

2015



conference



Juniors Unlock Potential at Key Conference in Sioux Falls, South Dakota

by Will Moore

The annual Key Conference was held in Sioux Falls, South Dakota and drew young Shorthorn enthusiast from six different states. The two day conference gave the juniors the opportunity to learn about different facets of the industry, meet new people and reconnect with old friends, as well as have some fun along the way. A total of 24 people were in attendance at this year's Leadership Conference.

Most of the participants arrived in Sioux Falls on Thursday evening and on Friday morning the conference hit the ground running when participants loaded the vans to head to Brookings, South Dakota. The group started their day at South Dakota State University in the livestock arena, where past and present South Dakota state FFA officers conducted ice breakers and leadership workshops where participants got to know one another better and learned more about leadership. Next, the group headed to the SDSU meat lab to have a lesson in preparing meat from a professional. Each group was challenged to cook a beef steak, a chicken breast, and a pork bratwurst. During this workshop participants got to sample what they made, and make their own dry-rub or marinade of their choice. Our participants had a lot of fun and came up with some interesting flavours along the way. The next stop for the day was Trans-Ova headquarters in Iowa. The group enjoyed a tour of

the facilities and had the chance to ask questions about the operation. After the Trans-Ova tour was completed the group loaded the van for Schrag Shorthorns in Marion, South Dakota. At Schrags, the group had a quick lesson and livestock judging contest facilitated by Joshua Cribbs, Livestock Judging Coach at South Dakota State University. After working hard during the livestock judging contest, the kids enjoyed a beautiful evening of music, great food, games and great hospitality from the Schrag Family. After a long day of travelling and action-packed activities, the group headed back to Sioux Falls.

On Saturday the group started the day at Sanford and toured SABIO Therapeutics. While on this tour the group enjoyed making DNA in test tubes and learned about cloning and the benefits that cloning livestock can have in the human health industry. Upon completion of that tour, juniors enjoyed some time at Falls Park in Sioux Falls. Then the group enjoyed several activities and lunch at Falls Park. The rest of the afternoon was filled with fun at Wild Water West Water Park and completed by a miniature golf tournament, where the competitiveness of the group was at the forefront. Upon arrival back to the hotel, the group reflected on the conference and had some more team building and leadership activities. ■