



Winning Reactions

Allison Bond wins the 2007 NJAS Showmanship Contest.

Story & photos by **Chelsea Good**

Allison Bond was in the grand drive at the Tulsa State Fair in Oklahoma in 2004 when her heifer started to lay down. The heifer stepped on Bond, and before she knew it, they were both lying in the shavings in the middle of the showring. Three years later, on those same fairgrounds, Bond received the greatest honor of her show career by being named the champion showman of the National Junior Angus Showmanship Contest at the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS). Surprisingly, she sees similarities between the two experiences.

Reacting to situations

“When I fell in the showring, all I could do was laugh,” Bond says. “It was the best way I could react to that situation.”

Bond says she feels that a lot of showing is reacting to different situations, especially in showmanship. She doesn't consider herself a flashy showman. In fact, she is laid back and easygoing in her everyday life and in the ring. However, Bond has achieved much showmanship success by reacting quickly to situations and paying attention to detail.

“You can't ever skip a step, because there

isn't any room for mistakes,” Bond says. “At the same time, I like to stay low-key, because if you get uptight and nervous, your heifer will be able to tell.”

Bond says this attention to detail and reacting to situations was more important in showmanship at the NJAS than any other show she had attended. Before the NJAS, she had never been in a showmanship competition where she showed only other exhibitors' heifers instead of her own heifer or trading animals in the ring for just a few minutes.

“A good showman has to be able to analyze cattle to know what needs to be done,” Bond says. At the NJAS, she had a few minutes to analyze the heifers before showing them. “I showed each of the heifers a bit differently to help cover up their problems. My show experience helped, because I've had some of the same problems in my own cattle, so I knew how to show them out.”

Looking back and ahead

Bond bought her first show heifer when she was 8 years old. Neither of her parents showed, but the family jumped in headfirst. She attended her first NJAS when she was 9 or 10, and growing up, most of her weekends were spent showing cattle. She says her father told her when they first started that they would quit showing cattle when it quit being fun. At 19 years old Bond is still going strong.

She kept her first heifer and many of the heifers she has shown since then, accumulating a herd of 40-50 females she has shown.

“I grow attached to the heifers I show,” Bond says. “I think the best way to thank them for the opportunities they have provided me is to keep them around and allow them to grow old raising calves.”

Bond has a deal with her parents that she can keep the heifers she buys as long as she sells the calves she raises. She does this, breeding her former show heifers and selling most of the calves for kids in the county to show.

When she was in eighth grade, Bond and her mother, Sheila, took an artificial



►Allison Bond steps forward as she is introduced as one of the top 15 showmen at the Saturday morning awards ceremony. Minutes later, she is announced as the overall winner.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 232



► Bond puts her showmanship number into her show harness before the first round.



► Bond leads her heifer into the ring an hour after being named the top Angus showman.



►Above: Bond stands with her grandparents. She decided to try and qualify for showmanship at Tulsa so they could come watch her.

►Below: Allison stands between her parents. She says they've always been very supportive of her interest in showmanship. Often, the family waits through long steer shows in order for Allison, who shows only heifers, to enter the showmanship competition.



►Above: Bond and her mom, Sheila, cry. Sheila hid behind the backdrop when Allison was getting her pictures taken; she knew Allison would lose her composure when she saw her.

►Left: Allison hands her silver Revere bowl off to a friend. The Angus Auxiliary awarded bowls to the top five showmen.

insemination (AI) course. Bond's mom helped her for about 6 months, but since then she has been AIing her cattle on her own. This experience helped Bond develop her future plans.

She is a sophomore at Oklahoma State University (OSU) studying animal science and agricultural communications. She hopes to start her own cattle reproduction business, providing AI and flushing services. She would also like to return close to home, so she can take care of her cattle and help with her dad's commercial operation, which she hopes to one day take over.

Home sweet home

Close to home seems to be where Bond excels. She grew up in Inola, Okla., the hay capital of the world, which just happens to be 20 minutes away from Tulsa.

"I have one more year of NJAA eligibility but decided to try and qualify for showmanship this year so my grandparents could come watch," Bond says.

Having an NJAS so close to home was an interesting experience for Bond and her family.

"It still felt like a trip," Bond says. "The NJAS is always a trip, because it is such a blast. But being close to home was hard

work, too." After a long day at the show, Bond still had to go home to do chores. She said she spent about as much time at home as she would have a hotel but didn't get to sleep as much, because there is always work to do on the ranch. To add to this, Bond showed a horse at the Tulsa Expo Center earlier in the NJAS week.

"It was crazy running back and forth between the cattle and my horse," Bond says. "The heifers were my top priority, but it was fun getting to do both."

Bond showed horses when she was younger and picked the hobby back up during the last few years. Still, showing

cattle is her favorite hobby, and she says she has a special place in her heart for showmanship.

“I have always shown heifers, and at many shows I would have to wait until after the steers showed for showmanship,” Bond says. “We would wait hours for showmanship, but my parents were always supportive, because they knew how important it was to me.”

Bond says she enjoys showmanship, because even if her heifers don't do well in the show, in showmanship she is dependent on her own ability.

Bond adds that she couldn't have

gotten where she is today alone. She is grateful for her parents' support and the mentoring of cattle people who taught her how to show. An only child, she considers herself a very independent person, but she says no matter how independent a showman is, they still need someone in the barn to tell them if their heifer looks good set up.

Bond's advice to younger showmen is not to be afraid to ask for help and to realize that they can't control situations, only the way they react to them.

“Everything doesn't always happen the way you want it to,” Bond says. “All you can

do is make the best of a bad situation and go on with it.”

Bond's reaction to her heifer's laying down in the showring was to laugh. Her best show situation evoked a different reaction.

“My heart was racing 90 miles an hour when they announced my name as top Angus showman,” Bond says. “My mom hid behind the backdrop until after I had gotten my picture taken, because she knew if she came up to me I would lose it. When I did see her after pictures, we just bawled.”

