



John Reid

John Reid, and his wife Kim, started farming with his parents in 1977. He is the 4th generation on the farm in TOWN. Half of his property is in Winnebago County and half is in Boone County. He used to serve on the Boone County Farm Bureau Board before they merged with Winnebago County. He now serves on the board for both counties.

At one time, Reid farmed corn and soybeans and ran a beef cattle operation. He got out of the cattle business in 1980 continued his hand in the livestock industry with a farrow to finish hog project until 1995. Then he was farrowing pigs that left the farm after they were weaned. This continued until 2010. Since then, he has focused solely on row crops.

Reid had his own swine herd in high school. “I got a couple sows of my own and raised the pigs and enjoyed doing that. When you grow up with it, it gets in your blood I guess,” he said.

Agriculture is an interesting industry where most of the time, your coworkers are your family members. Reid worked closely with his father on the family farm for many years. “My father and I were a lot alike. We worked well together. I started taking care of the farm records and then I started handling the checkbook, then soon I was making the decisions. We always talked about things a lot, but I took it over gradually. He started doing less and I did more,” said Reid.

“The transition from cattle to pigs was harder for dad than me,” said Reid. He explained that things were changing in the cattle industry, and it was not as cost effective. Unlike his father, Reid enjoyed pigs more. He appreciated the cash flow. “We sold pigs every week and we got new pigs every week. It was different for my dad. He was used to feeding 400 head of cattle a year,” said Reid.



Reid Graduated from Iowa State University. He studied Farm Operations which allowed him to get a good balance between mechanics, agronomy, animal science, and economy. He and his wife, who is now retired from working in the Rockford School District, have four daughters. Three of them went into education and one is a massage therapist. They also have five grandchildren. Reid grew up in 4H in Winnebago County. He showed steers and hogs and entered projects in model rocketry and agronomy. He was excited to pass this tradition on to his girls, who grew up showing pigs.

Reid is heavily involved in his community. He has served on the Buildings and Grounds committee at the Presbyterian Church in Argyle, the Boone County and Winnebago County Pork Producers, along with his time on the Farm Bureau Board.

Reid has a genuine passion for agriculture. He chose to continue the family farm because he simply enjoyed doing it. "I enjoy farming and being outside. I always liked the livestock and working with them," he said.

Reid sees the importance of caring for the product he produces. "We (farmers) are passionate about what we do and we care about what we do," said Reid. "We take care of the things that involve our livelihood. We are in the business to make money, but it is more than that. We are providing a product for the consumer also. We have probably not educated the public enough on what we do. But, we do take care of the land and the animals."

"I like how the young generation is reaching out to bridge that gap between producer and consumer. We are stewards of the land and we use conservation practices. It is important to save the soil so it is there for the next generation," he said. When Reid was raising livestock, he made efforts of his own to bridge that gap. He had classes come out to the farm to teach consumers about handling techniques. Strategies such as following withdrawal periods on antibiotics, following the vets directions, growing a good product, giving the best care you can, harvesting right and keeping the grain in good condition while it is in his hands are all steps he takes to ensure a good product.

Reid is feeling the pressure of urban sprawl and developers. Some of the land he farms is being impacted by the Mercyhealth Hospital project and housing developments. Unfortunately, he sees himself phasing out as land becomes less readily available to rent. However, he plans to continue doing what he loves as long as he can.

We at the Winnebago-Boone Farm Bureau share that love of farming and are so thankful to all of our hardworking and dedicated farmers, especially the ones that serve on our Board of Directors. (Published July 27, 2018)