



# Agriculture Educators Lifetime Achievement Award *Joe Koenen*

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Joe Koenen was born and raised in Burlington, Wisconsin. He spent his early years and summers on his grandparents farm, since his parents both worked. It is there where he got his love of Agriculture. He graduated from Saint Mary's Catholic High School in 1974 and attended the University of Wisconsin at Platteville where he graduated with a BS in Agricultural Business and a MS in Ag Economics in 1979.

While in college, Joe assisted Dr. Robert Cropp, a nationally known dairy specialist, who convinced him to pursue a job with University Extension. Joe began his career with University of Missouri Extension as a Farm Management Specialist on December 3, 1979. He has been headquartered in Unionville since 1980.

A past co-worker (Burch Harrington) tried to convince him to write a weekly column when he first started, but Joe resisted for a year. He started "Joe's Bits and Pieces" in 1981 and has wrote it on a weekly basis ever since. He now writes this weekly column for papers in four counties in northeast Missouri. He gets many positive comments about it, especially about his "thought" at the end of his column.

The Feeder Calf Sale in Unionville was once billed as the "world's largest" and Joe was involved with it from 1980 until the end of it in 1993. He did most everything for the sale, including taking consignments before the sale, taking in calves the nights before the sale, weighing calves, double-checking tags on calves and even loading out cattle all through the night.

Joe has been closely involved with the Putnam County Fair for his 38-year career, one of the largest county fairs in North Missouri.

Not far into his career the "Farm Crisis" negatively affected agriculture in a huge way. He assisted hundreds of farmers and lenders in the "farm crisis of the 1980's," not only in his counties, but also throughout north Missouri. His three counties at the time (Harrison, Mercer and Putnam) had the dubious distinction of having three banks close during the crisis.

Along with co-workers, he started a county support group to assist farmers and others through the crisis. Joe worked with numerous lenders, attorneys and even bankruptcy courts during that time and even assisted FDIC with a bank closing in northwest Missouri. He to this day gets calls from folks that say he helped them through a rough time and remember him well.

Since many clientele in his counties were asking questions on fences, Joe began handling those questions over 25 years ago. He eventually became known throughout Missouri as the "fence law expert." He has reached thousands of people while providing programs on the fence law in person to 39 locations and via interactive television, (ITV) to an addition 36 locations.

Additionally, he revised the MU fence law guide and authored an additional MU guide, assisted Farm Bureau with a pamphlet, and has been interviewed on radio and television alike. He has utilized online learning in the last several years to reach out to additional audiences in remote parts of Missouri.

Joe has provided programming in ag business over the years in estate/succession planning, farm tax schools, farm leases, farm finances, Farm Bill education, current landowner issues and many others. He has taught hundreds of families in estate and succession planning via ITV and worked with many more on a one-on-one basis. Joe has also developed curriculum in estate/succession planning, farm leases and others.

After a request from county commissioners and other board officials, Joe started a "Serving on Public Boards" program in 1993 that has continued every other year to this day. Over 205 participants have attended this class in the last 10 years alone and Joe gets questions on local government issues to this day. He became an "Ask an Expert" for eXtension in 2012 and has since answered questions on fence, land use and local government issues.

Joe learned early in his career to be careful what to say to his regional bosses. After mentioning that he had a dairy background, he ended up being given additional responsibilities with dairy in the Green Hills Area. Over his years doing dairy work, he assisted with Amish ice cream meetings throughout the area and Memphis Dairy Day for many years, in addition to working with multiple producers and Dairy Herd Improvement Association (DHIA) employees.

Joe and his wife Susan have been married for 30 years and have three children: Phillip, Brian and daughter Nioka. They have five grandchildren, Bryce, Abbie, Alice, Paisleigh and Tamzin.

The Missouri Livestock Symposium congratulates Joe on his successful career with University of Missouri Extension and recognizes him as the 2017 Agriculture Educator of the Year.