

2008 Hall of Fame Inductee

Dave Hessman

Merle Hyett, Dave's 4-H leader in Mercer County Illinois inspired his decision to choose a career in Extension. His love for children, agriculture and livestock prompted a great deal of enthusiasm for 4-H programming, education and organization. During his 32 years with ISU Extension, he served Muscatine County 4-H & Youth for four years, Ida County Extension Director 16 years and Clay County Extension Director for 12 years.

Fairs and livestock judging have been a passion. Serving as 4-H Swine Superintendent for Iowa State Fair for nine years, on the Association of Iowa Fairs Board for six years and president in 1980, on the Ida County Fair Board for 16 years, he continues his volunteerism as current Chairman of the Blue Ribbon Committee, a group he helped organize to raise money to support various 4-H projects.

Adventures continued for both Arlene and Dave as they guided 4-H Exchange Trips for Ida and Clay County 4-H'ers. This program allowed youth to live with other 4-H'ers for a week in six different states. As chaperones for both boys and girls 4-H dormitories at Iowa State Fair for 15 years, they really had hands on experiences with many 4-H'ers from across the state.

Dave enjoyed judging cattle and lamb shows in several states, working with the AKSARBEN stock show and the Iowa Beef Expo. His help on the Michigan State campus, encouraged modernization of livestock shows in that area. Through these activities, he met many professional livestock and agricultural local and nation leaders that gave him ideas and suggestions that he brought back to use in local programming.

Throughout his career in Clay County, he was influential in starting the Scramble Calf program and the Classic Calf project. These programs were designed to give children who would not have an opportunity to raise a calf for the fair to be able to participate in this project area. Along with these programs came his commitment to teach ration management so 4-H'ers would learn how to feed properly through monthly letters with information pertaining to their particular animal. From this, most calves graded choice by Clay County Fair time.

He brought many Judging teams to great success, teaching children to know what they were looking for and to recognize it when they saw it. He takes great pride in the fact that he also taught 4-H'ers how to make decisions, encouraged them to get in front of people giving oral reasons, and gave each an opportunity to learn through many workshops.

When asked what has highlighted his career, he said, "The satisfaction of working and volunteering with youth and seeing them obtain the training they need for their chosen career and then seeing the success. I tried to instill in children that there is a need for community volunteerism. What they build today is building for the future of others. The 4-H program has influenced many lives."

As Lieutenant Governor of Kiwanis in 2007, Dave had the opportunity to visit 93 Kiwanis groups from different states. During these visits, many would come up to him and talk of past connections they had had in one way or another. This confirmed his belief, that 4-H truly makes an impact on our youth whether it is through project areas, fun or work.