

2016 MGFA Community Service Award Recipient – Lyle Hovland

Lyle Hovland was born May 19th, 1941 in Pelican Rapids to Alvin and Agnes Hovland. Lyle has four younger siblings, one brother and three sisters. He grew up on the farm in Plainview Township, Wilkin County, just north of Rothsay. Lyle is a lifetime member of the Little Bethany Lutheran Church in rural Ottertail County. He attended grade school in a one-room schoolhouse near Lawndale. He graduated from Barnesville High School in 1959. While in school, Lyle was active in FFA and 4H, serving as FFA president and serving on several judging teams following High School.



Lyle worked on the family farm until enlisting in the Marine Corps, going into active duty from July 1962 to July 1964. He returned home to run a dairy operation with his parents. In 1974, Lyle and Diane were married and had two children, Krysta and Kurt. Following the death of his father, Lyle took over operation of the family farm, slowly got out of the dairy business and developed a partnership with a cousin for about 35 years. Lyle currently operates the 2300 acre “Century Farm” with his son Kurt (a fourth generation).

Through the years, Lyle served on several boards. He served on the Rothsay Farmers Co-op Board for 37 years, serving as president for a 6 year period while the co-op experienced substantial growth. During that time, Lyle was able to mentor several new members of the board. He also served on the Northwest Farm Managers Association Board and was a past president. He was a member and past chair of the Agassiz Club, a group farmers, educators and bankers dedicated to education and promotion of the ag industry in the Red River Valley. Other civic activity included being elected as a county committeeman to the local ASCS for 18 years and serving as chairman for several of those years. He was on the founding board of the Golden Growers Cooperative, which is part owner of the Pro Gold Processing plant operated by Cargill in Wahpeton ND.

Lyle was elected to the Wilkin County Board of Commissioners in 2000 and is currently serving his fourth term in office. His duties have included 15 years on the Lakes & Prairies Community Action Council, actively involved with family assistance and developing a head start program for small children. He has also served as chair for the Wilkin County Water Planning Board and was directly involved in the expansion of the Buffalo Red River Watershed District. He is currently vice-chair of Richland (ND)/Wilkin Joint Powers Agreement, which is challenging the controversial Fargo dam and diversion project, which has the potential to flood nearly 35,000 acres of farmland.

Last, but certainly not least, Lyle served on the Minnesota Grain and Feed Association Board of Directors for 27 years (from 1989 to 2016), serving as president from 1999 to 2003 and during which, the MGFA merged with the Northwest Agri-Dealers Association. We congratulate Lyle for his years of dedicated service, commitment and leadership provided to his greater Rothsay community and for being selected as the recipient of the 2016 MGFA Community Service Award.

Pictured above: David Estrem, MGFA President; Lyle Hovland and Bob Zelenka, MGFA Executive Director.