

Meet North Dakota Producers

Strommen Ranch



Aaron and Sheyna Strommen
ranch south of Mandan, ND

What does it mean to be a rancher?

Sheyna: As ranchers, we care for livestock and manage the natural resources on our ranch in a way that we believe will enhance sustainability for generations. We are acutely aware that the decisions we make today impact the choices others have tomorrow. These are decisions we take very seriously.

Aaron: To be a rancher, you not only care for livestock, you must be a good business manager, a nutritionist, a student of environmental science and a mechanic. We wear many hats as ranchers. No day is the same and that's why I love ranching.

What makes your operation unique?

Aaron: North Dakota has a long and proud history of multi-generation operations working the same ground their ancestors did. Our operation is a little different. We are the first generation of Strommens ranching here. Sheyna and I started when we got married and we hope to one day pass our operation on to our kids and grandkids.

What is a typical day like?

Sheyna: There is not a 'typical' day on a ranch. It really depends on the season. When the cows begin to calve, we are up checking on them every few hours and spend the days tagging calves and making sure the mommas and babies are doing well together. During the summer, our days are filled with fixing fence, monitoring grass and water, and moving livestock from one pasture to another. In the late fall, we wean calves and prepare for winter.

How do you work with the local community?

Aaron: Our ranch is 100% grass, 100% pasture. We don't farm or have any farmland. We don't put up any of our own hay or have any hayland. We buy all of the feed that is needed to supplement our cattle through the winter. We rely on our farming neighbors as local sources for straw, hay, corn, etc. When we clean our corrals, our manure goes back on their land as fertilizer. We are very appreciative of the relationships we have with neighbors.

Sheyna: We are also involved in our local beef promotion and policy organizations. We want to work with our peers to engage consumers in a real conversation about agriculture – cattle ranching, in particular. We know that consumers have questions and we want them to get straight answers straight from ranchers.

Why is agriculture important?

Sheyna: You'd be hard-pressed to get through a single day without agriculture. From the food we eat, to the fiber we wear and the fuel we put in our vehicles – agriculture plays a critical role in our lives in ways we don't often think about. Walk through a grocery store or a big box store, many of the products that are available to us are there because of family farmers and ranchers like us, have a passion for what we do and have a desire to work with nature to grow safe, healthy and wholesome food, fuel and fiber.

Aaron: Agriculture is very important. It is the basis for everything that we do in the U.S. and around the world. If we don't have food to eat – nutritious, safe food – there are many problems.

What is your favorite part of ranching?

Sheyna: My favorite part is teaching my kids about agriculture – the life cycle, the delicate harmony of nature, livestock and wildlife. I enjoy seeing the different seasons through their eyes and watching them take responsibility for their chores on the ranch. This is a great place to learn work ethic and values that will transcend into whatever career they choose to pursue.

Aaron: We are lucky in the United States to be able to choose our profession. As ranchers we have the freedom to get up in the morning and decide what we're going to accomplish for the day. That being said, consumers need to know how heavily regulated our profession is and how seriously we take those regulations. At the end of the day, it gives me a good feeling to know that we're providing safe, wholesome beef not only for people in the U.S., but for people all around the world.