



## Dennis Ellingson



Dennis Ellingson and his wife Janet both grew up on farms in the Boone County area. However, they never figured they would be where they are now. The Ellingsons', accompanied by their 3 sons, 2 daughter-in-laws, and 5 grandchildren, are taking on a new project involving driving horses. From the Boone County Fair, to community events such as Stroll on State, this family has become very involved in the sport of driving horses. They have become very fond of the halflinger breed. This type of horse is somewhat small, generally palomino in color, and has a distinctive walk that can be considered energetic but smooth. They originated in Germany and Austria. Currently, there are 8 horses on the Ellingson farm.

“They are combination working/pleasure horses and were popular in WW1,” said Ellingson. “They were preferred in war time because they ate less than the large horses and yet they could pull heavy loads when necessary, and they are generally calm and quite by nature.”

Having such a calm attitude allowed the Ellingsons to sell three horses to a Handicap Riding Facility in Hawaii. The facility deals with handicap military veterans as well as children with disabilities. This requires the horses in their facility to be able to handle a wide variety of sizes and differences in their riders. The facility sent 7 people out to the Ellingsons place to ride the horses. After their visit, they called and exclaimed that they would be purchasing 3 horses.

“We have been over to see them,” said Ellingson. “They just totally love the horses that they got and they still use them all the time.”

While talking with Ellingson about his horses, I could sense the passion he has about his animals and the horse industry. It has become a project he and his wife can do together. It has even brought in his other family members. The horses have made their way into the Ellingson family's

heart. Yet, Ellingson is realistic when he talks about a humane way to rid of his animals if need be. He sees many animals left to struggle when an owner can no longer care for their horses. He wishes there were opportunities for a more humane and resourceful option.

Besides his time spent raising and selling horses, Ellingson has experiences with Conserv FS. He started his time there in 1981. He has seen a large rise in the products sold from year to year and has worked in the fuel, turf, feed, and crops sides of the company. Spending time with this company led him into many leadership roles with related organizations including the Soil and Water Conservation Board and Farm Bureau. He has many other leadership opportunities including 18 years on the North Boone School Board. He even served on the Regional School Board of Education and is currently serving on the Boone County Board.

All of his service has led him to understand the importance of not only educating those in his community, but being a good neighbor.

“I try to engage people in conversations,” said Ellingson. “We all need to work together and be civil with each other.”

Much like others, Ellingson has a “country mentality”. “When we meet people on the road, we wave,” said Ellingson. “It may not be someone we are friends with yet, but anybody you meet on the road we hope would be a friend at some point.”

Here at the Winnebago-Boone Farm Bureau, we also keep a “country mentality” and we are grateful to all of our members and friends we have now and hope to know soon. (Published January 13, 2017)