



Aaron & Sheyna Strommen
Fort Rice, North Dakota

Both 40-years-old

Owner operators of Strommen Ranch & Strommen Livestock Services

Both North Dakota State University graduates, Aaron holds a B.S. in Animal Science. Sheyna holds a bachelor's degree in Mass Communication

Background: Both with rural backgrounds, Aaron grew up at Regent, N.D., while Sheyna was raised at Rolette, N.D. They began ranching in 2001 with a few head of Sheyna's commercial cattle and the gift of three purebred Angus heifers from Aaron's grandpa who had been raising cattle since 1942.

Family: Cassidy 13, Cooper, 11, and Clint, 6

Industry Involvement: Members of the North Dakota Stockmen's Association, American Angus Association, North Dakota Angus Association and the North Dakota Cattlewomen. Aaron has served on the North Dakota Angus Association board and has been a voting delegate to the American Angus Association annual meeting from 2011 to 2016.

Words to Live By: Monte Howrey of Vale, S.D., once told them, "Buy land or buy cows but don't buy both or you'll go broke." He also told them to "not get too attached to one piece of ground." The Strommens have put those words of advice into practice.

Mentors: Along with Monte Howrey, Aaron has been influenced by the late North Dakota cattleman, Jack Reich, who was an all-around good cowman and family man. Sheyna draws support and inspiration from peers in her line of work.

Hobbies: Summer fun at a family member's lake cabin and taking in NDSU Bison football games.

SUCCESS FROM SCRATCH

By Codi Vallery-Mills

When the North Dakota prairie dries up and rain falls sparingly you might question your ranching lifestyle, but Aaron and Sheyna Strommen don't waver easily and it is evident from their 16 years of marriage and ranching together.

When adversity comes knocking on their door, the two dig in, put plans in place and ride out what may come. They have weathered moving ranch operations, family health issues, nearby Dakota Access Pipeline protests and Mother Nature's whims.

Aaron and Sheyna have built up the Strommen Ranch at Fort Rice, N.D., from scratch. "We are among those that haven't inherited land or had an older generation to share equipment with. We started with one good horse, one not-so-good horse and a couple of saddles," Aaron says.

North Dakota natives, the Strommens met during college at North Dakota State University. Aaron then worked for Genex for 15 years while Sheyna pursued her ag communications career.

When Sheyna became communications director for the North Dakota Stockmen's Association (NDSA) in 2008 they leased a ranch at Fort Rice, and began expanding the Angus seedstock operation they started in 2001.

Key Genetics

Combining their backgrounds in genetics and communications, the Strommens have created a respected ranching operation, selling 80 registered Angus bulls annually to customers in multiple states.

"When we first started, we needed efficient, hard-working cows that could perform on less, because that's what we had to offer them – not much." That style of cow – the one who can go out on her own and generate income without much input – has allowed the Strommens to expand and continue to be the foundation of their herd and ranching philosophy.

They focus on proven, balanced female-makers – creating mother cows that are fertile and easy fleshing with good udders and feet. At calving time, Aaron not only logs the birthdate, sex and weight of the calves, he also scores

udders and a cow's temperament.

"That is a high-stress time period for the cow. How she behaves right after calving with the flood of hormones and a new baby on the ground can tell you a lot about her," Aaron notes.

The Strommens AI their cattle in two cycles using synchronization; they also have expanded their embryo transfer program, implanting more than 120 embryos in 2017.

An exciting addition to the Strommen lineup in 2017 is a bull, Bruin Torque 5261, that they own with Bruin Ranch, Upchurch Angus and Genex, CRI. They bred 70 head to Torque this past spring and are excited about the pedigree and phenotype that he carries.

"Our customers are really good cattlemen. They are very particular about the type and kind of seedstock they want for their own herds. Listening to their wants and needs helps make us better breeders," Aaron says.

Communications Component

The Strommens say their customers are very savvy in the cattle business due to technology and great opportunities.

And to keep astride of them, Aaron and Sheyna routinely talk to other producers, host meetings, tours and share ranch happenings on social media.

"As a whole, ranchers have a great story to tell – one of perseverance through life's storms and one of practical application of sound science to enhance natural resources, livestock and ultimately, human health," Sheyna says. "It's important to us that we share those authentic messages in the 'coffee shop' of today: social media."

It's a belief she brought home with her when she left the NDSA in 2012 to be a full-time mom to children Cassidy, Cooper and Clint, who was born with a rare form of muscular dystrophy. The change allowed her more time to expand Strommen Livestock Services, a graphics design business she runs from their home. Today, she works with 30 seedstock operations across five states on their individual bull/female sale catalogs and advertisements.

The design business fits well with the different seasons of ranch activities. "The ranch and the design business both have their busy seasons, but everyone pitches in and makes it work. We feel very fortunate that our 'jobs' are actually our passion and hobby," Sheyna says.

"Being able to work with and for cattle producers in every aspect of our lives is very rewarding," she concludes. "Whether customers purchase bulls and females from our ranch, or we are helping our design-clients execute their marketing plans, Aaron and I are deeply committed to their success."

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Aaron Strommen