



Agriculture Educators Lifetime Achievement Award *Dr. Rex Ricketts*

Dr. Rex Ricketts retired as coordinator of the University of Missouri Extension Commercial Agriculture program in 2013 after 42 years of service. His ability and energetic efforts to analyze a situation and outline constructive programs has contributed much to Missouri agriculture.

While Rickett's specialty is dairy, he worked extensively with swine, beef and agronomy educators and industry leaders across the state and nation. Livestock teams that he organized at MU exemplify Rickett's focus on the land-grant mission of giving instruction and practical demonstrations of existing or improved practices or technologies in agriculture.

Rickett's multi-disciplinary collaborations at MU continue to be emulated by other universities that want to move faculty from the narrow focus of their individual disciplines to a more integrated, holistic, perspective of agriculture. These teams developed products that continue to be used in agriculture today.

Ricketts grew up on 160-acre farm with a registered Jersey dairy herd at Fair Grove. During high school, he and his brothers showed many prize-winning cattle at fairs. He earned a B.S. in agriculture in 1963, master's degree in 1964 and doctorate in dairy husbandry in 1970 from MU.

In college, he was president of the ag and student dairy clubs. MU College of Agriculture named him the 1962-63 Outstanding Senior. He was a member of numerous honor societies and earned High Individual Award as part of the UMC Dairy Judging Team at an international contest in 1961.

Early employers included Cargill Nutrena Mills and Ralston Purina Company. In 1970, he became the MU Extension state dairy specialist. In 1985, MU Department of Dairy Sciences named him as chair. In 1989, Ricketts became MU Com-

mercial Agriculture Programs coordinator.

While chair of the MU Department of Dairy Science, Ricketts led the Missouri Dairyman's Institute, the All Breeds Show and Sale, and Dairy Day programs. He strongly promoted the state Dairy Herd Improvement Association program and the Missouri Livestock and Poultry Health Council. He revamped the management and cropping system at MU's Foremost Dairy Research Center to increase feed production, increase milk production and improve labor efficiency. He worked closely with state breed and dairy products organizations, 4-H and FFA.

Ricketts served as a member of many national, state and university committees including chair, North Central Extension Group 1977; Coordinating Group National DHIA Program; chair, American Dairy Science Association Intersociety Extension Group, and North Central Committee for Improving Large Dairy Herd Improvement Practices. Missouri Dairy Hall of Honors bestowed the Dairy Leadership Award to him in 1993.

In June 1964, Rex and his wife Sondra, who holds a B.S. in education from MU, married. She retired after 28 years as a librarian. They live in Hallsville where their children were active in 4-H. They are members of Trinity Presbyterian Church. They have six grandchildren and three children, all Mizzou graduates.

Chad was the first graduate of the UMC food-engineering program. He owns and runs his own food engineering company in Tulsa, Okla. Trina is an attorney shareholder with Ogletree, Deakins, Nash, Smoak and Stewart, P.C. in Kansas City, Mo. Neysa, the youngest, farms with her husband in Lawrence County and is a senior oncology specialist for Amgen.

The Missouri Livestock Symposium would like to congratulate Rex Ricketts on receiving the 2019 Agriculture Educators Lifetime Achievement Award. Thank you for your commitment to agriculture education and our community.