

Juggling Act



Feeding cattle, repairing fence, and clipping steers are not tasks that most communications directors do on a regular basis. Writing press releases and planning events are usually more common for communications professionals. Samantha Borgstedt manages to do all of these things while making time for family and hobbies.

Borgstedt is the communications director for the Cotton Economics Research Institute at Texas Tech University. However, she also works with the Larry Combest Chair for Agricultural Competitiveness and the Texas Alliance for Water Conservation. She is a free lance photographer and web designer as well.

Although she is a graduate and an employee of Texas Tech, Borgstedt did not always want to go to Tech. She said she wanted to attend Texas A&M University when she was young, but chose Tech because of its agricultural communications program.

"When I was little, I went to 4-H Roundup and I was all about A&M," Borgstedt said.

Visiting her older sister Katie at Tech influenced Borgstedt's decision to become a Red Raider. She now holds a bachelor's and a master's degree from Tech in agricultural communications.

Borgstedt currently lives in her hometown of Tarzan, Texas, where her family has farmed

for four generations. Her family also raises Hereford show steers. She lives near her parents and sees them quite often. Borgstedt and her mother spend time in the summer and fall growing vegetables to sell at the farmer's market in Midland, Texas. She said she tries to help her parents as much as she can with the family operation.

"I go help fix fence or feed or do whatever," Borgstedt said.

For Borgstedt, working with family is nothing out of the ordinary. Borgstedt and her sister, Katie Day, run a photography and web design business called Flying Y Promotions. The business started as a result of a Christmas present.

Borgstedt said several years ago, she and Day did not know what to get their parents for Christmas. They decided to take pictures of each other and present them as gifts. After friends and family saw the photographs, Day and Borgstedt started getting asked to take pictures for people. The sisters continued to take pictures for friends, and eventually formed Flying Y Promotions.

"It just kind of snow balled. We didn't do it thinking we would be taking weddings and family pictures like we do now," Borgstedt said.

The web design aspect of the business originated the same way as the photography. Borgstedt and Day designed websites for their show steer businesses in order to be more visible to buyers. After seeing the

website, other business owners wanted them to design their site. Borgstedt said a growing number of people are now buying steers online.

"Each year we get more and more phone calls from people who have seen pictures of the steers online," Borgstedt said. "It is surprising how much interest the website brings and the number of people who buy steers now after only seeing a website picture."

With so many things going on, managing her time well is crucial. Working from home for part of the week allows her to balance each task and still be involved in the family business.

"If there's anything I need to do for my job, I'll probably wake up super early and get it done. That way I can go out to the barn and wash and dry steers before our sale and be available if anybody stops by to look at them," Borgstedt said.

Dr. Darren Hudson, director of the Cotton Economics Research Institute, said Borgstedt has great time management skills and is very dependable.

"I'm busy doing my own thing and I'll find out after the fact that two or three things went wrong but I never knew it," Hudson said, "because it always got fixed before she came to me with a problem. She is very very self-sufficient."

Whether it is her primary job, a side business, or the family farm, Borgstedt is always involved in agriculture. She is a great example of an agricultural communications professional. Although she has a lot on her plate, she manages to successfully incorporate her family and hobbies

into her busy schedule.

"It's just juggling a bunch of balls in the air," Borgstedt said. "You just have to be sure you don't drop one." **T**

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