

News Release for Immediate Use or Next Issue
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River Valley Extension District
3/24/2020

Richard and Denise Swenson — Master Farmer & Master Farm Homemaker Class of 2019

Six couples have been honored as the 2019 Class of Kansas Master Farmers and Master Farm Homemakers at a banquet held on March 13th at the Four Points by Sheraton Hotel in Manhattan.

The program, which is in its 93rd year, recognizes Kansas farm families for their leadership in agriculture, environmental stewardship and service to their communities. The award is co-sponsored by K-State Research and Extension and *Kansas Farmer* magazine.

Nominated by the River Valley Extension District, Dick and Denise Swenson join the Class of 2019 and a long list of MF/MFH members from the River Valley District.

Richard and Denise Swenson operate a combined crop operation and Hereford herd north of Concordia. In 2015, they purchased two meat processing facilities with their son, Ryan, and created Swenson Meat Processing.

The couple says rotating crops and livestock has improved their land's overall health and created multiple marketing avenues. In addition to selling commodity crops, their beef is sold through stores in Concordia and Salina. They market grass-finished and grain-finished beef to meet their customer's varying preferences.

Richard is a life-time member of the American Hereford Association, Kansas Hereford Association, and Kansas Farm Bureau. He has served on the Kansas Hereford Association Board of Directors and was president twice. He also tested and championed his stock by participating in regional bull tests and exhibiting at the Kansas State Fair.

Denise is a program manager for the Cloud County 4-H program and will retire in April. She is a 42-year member of the Kansas Hereford Women and served as the treasurer for 20 years. Denise is currently the secretary of Zion Lutheran Church (LCMS) and was active with her sons' school activities. She also volunteers her time for community events and has helped with foods judging at the Kansas State Fair.

In 1996, the Swensons helped host the World Hereford Tour with visitors from 11 countries and hosted a tour group from Kazakhstan in 2012. Among their honors, they have won awards for Kansas Hereford Breeder of the Year, and Golden Breeder Award (American Hereford Association); and have also been recognized as a Farm Bureau Century Farm.

They are the proud parents and grandparents of their son Ryan and his wife, Melissa, their son Kevin and his son, Nolan, and their son Ben, his wife Jennifer, along with their two sons, Walter and Gabriel.

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Enclosure in e-mail: Photo of Richard and Denise Swenson.