

NORTH AMERICAN JR. RED ANGUS EVENT
NAJRAE

When

**ADVERSITY &
GENEROSITY
COLLIDE**

Say it isn't so...

By: Brian and Courtney Kuelbs

It is with heavy hearts that we have had to write this, but life takes a turn at times. As many of you know our son Kainan lost his heifer while we were at the NAJRAE. Growing up in the livestock industry can be very hard especially for young kids. We all learn at a young age about life and death but when it comes to your show animal it is that much harder. There are endless hours that are spent from picking your animal, training, feeding, washing and showing it. It becomes part of your family and like a best friend.

This was Kainan's first year showing and first time at a junior national. He had so much fun in all the satellite events, activities, and showmanship where he placed in the top five in novice showmanship. He was looking forward to show day on Saturday. Unfortunately, that day never came for him. June 30th was one of the hardest days for our family. As a parent you never want to see your kids hurt and this broke our hearts. This heifer had grown close to us all even Kainan's younger brother Nash. He also had shown her in Peewee Showmanship the day before.

Tough Decisions

Yes, the decision to stay for the rest of the show was a tough one. Right away that morning we canceled our room packed our stuff and were ready to leave. We ultimately left the final decision up to Kainan. Throughout the day he went back and forth about staying. Every time he went into the barn by the stalls where his heifer had been stalled with his cousins, he would start crying and had a hard time holding it together. Deep down he wanted to stay for the banquet because he had made it in the top 10 for his arts and crafts project and wanted to know how he did. So the final decision was made to stay and go home after the banquet.

The banquet was so much more than we had expected. The turnout of support for the juniors was phenomenal. All the prizes for the junior exhibitors was nothing short of amazing. To watch and listen to all the support NAJRAE gives to the youth is breath taking.

NEXT →

NORTH AMERICAN JR. RED ANGUS EVENT

Not a dry eye

As Matt Griffith got up on stage and began to talk, mentioning Kainan's story, Brian and I took a glance at Kainan and new this was going to be a struggle. Little did we expect he proceeded to call us on stage. It took every last effort for us to not break down. We held it together as much as we could for Kainan. Matt began to announce that Thompson/Griffith Cattle wanted to gift Kainan 3 embryos. We were absolutely shocked with the generosity and support. We no longer got to our seat for the rest of the evening and Matt came up to us stating that the Richter family from Oklahoma was offering to put in the embryos for Kainan. This was very hard for us to accept as we felt so overwhelmed by the support and generosity from everyone.

Later that Evening when Cheryl Johnson came up to us and told us about a wonderful family and how they wanted to give Kainan a pick of their fall heifer calves, we could not believe this. This had been a whirlwind of a day, and we could not wrap our heads around it. That night we talked and decided it would be best to stay for the show the next day.

NEXT →

NAJRAE community -

As hard as it was to watch the show and the class Kainan would have been in, we felt part of this family. We knew it was the right thing to do to stay and watch. That morning Cheryl introduced us to this wonderful man and his hired man that were giving a pick of 3 heifers. The two of them explained to Kainan how they wanted to give him a heifer and how our story touched them. Not only were they going to give him a heifer, but he could choose one out of their 3 fall calves so he could have something tangible now. We cannot begin to explain how thankful our family is for the generosity of everyone.

It has been weeks since we left the NAJRAE and there have been a lot of emotions at home. Many questions by Kainan of: Why did this happen? When will we find out what happened? I just want my heifer Katrina back. I miss my heifer. It's hard to explain to an 8 year-old so he understands that things happen and we have to embrace it and look for the positive.

NEXT →

Just got bigger 'n better

A week after NAJRAE the wonderful husband and wife made the long trip to central Minnesota, bringing the 3 heifers to us, to let Kainan pick his heifer. They spent the morning with us bonding over the perfect heifer for Kainan. Right away you could see the connection between Kainan and his heifer Ruby. This was the happiest we have seen him since this took place. One request from the man to Kainan was if they could be lifelong buddies. Many hugs, smiles, and laughs were exchanged that day. It will be a day our family remembers forever.

NEXT →

Welcome home.

Our family would like to thank each and every one of you from the bottom of our hearts. We can't thank the NAJRAE enough for the support and organization of this for our family. Cheryl Johnson you have been a blessing in disguise for our family and admire your passion for the youth and the love of the Red Angus breed. You're a very special person. To the Thompson/Griffith cattle and Richter family we look forward to working with you and are so grateful for the generosity of your families. To the family that gave Kainan Ruby,- thank you so much for your kind heart and taking Kainan under your wing to support him. We will cherish this for the rest of our lives, and we know Kainan will as well. Kainan is so excited about his future in the Red Angus Breed and looking forward to many Junior Nationals in his Future. Our family is so thankful for this. We are beyond grateful for the friendships this experience has brought us and the love for the Red Angus breed.

Thank you again,
The Kuelbs Family