

2020 Women Impacting Ag Honoree Elaine Utesch



Elaine Utesch believes it is extremely important consumers know where their food comes from. Elaine's strong advocacy for agriculture is one reason she earned the ISU Extension and Outreach 2020 Women Impacting Agriculture honor. She was nominated by Mary Tuttle, ISU Extension and Outreach Cherokee County Director. As a partner in her family's Triple U Ranch located in Woodbury County, Iowa, Elaine hosts everyone from school groups to international trade delegations on their farm. "The whole gate-to-plate story is so much different than it used to be. I'm

hoping people understand the cattle we produce here, we raise in a responsible, sustainable manner," stated Utesch. She is proud her family earned the Environmental Stewardship Award in 2000 from the National Cattlemen's Beef Association.

Elaine loves to share her passion for agriculture with the local community and even hosted the national Today Show's producer and film crew for a Farm to Fork segment. She and her family host tours for the Iowa Department of Economic Development including groups from Germany, Mexico, Japan, China, and South Korea. Another messaging effort the Triple U Ranch, LLC participated in was a commercial for HyVee's meat advertising that was led by Tyson.

Through the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, Elaine is a trained Master of Beef Advocacy and Beef Spokesperson. Working with the Iowa Cattlemen's Association, she and her family were featured in several of the Beef It's What's for Dinner commercials as well as being part of the rebranding of Beef It's What's for Dinner called Rethink the Ranch. Elaine wants people to understand her family cares about other families. "The cattle that go out of here to feed people all over the United States are the same cattle that I put on the Christmas dinner table for my children and grandchildren to eat, your family is just as important to us as our family is," Utesch said.

Teaching is a lifelong passion for Elaine. She was a high school home economics teacher for 23 years before resigning to work on the ranch. "I think by being an educator [and farmer], kids that came into my classroom got a real farms, real foods kind of background on things so that they didn't have some crazy notion," shared Utesch.

Elaine served as a 4-H leader and superintendent for the Woodbury County Fair for 33 years. She started in the home economics department before becoming the overall 4-H building superintendent and then shifted to the overall livestock superintendent. From 1991 to 2015, she led the 4-H and FFA livestock auctions, raising nearly \$80,000 each year for youth exhibitors yearly. Elaine served on the ISU Extension and Outreach Woodbury County Extension Council.

Creating opportunities for people to ask questions and learn about the sustainable practices the vast majority of farmers use every day to produce the food people consume in their homes and restaurants is Elaine's major focus in the agriculture industry. "Elaine has proven how much farming has shaped her life and continues to show that love of the farm life to her children and

grandchildren. I am amazed at how much this town girl that I grew up with has made such an impact on agriculture and other women in Ag,” shared Tuttle.

Elaine advises other women in agriculture to be innovative. “You can tell a lot of really good stories about the way it used to be, but I don’t see anyone giving up their smartphone or their computer because we didn’t used to have those. We pull ourselves into new technologies, new research – and stay current. You just can’t NOT stay current and stay viable as a business,” related Utesch.

