

Describe accomplishments or rationale for award

Kent and Cheri Christensen have been married for 50 years this June. Kent grew up in Fremont County on the land his father homesteaded in 1948. In 1973, the couple returned to Fremont County following achieving their college diplomas; Cheri at Colorado State University and Kent at the University of Wyoming. After working for Fremont Title Company for two years, Kent began teaching vocational agriculture at Riverton High School in 1975, and continued to do so until 1979. During this time, he also taught agriculture classes and coached the livestock judging team at Central Wyoming College, a position he held until 1979. During this time, Kent's livestock judging teams were nationally-recognized and won several awards at contests from the Cow Palace in San Francisco, California, to the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo in Houston, Texas.

The couple leased a farm in 1980, where they raised alfalfa, malt barley, corn and commercial cattle until they purchased their own place on Eight Mile Road in 1985. When Kent's father wanted to retire in the later part of the 1990s, Kent returned to his father's homestead to continue the farming operation, and the couple continues to operate that farm today, raising a rotation of sugar beets, malt barley, alfalfa hay and silage corn. Both Kent and Cheri served actively as 4-H project leaders for more than 20 years and were founding members of the Wyoming Junior Livestock Association in the 1980s.

In addition to serving as the number one farm hand, Cheri began working at the University of Wyoming Extension Service as the office secretary in 1973. After a few years, she took the job of fair manager of the Fremont County Fair, a position she served in for more than 10 years. She was integral in the creation of what we know as today's Fremont County Spring Fair, and served as a resource for other counties wanting to create jackpot shows in the state of Wyoming at the time. During this time, she also served actively on the Miss Rodeo Wyoming committee and several International Association of Fairs and Expositions committees.

Following this, Cheri earned her master's degree in mass communications from the University of Denver, where her thesis was based on the benefits of adding children younger than age 8 to the national 4-H program. Cheri also served as executive director of the National Cattle Congress in Waterloo, Iowa, and the Amarillo Tri-State Fair in Amarillo, Texas, during her career. Cheri served as a cattle superintendent for the State Fair of Texas and mutton busing superintendent for the National Western Stock Show for several years. Even in retirement, Cheri still works as a consultant for many fairs and entertainers across the nation in support of showcasing the agricultural industry in this setting.

Kent also sheared sheep professionally for four years and has been a regional salesman for Vigortone animal products for more than 25 years. He has actively served on the Junior Livestock Sale Committee for the Fremont County Fair, and has been awarded an Honorary Chapter Farmer Award for the Wind River FFA Chapter. Kent coached the Fremont County 4-H wool judging team. Even after his children left 4-H and FFA, Kent continued to assist other county youths in learning animal husbandry and participating in the market sheep project. Outside of Fremont County, Kent served as junior sheep superintendent at the Wyoming State Fair for eight years and as a junior swine superintendent at the National Western Stock Show in Denver, Colorado, for six years. He also has judged several county fairs throughout Colorado and Wyoming. He served on the Wind River School Board for four years, including serving as chairman of the board.