



NorthStar Genetics Community Star Winner Alan Enger

May 22, 2018 - Although retired from day-to-day farming on his farm South of Sioux Falls, 64-year-old Alan Enger is still farming – just in a different way.

The NorthStar Genetics Community Star winner and former corn, soybean and livestock farmer, is now helping fellow farmers through crisis, with his volunteer efforts with Farm Rescue. A non-profit organization, Farm Rescue provides planting, harvesting and haying assistance, free of charge, to farm families who have suffered a major injury, illness or natural disaster. The organization's ability to help farmers is 100% dependent on sponsors and volunteers like Alan, who has been a volunteer for the past three years.

Alan's most recent efforts helping to assist farmers and ranchers who dealt with drought and fire throughout North

Dakota and Montana this past season are why David Smith, Development Officer, Farm Rescue, nominated him for the NorthStar Genetics Community Star award.

"Alan is a strong advocate of Farm Rescue. He is always seeking support in his community in order to strengthen our mission of helping farmers through crisis. With the ongoing drought in Western North Dakota last year, many farms and ranches faced severe hay shortages. Alan sought out hay to be donated throughout Wisconsin and Minnesota and then helped ensure its transportation by Farm Rescue by semi-trucks to these farm and ranch families," says Smith.

Much like many of the farm families that he helps, Alan's decision to volunteer with Farm Rescue also stemmed from adversity.

"Eleven years ago I was involved in a very serious car accident that put me on life support for three weeks. My father also suffered a heart attack, so our ability to farm was greatly hindered. For the years that followed, as rural communities do, friends, neighbors and even strangers lent a hand to help me both harvest that fall and then to get my crops in in the spring. They also supported me in the years that followed in the areas that I needed help," says Enger.

Alan sold all of his livestock shortly after his accident but remained farming corn and soybeans. He retired from farming last year and now rents out his land.

"Because of the help and support that I received from my community, I was able to continue farming," Alan says. "About three years ago my wife and I went to a Farm Rescue banquet in Fargo, North Dakota. I was impressed with everyone there and on the way home we reflected on the fact that we were able to have ten good years of farming since my accident because of the community support that I received and that it was time to give something back – to start helping someone else."

In speaking to Alan, you feel like you are speaking to a long-time friend or neighbor and perhaps that is the greatest contribution that he gives to the Farm Rescue families that the organization supports.

"It can be emotionally overwhelming for families when all the volunteers and the equipment rolls into the yard. I'm happy to let the other volunteers handle the equipment and operations and what needs to be done out there on the fields to help out these families – whether it's spring seeding or fall harvest. Where I like to help is to simply sit with these families and listen," says Enger. It helps, he says, to have farming as the thread of connection and understanding.

Alan says that he also enjoys working with other like-minded volunteers in the Farm Rescue organization, many of whom he says even forego taking a vacation to spend their time helping with Farm Rescue.

"I want to spend more time with Farm Rescue," says Enger. "I will never quit this farming thing all together. In a way I am still farming – just in a different way."

Thank you, Community Star Alan Enger, for giving back to farming communities and keeping the spirit of community alive. The world needs more good news stories like you.

The NorthStar Community Star initiative was designed to recognize and award farmers residing and working in the agricultural industry throughout Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and Iowa for giving back to their agricultural communities. Alan was one of four winners of the NorthStar Genetics Community Star program. The initiative recognizes individuals who give back to their local community. The program donates \$1,000 to the charity of the winner's choice. Not surprising, Alan has chosen Farm Rescue for this donation.

"The idea for the Community Star program stemmed from recognizing the vital and selfless role that farmers play in supporting their farming communities," says Dan Hogstad, CEO, NorthStar Genetics. "Despite their busy lives, they find time to give back to their communities. At NorthStar Genetics, we, in turn, wanted to recognize these individuals and say thank you. Without their efforts, many small town agricultural communities would fail to thrive."

NorthStar Genetics is a trusted seed company because of their dedication to local growers and conditions, providing seed that is grown and conditioned locally on the same land as the farmers who grow it. By testing hundreds of varieties, they are able to designate them to specific areas based on local conditions and be confident that they will perform. NorthStar Genetics proudly serves four states, offering the highest quality, locally proven genetics available.