development) Conference, Aug. 4-7 in St. Louis, Mo. Pictured front row is Cody Smith, West Plains. Second row from left are Cameron Ward, Plattsburg; Paige Wallace, Stotts City; Carter Ward, Plattsburg; Sydney Thummel, Sheridan; Jera Pipkin, Republic; Brittany Eagleburger, Buffalo; and Hannah Moyer, Lamar. Back row from left are Samuel Wallace, Stotts City; Mark Moriondo, Mount Vernon; Layne Robinson, Wellsville; Chance Hardy, Diamond; Jacob Coon, Bethel; Shannon Yokley, Jefferson City; Jillian Campbell, Sarcouxie; and Elizabeth Otte, Saint Mary.