



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Daniel and Karen Koester recognized as a 2018 ‘U of M Farm Family’**  
*Claire LaCanne, Agricultural Extension Educator for Rice and Steele Counties*

Faribault, MN. (6/1/2018) — The Dan and Karen Koester family has been named Rice County’s “2018 Farm Family of the Year” by the University of Minnesota.

The Koesters have been raising quality registered Hereford cattle since 1954. Their operation, GVF Herefords, is located outside of Northfield, MN, and Dan was a charter member of the Minnesota Junior Hereford Association. Dan and Karen were married in 1972 and immediately built a herd from the Herefords Dan had accumulated. Together, they also raised two daughters, Audra and Barbara, on the family farm.

Today, the farm continues to be a family operation. GVF Herefords currently runs a herd of 70 cows and their crops focus is mainly on forage for their cattle. Their cattle are backed by line-bred genetics, and the herd is managed with a bias toward maternal strength, structural soundness, and a “kid-friendly” temperament. The Koesters’ cattle are versatile and they pride themselves in fitting their customers’ various needs. The Koesters are also champions of land conservation and stewardship. They’ve worked with various organizations to protect a native stream, prevent erosion of the limestone bluffs, and protect native prairie plants which are found on the farm.

The Koesters are carrying on their family’s farming legacy, even after Dan passed away in December of 2017. The Koesters are truly a family-run operation; daughters Audra and Barbara and son-in law, Ryan, all play roles in the operation. Barbara manages and does most of the daily operations including cow health and calving. Barbara’s husband, Ryan, assists with feeding and crop duties. Audra works long distance from Arizona, helping with advertising and computer operations. Karen is responsible for finances and general farm management, and is also available to hold a gate, nurse a calf, or chase a cow. Dan had many responsibilities on the farm, and loved caring for their cattle. He had a love for Herefords, and enjoyed showing them – he showed his cattle at the Minnesota State Fair for 42 years. In 2009, Dan was honored by the American Hereford Association with The Golden Hereford Breeder medallion for fifty years as a Hereford breeder.

The members of the Koester family have long been involved in their community, and they value giving back to local organizations. In their youth, Dan and Karen were both involved in 4-H and remained active as adults, as they served as 4-H and American Junior Hereford Association leaders and advisors. Dan was named Outstanding Adult leader in 1988 and Rice County 4-H Alumnus of the Year in 1994. As a young 4-H member, Dan was an active livestock exhibitor

and leader in the Big Giants 4-H Club and the Rice County 4-H Federation. He became a founding member of the Minnesota Junior Hereford Association.

The Koesters have been committed to contributing to enhancing and promoting agriculture for a long time; they participated in the University of Minnesota Agriculture Foreign Exchange Program for 17 years, bringing more than 25 students from Europe, New Zealand, and South Africa to the farm during the summer months. As supporters of agricultural education and youth leadership development, the Koesters have remained active in various Hereford breed and agricultural organizations. Dan also served as a board member of the Rice County Agricultural Society and a member of the Minnesota 4-H Livestock Project Committee.

Even outside of agriculture, the Koesters are vested members of their local community. Karen is a retired educator from Northfield High School and worked with young people of the Northfield community for many years. Dan was active in the Dennison Lutheran Church Council and their daughter, Barbara, continues to be active in church leadership.

Families were selected as Farm Family of the Year by their local county Extension committees for demonstrating commitment to enhancing and supporting agriculture and agricultural production. “These farm families are a major driver of Minnesota's economy and the vitality of Minnesota's rural communities,” said Bev Durgan, dean of University of Minnesota Extension. “The University of Minnesota is proud to recognize these farm families for their contributions to agriculture and their communities.”

At the local level, the Koesters will be honored during the Best of The Best Breakfast ceremony on Wednesday, July 18<sup>th</sup> at the Rice County Fair. The Koesters will also be recognized during the state-wide Farm Family of the Year recognition ceremony at 1:15 p.m. on Thursday, August 9<sup>th</sup> at the annual Farmfest near Redwood Falls. Profiles of the 2018 honorees and information on the recognition event will soon be posted on the University's farm family website, <http://mnfarmfamilies.cfans.umn.edu/>.

Farmfest runs August 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> at the Gilfillan Estate, near Redwood Falls, MN. Event hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on August 7<sup>th</sup> and 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on August 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>.

Along with Farmfest, University units sponsoring the recognition event include University of Minnesota Extension, Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station, the University of Minnesota College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences, and the College of Veterinary Medicine.

Claire LaCanne  
Agricultural Extension Educator  
Rice and Steele Counties  
University of Minnesota Extension  
[lacanne@umn.edu](mailto:lacanne@umn.edu)  
Rice County: [\(507\) 332-6165](tel:(507)332-6165)

Steele County: [\(507\) 444-7691](tel:(507)444-7691)  
Cell phone: [\(507\) 330-0447](tel:(507)330-0447)