

Heart of a Tiger: Delivering innovative agriculture practices to rural Kansas and the world

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By Tisa Mason

HAYS, Kan. - From the rolling hills of Rush County, where his mother was raised on a farm among five siblings, Jeremy Myrick traces his roots back to the heart of agriculture in rural Kansas. His story, starting as a toddler living with his grandmother while his family's home was being repaired, shows the essence of hard work and the love of a family that nurtured his passion for farming.

Most of Jeremy's childhood was spent on the family farm, where he dedicated countless hours to riding various pieces of equipment and engaging in tasks such as elevating terraces and building waterways. Surrounded by animals and learning the ins and outs of machinery, he developed a deep connection to the land. His grandfather, a dedicated welder, instilled a strong work ethic in the family, with high expectations set for Jeremy and his siblings. Through his cherished relationships with his uncles and grandmother, he came to view farming not just as a vocation, but as the way of life he truly desired.

"I was fortunate to spend a considerable amount of time on the farm, bonding with my uncles and learning the ropes," Jeremy recalls. Jeremy's early experiences solidified his desire to work the land, yet sports, particularly football, also captured his enthusiasm.

After graduating from high school in 2008, Jeremy took a significant step toward his future, earning a football scholarship at Garden City Community College (GCCC). "My parents always insisted on hard work and self-sufficiency. They assured me that I would appreciate the struggle, and they were right," he reflects on a lesson that would define his journey.

At Garden City Community College (GCCC), Jeremy dedicated most of his time to football and "various extracurricular activities," yet after two years, he found himself without a degree. With a heart set on returning to the family farm, he moved back in with his grandmother, a decision he described as fortunate. "She was one of the best 'roommates' anyone could have," Jeremy fondly recalls, reflecting on the support and comfort she provided during that pivotal time in his life.

While he immersed himself in farm work, his family emphasized the importance of education, encouraging him to finish the remaining credits needed for his degree. Inspired by their belief in him, Jeremy committed himself to his studies and ultimately completed his associate degree at GCCC in 2013, marking a significant step on his journey toward personal and professional fulfillment.

Following the death of his grandmother in 2014, he returned to school full-time at Fort Hays State University (FHSU) to pursue an agriculture degree, culminating in his graduation in 2016.

Growing up in Western Kansas, Jeremy always felt a calling toward agriculture but was uncertain about his future path—whether to stay on the family farm run by his uncle or venture into the corporate world. Realizing his deep attachment to his hometown, he sought a way to remain connected to the land. After starting his career as an agronomist, Jeremy discovered Diamond Ag. Research, a unique opportunity right in his own backyard. "Once I joined the team, I never looked back," he recalls. The role offered him a perfect blend of hands-on farming

experience and the application of academic knowledge, all while allowing him to connect with people from around the globe and introduce new chemistry, traits, and practices to the agricultural sector.

Jeremy began his journey at DAR as an Ag. Research Assistant II and steadily advanced to the position of efficacy project manager. Over time, discussions began about the possibility of him purchasing the company. Today, as the owner of DAR, Jeremy reflects on the significance of his work: "It's the perfect blend of agriculture and research, enabling me to engage with people worldwide." Through his leadership, he continues to foster innovation and support local agriculture, all while honoring the roots that have deeply influenced his life's journey.

As Jeremy reflects on his career, he emphasizes the significance of collaborating with students from FHSU. "We attend the Ag. fair every year to recruit interns who share a connection to this region," he explains. "Many of these students understand the local agricultural landscape and bring this knowledge and experience to the table." Interns play a crucial role at DAR, assisting in tasks such as logging test substances, maintaining and fabricating equipment as needed for trials, and mixing test substances into spray treatments. Their responsibilities also include conducting herbicide control evaluations, plant stand counts, and a variety of other assessments required by research protocols.

Yet, beyond business, Jeremy is a pillar in his community, currently serving as the president of the Pawnee County Farm Bureau (PCFB). "I'm still trying to find my footing in this role," he admits, but remains committed to making an impact. "It's crucial that we reach out and give back to our agricultural community."

From organizing agricultural events at local schools to initiating mentorship opportunities for budding farmers, Jeremy emphasizes the importance of outreach. "We want to shine a light on agriculture and educate those less familiar. Engaging with the community is integral," he notes.

Balancing work and family, Jeremy is a devoted husband and father of four. He married in the fall of 2017, and his personal life took on new dimensions when he became a father. "I call it miniature farming," he jokes about involving his children in his work, teaching them the values he learned as a child. "They're learning the ropes, and I hope one day they'll take over and be even more successful."

Looking ahead, Jeremy acknowledges the challenges of the agricultural sector, especially in uncertain times. "My goal is to keep Diamond Ag. afloat because I simply cannot fathom failure," he states resolutely. He aims to expand the company while cherishing time with his growing family, understanding the significance of both pursuits.

"I've appreciated the work ethic my parents instilled in me. You must want it and work for it," Jeremy reflects, embodying the spirit of resilience. As he considers his journey thus far, Jeremy expresses a heartfelt perspective: "If you do what you love, you won't work a day in your life. It sounds good, but it's not real. However, because you love it, you're willing to work harder than ever."

To aspiring entrepreneurs and students considering a career in agriculture, Jeremy conveys an essential message: "I'm very proud of my unconventional route. If I could change anything, I wouldn't. We all mature at different rates, and our unique paths shape who we are today. I was scared to return to school at 24, but I found my purpose once locked in. Hard times make tough people. If you want it, go get it. Remember, Rome wasn't built in a day. Keep your head up,

grind away, and don't lose sight of your goals. There will be bumps in the road, but with commitment, today's mountains can become mere mounds in your rearview mirror."

With aspirations for continual growth and community impact, Jeremy Myrick is not just cultivating crops; he is nurturing a legacy that honors his roots while paving the way for future generations in Pawnee County and beyond. His journey is a powerful reminder that dedication, resilience, and passion can create a fulfilling life, both personally and professionally, even amidst the challenges of the agricultural landscape.

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Cutline: *Back left Jeremy Myrick, back right Allison Myrick, front right Graylynn (soon to be 7), front left Teagan (5), Jeremy holding Baker (2), and Allison holding Sutton (1)*