SAUK CITY, WIS. – Jeanne Alling of Unity has been honored with the Honored Educator Award from the Wisconsin Association of Agricultural Educators (WAAE). Ms. Alling was presented with this honor at the WAAE Professional Development Conference held June 25-29, 2023 in downtown Oshkosh at the Best Western Waterfront Hotel and Convention Center.

The WAAE Honored Educator Award recognizes members who provide key leadership and input at the local and state level. Members who have at least 20 years of teaching experience are considered for this award.

Jeanne Larsen-Alling has always possessed passion for agriculture education and the FFA organization. She graduated from Unity High School and was the first female to receive the Wisconsin FFA State Degree from the chapter. With family and community support she graduated from UW Madison with a degree in Dairy Science and earned a two-year degree from the Farm and Industry Short Course Program with a specialization in Dairy Farm Management. She then attended UW-River Falls to become certified in Agriculture Education. While at River Falls, she worked as a reporter at the Polk County Ledger in Balsam Lake.

Jeanne’s first teaching job was a quarter-time position at the Ondossagon School in rural Ashland. She taught in the afternoon and in the morning she was an agricultural loan officer for the Production Credit Association. Just before year two was going to start the PCA office closed but a part-time position opened at the Ashland High School. Now she was halftime at both schools, traveling between them and an advisor for both FFA chapters. During her first local FFA Alumni meeting at Ashland one of the younger farmers asked her if she found it difficult being a female ag teacher, her response was, “I find it difficult being short.”

After five years at both schools, the Ondossagon School closed and she became full-time at Ashland. Jeanne loved the area but wanted to move closer to home. An opening at Shell Lake came about so she taught at Shell Lake for three years then...
when the position at Unity High School came open she returned home. She says, “I had promised my Ag teacher that one day I would come home and take his job and I kept my promise!”

Food insecurity became a focus at Unity. They sponsored a Shanty Town, and installed school gardens and community gardens. The members took great pride in their program and gained valuable leadership skills. After 22 years at Unity, Jeanne retired. She is still actively involved in subbing for local school districts, working with the FFA Alumni, and also her community’s activities.

Jeanne married her husband, Al in 1990 and they have two daughters Johanna and Jena.

_waae is the professional association for agricultural educators in Wisconsin. Members include 410 middle school, high school, technical college and university educators. The association’s focus is to provide professional development, legislative support and educational resources for teachers to enhance their local agricultural education programs._

_For more information about your local agriculture education program and how you can support agriculture in your community, please contact your local agriculture education instructor or visit www.waae.com._

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