

2015 Round-Up – From the Badlands to the Bison

by Jaclyn Ketchum, JRA President

Bison! Badlands! Red Angus! Juniors from 12 different states plus Canada! The 2015 Round-Up in North Dakota consisted of just under 40 attendees who learned a lot and were able to have several great experiences.

Day 1 – June 22, 2015

Round-Up kicked off in Bismarck, N.D. when attendees left Bismarck and headed to Belfield, N.D., where they toured MBI Oil and Gas LLC. Chuck Steffan gave a tour of a training center for train new employees. It was interesting to learn about one of the leading industries in North Dakota and how it affects the rest of the state and world.

The next stop was at Heart River Ranch and Embryo Transfer Clinic, owned by Chuck and Annette Steffan, which is also located in Belfield. Annette educated juniors about the embryo transfer process and science. Juniors watched a veterinarian flush a cow and, after the procedure, were able to look at embryos to see the difference between fertilized and unfertilized embryos as well as the different grades.

Round-Up attendees enjoyed the view of the Badlands as they traveled from Belfield to Medora, N.D., and visited the historic old west town. At the Badlands Ministries Camp they participated in the team- and trust-building high ropes course. That evening, juniors enjoyed the entertainment of the Medora Musical with singing and dancing that reflected the past 50 years of country music. The day concluded with a campfire and s'mores.

Day 2 – June 23, 2015

Home On The Range (HOTR), located near Sentinel Butte, N.D., is a working ranch for troubled teens. Round-Up attendees learned how HOTR practices animal-assisted therapies to assist teens in overcoming their problems. Juniors experienced a horse therapy session and learned how therapists help the teens relate their animal sessions to their own individual lives.

Next, the group traveled to Sperry Quarter Horses at Trotters, N.D. The Sperry ranch utilizes Red Angus genetics in their commercial cowherd but primarily raise and sell Quarter Horses. Robert Sperry and his crew demonstrated some of the rope horses.

Leland Red Angus, owned by Melvin and Luella Leland and son Todd and his wife Carla, took juniors on a tour of their cattle and beautiful scenery. While there, juniors participated in the

Team Advocacy contest, listened to interesting local history presented by Luella, and the Red Angus history by Melvin.

The night concluded in Bismarck with the Quiz Bowl competition and the Chinese Auction.

Day 3 – June 24, 2015

The Schmidt Ranch, a commercial operation near Crystal Springs, N.D., is owned by Jason Schmidt and his family. Jason explained how Red Angus is a vital tool in their crossbreeding system. Attendees were able to look through several pastures of their cow-calf pairs and enjoyed seeing how Red Angus influence their cattle.

After stopping to see a rare albino bison in Jamestown, N.D., the group continued their trek to North Dakota State University (NDSU) in Fargo, N.D.

At NDSU, JRA members participated in the Stockmen's Contest that was composed of equipment identification and a quiz. Juniors enjoyed recreation at the Student Union Building where they bowled and played pool and air hockey.

Day 4 – June 25, 2015

Prepared and extemporaneous speeches kicked off the day, then juniors toured the NDSU greenhouse and commodity trading room, Veterinary Diagnostic Lab, Animal Nutrition and Physiology Center and the Beef Cattle Research Complex. While at the Beef Cattle Research Complex, juniors participated in the cattle evaluation contest.

That evening, attendees participated in Barbeque Boot Camp, an event the NDSU meat science graduate students designed to educate the public about agriculture and, more specifically, about the different types of meat and the journey from pasture to plate. This education includes marketing, flavor, cooking and the composition of the meat. The night ended with a Red Hawks baseball game.

Day 5 – June 26, 2015

That last day of Round-Up, juniors toured the Central Grasslands Research Extension Center near Streeter, N.D. While there, the group took in a presentation by a veterinarian from South America, learned about the grasses that are popular in North Dakota, and the different research projects that the center is conducting.

At Fanta Farms in Dawson, N.D., attendees took in a Pioneer seed distributor operation and learn about Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) and agribusiness.

The final stop was near Steele, N.D., where they spent the rest of the day at Koester Red Angus. Steve and Tracey Koester explained their operation as well as their ties to the Red Angus Association of America. Juniors participated in the weight guessing contest and then were able to look at fall-born bull calves and herd sires.

The group competed in a Barnyard Olympics and then settled into the Junior Red Angus (JRA) Standing Committee Meetings. After the committee meetings, the juniors convened for the JRA Annual Business Meeting and presentation of Round-Up awards.

Round-Up was a very successful event and attendees witnessed the different terrains of North Dakota and learned not only about Red Angus, but other areas of agriculture. The hosts were wonderful and the JRA is very thankful to every sponsor, host and person who helped make Round-Up possible.