

Heilan Greenhorn Corner



Hello Highland Juniors!

Have you ever thought that it would be cool to visit other Highland cattle farms or maybe spend some time with a breeder that you think you could learn from? If you make the effort to do this you will find it very rewarding. By interacting with other Highland owners, both juniors and adults, you will make new friends and form valuable social connections. Observing other Highland cattle owners and talking with them about their breeding and/or beef programs can also be a great way to learn more about cattle management and the bloodlines behind our breed.

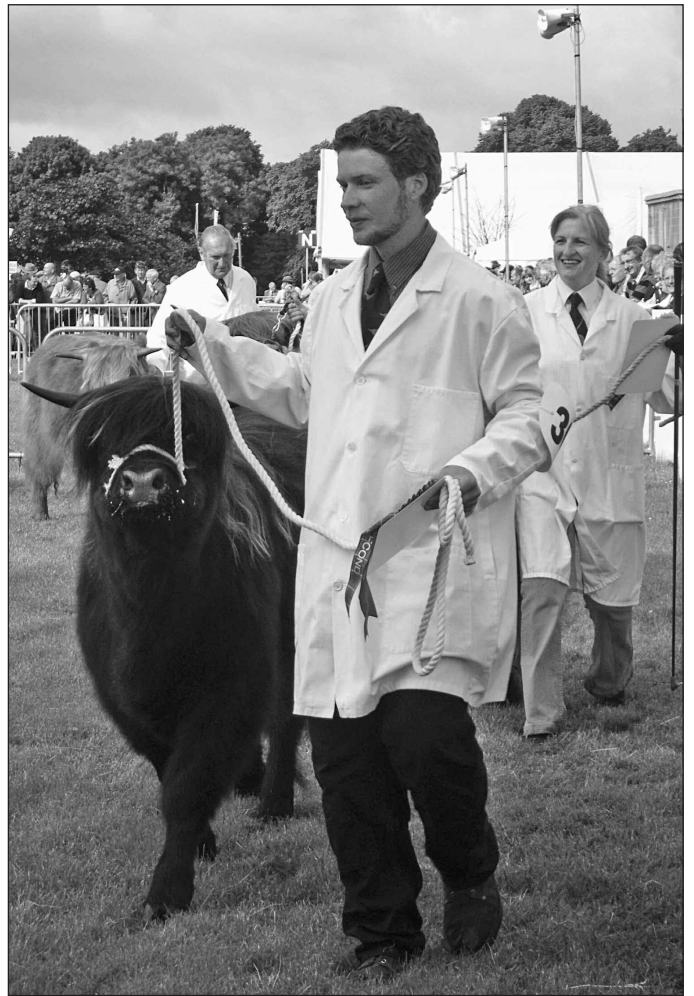
You can begin exploring the world of Highland cattle any time. During my early junior years I visited many farms with my parents, which helped me learn more about Highlands. By comparing cattle at different places we went and talking with the owners I discovered many new things about cattle breeding philosophy and Highland bloodlines. Interactions like these help build a solid knowledge base and will give you the advantage of perspective as a cattle breeder.

If you are excited to meet other Highland people and see their cows, make it happen! Several years ago my good friend Skyler Anderson and I planned a grand farm-touring trip that took us in a big loop through southeastern Canada and the northeast U.S. We both picked the farms we wanted to see most and then called them up and arranged to visit them. We spent twelve days on the road and saw more great Highland cattle than either of us had ever seen before. We found that Highland breeders love to show off their cows and we learned a ton from what we saw and heard. During the planning stages it was a bit intimidating, but by the end we had gained new confidence as well as many friends and great memories.

You older juniors might consider actually spending a couple weeks or maybe even a few months

interning with an influential Highland breeder. Last year I decided I wanted to do this. I got the crazy idea in my head that I would write to some of the major breeders in other countries and see if they had room for a summer intern. It turned out that a few did, and I ended up going to the U.K. for the summer and fall. It was the experience of a lifetime! I got to stay at and be a part of the daily activities on a large-scale Highland beef and breeding stock business. I went to more than fifteen Highland shows and we took cattle to about ten of those. While I was there I also got the chance to tour many of the oldest Highland folds and see some of the beautiful Scottish and English countryside. Like here, the Highland breeders there are eager to show off their prized beasts and I was shown a warm welcome everywhere I went. It was really cool to talk with some of the long-time breeders who exported Highlands to the U.S. years ago. I now have a much better idea of what U.K. genetics I admire and the history behind the Scottish/English bloodlines in our American Highlands. I would highly recommend that you do some research and see what opportunities you can come up with. You might find something really interesting in the U.S. or even abroad.

I admit I am pretty crazy about Highland cattle and I know that many of you share this passion with me. I would like to encourage you to pur-



sue your cattle interests. You are the future of Highlands. As such, realize that “the future” must understand the present and past to be progressive. So talk with other breeders, visit farms, or maybe even find an internship where you can learn and gain perspective. Be bold and discover! Have fun!

Jake Larson
National Junior Committee Member