

Studer proud to be part of family business, livestock industry

By JASMYNNE SLOAN - CNA staff reporter



Nathan Studer is positive there's a bright future for beef production in the area.

"I think, worldwide, there's always going to be a need for food and animals and protein, but if you look down the road, Southwest Iowa is in particularly good shape," he said. "I think we have some good opportunities for growth."

Studer, 26, is looking forward to being part of that future, too. He's a partner in his family's purebred livestock business, Studer Shorthorns, northeast of Creston.

"That's why I moved back here two years ago," he said. "I wanted to be closer to the family operation and try to grow it."

Studer is appreciative of the whole production-agriculture community though, emphasizing the importance of every beef producer.

"It's not just me, not just my family, who are making this successful," he said.

Studer, who is also a beef consultant for Cargill Animal Nutrition and president of the Iowa Shorthorn Association, said interacting with other producers is one of the reasons he enjoys what he does.

"Ever since I was little, I've enjoyed all facets of agriculture," Studer said. "And, really, I enjoy the lifestyle — the people and the network in the industry."

Economics

Studer, and his parents Dale and Anita Studer, are making sure Studer Shorthorns does its part to keep that industry alive. Studer is the fourth generation of the family involved in the Shorthorn business. He clearly sees the bigger picture.

"This is what I've grown up with — animal agriculture and providing food for the world," he said. "It's important to look at the economy of it, though, too."

Studer said one of the challenges the beef industry faces currently is rising costs. Specifically, he said rising fuel costs have an "intricate" impact.

"In the end, it's led to high feed costs, and 2/3 of production costs in a cow are feed costs. There's not a lot of options to cheapen that up, so you have to become efficient, try to manage the best you can, and try to be a low-cost producer if you can," he said. "But, like I say, you can't starve a profit out of them, so you still have to feed them and you have to go on."

It's not all doom and gloom, though.

"Right now, we're probably looking at record capitol in production costs," Studer said. "Like I said, it's a good industry to be in for a lot of reasons."

Shorthorns

Studer Shorthorns raises purebred Shorthorns, which are sold across the U.S.

"We have a production sale every fall ... for not only purebred but for commercial use," Studer explained. "Even though we're purebred, we try to raise animals to fit anybody's operation."

The family also takes pride in many awards won by their Shorthorns.

"In 2007, we raised the champion bull at National Western (Stock Show in Denver, Colo.)," Studer said. "And, of course, in the past, we've raised and shown numbers of All-Americans and champions at many different shows throughout the U.S."

He attributes the business's success to careful progress.

"We try to keep a good genetic base here, something that's viable and keeps us in it for the long term," Studer said.

Busy

Studer said he and his wife Jenny stay busy, especially at this time of year.



"Between work and our daily activities, and the associations we're involved with, it's a busy lifestyle. You never really have a free moment," he said. "I try to get my work done in the morning, then hopefully come around here in the evenings so I can be here to help."

Studer said he's been in the fields lately, making use of good weather. He then reeled off a list of specific tasks he pitches in on at Studer Shorthorns: "AI-ing and embryo-transfer work, sorting efficient breeding groups, getting pastures ready, turnout, synchronizing cows," he listed. "There's more, but right now it's mostly AI and embryo-transfer."

He enjoys the work — and is looking forward to becoming more involved as time goes on.

"Since I've been in high school but more in the past couple of years, I've significantly increased my share of the business as far as the cows are concerned," Studer said. "I'm happy. There's a lot of good young and experienced livestock producers all over the country, but especially in this part of the state, and I enjoy working with them through my professional career and also through our association with livestock."

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