



Lacey Maier

- 30-years-old
- New Salem, N.D.
- Co-owns and operates Maier Ranch

Education: Graduated from North Dakota State University in 2010 with a major in animal science and minor in ag business

Background: Maier Ranch includes a 400-head cow/calf operation with 1,000 head custom backgrounding yard. Farmground is utilized to put up feed for the herd and custom feedlot.

Family: The youngest of five siblings, Lacey and her young daughter, Mattie, 2, operate Maier Ranch with her parents, Greg and Diane, and sister and brother-in-law, Amy and Jared Miller, and their two young children.

Industry Involvement: Maier has been involved in the North Dakota Stockmen's Association and National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), as well as the King Ranch Institute for Ranch Management Excellence in Ag Leadership program. She is also a member of the American National Cattle Women and locally enjoys assisting with FFA and 4-H events.

Two Fun Favorites: When asked about hobbies, Maier says she enjoys interior design and refurbishing old furniture.

5th GENERATION

By Kindra Gordon

In 2010 as Lacey Maier prepared to graduate from North Dakota State University, she was faced with a decision – pursue an ag industry career or return to her family ranching roots near New Salem, N.D.

With her animal science and ag business degree in hand, she chose the latter and became the fifth generation in her family to carry on their ranching heritage. Of her choice, Maier says, “It had always been in my mind that I wanted to come back...I'd left for college, but there was nothing else I'd rather do; nothing compares to being at home.”

The 30-year-old also talks of growing up working alongside her parents and grandparents, with her grandmother and mother also helping with the farm and ranch work. It laid an early foundation for Maier that family working together was important and that women could work in production agriculture, too.

Today, Maier Ranch continues to be a family collaboration. Lacey, her dad, Greg, and brother-in-law, Jared Miller, all work together to manage the large commercial cow/calf operation, custom backgrounding yard and farming entity. Maier returned to the ranch about eight years ago; sister, Amy, and her husband, Jared, returned about five years ago.

In addition to the land and livestock, they balance other jobs as well. Greg does the farming and reclamation at a local coal mine. Jared works in construction and also has established a new fencing business. On Wednesdays, Lacey works in the office at Kist Livestock Auction in Mandan, N.D.

Maier says they all “do a little bit of everything.” She helps manage their custom feedyard, which she and her dad established about a decade ago. It's a role she had the opportunity to prepare for by taking part in the 8-month Feedlot Management Internship Program at the University of Nebraska while she was in college. Their farming operation puts up feed for the

feedlot, primarily mixed grass hay and other hay crops. In abundant years, they sell some hay.

Their 400-head commercial cowherd is primarily Angus. In the pursuit of continuing to improve their genetics, they've utilized A.I. to Angus sires the last few years, but utilize Hereford bulls for their clean-up bulls. “We like the baldies,” Maier says.

One recent change they've made is a move from March calving to April and May – to match calving to better weather and forage resources, as well as minimize labor.

While Maier chose the path home, she has not closed the door on continuing to grow in the beef industry. She's found opportunities for leadership development through the King Ranch Institute for Ranch Management's distance education program, and she's been active in the North Dakota Stockmen's Association and National Cattlemen's Beef Association. In 2015, via those organizations she was selected to participate in the Young Cattlemen's Conference which took young industry leaders on a comprehensive tour of industry hubs from Denver to D.C.

Those experiences have helped reinforce for Maier that she is exactly where she needs to be. She says, “We've had a lot of women in the generations before us who gained the respect we (women in agriculture) are getting today. We have a good solid foundation we can grow on.”

In looking to the future for Maier Ranch, Maier says she is focused on continuing to grow their cattle numbers and improve their genetics. She says, “I don't think we'll become a registered herd, but I am interested in the breeding and selection to improve.”

Her advice to others – male or female – is straightforward: “Honesty, integrity and hard work can open a lot of doors.”

And, she cites a scripture she relies on, “For we live by faith, not by sight.” (2 Corinthians 5:7). She concludes, “I think most people in agriculture live by that.”

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