

## **Experience vs. Expense**

*By Zachary Butler, AGJA Vice President*

Greetings fellow junior members! The time has come once again for everyone to join up at another competitive and enjoyable National Junior Classic. Everyone has his or her own story from a classic; whether it is from the flood at the Missouri show in 2000 or the mud brawl from the 2007 Missouri show. We all have our memories that will last a lifetime. But in today's world many sacrifices have to be made. It comes down to the battle between the experience or the expense.

First, we will talk about the negative side of the topic. As our economy struggles, so does the attendance at every event. The cost of fuel and corn drastically rise to a peak that is about unreachable for many. Several people may have to make the choice to stay at home due to these price hikes. It becomes hard to afford the feed for our show cattle and find the time to become prepared for a national show. Yes, we are in a field that is still about making a profit on the bottom line after all of the inputs. But still there comes time for a gut check and sacrifice to be made. This is where the experience of participating comes in and overwhelms all of the cost.

Yes, the classic does take money and time out of an extremely busy schedule during the summer months of the year. Still there are certain memories and friendships that will last a lifetime. The people that you will meet may very well later on life become business partners or even the best man or the maid of honor at your wedding. Not only do you make life long friendships, but the knowledge and education that you can gain will rival any university in the country.

So now I challenge each and every one of you to make that huge sacrifice and join us at this year's classic. It's too late to enter cattle, but you can enter contests at the show. Bring those photos and poster with you and come join us for an educational week. With the southern hospitality and excitement of this year's classic I can guarantee that it will be worth the trip.

I want to send a personal thank you to the North Carolina Gelbvieh Association for hosting the classic and I expect to see everyone there for another unforgettable week.