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Farm Rescue Honors Longtime Volunteers with Annual Service Award

*Nonprofit names Kenneth Chyle (Auburn, KY) and Mark Baumgarten (Bettendorf, IA)
as "Good Samaritans" for 2022*

HORACE, N.D., January 23, 2023 - Farm Rescue, a nonprofit organization that provides free planting, haying, harvesting, commodity hauling and livestock feeding assistance to farm and ranch families who have experienced a major illness, injury or natural disaster, has honored Kenneth Chyle and Mark Baumgarten with its annual Good Samaritan Award.

The Good Samaritan Award was created in 2016 to honor individuals who support Farm Rescue with the compassionate heart of the Good Samaritan. That support may include an overwhelming contribution to further the mission of the organization, serving as an ambassador for the nonprofit, or going above and beyond as an Angel in Blue volunteer to help farm families in crisis. Beginning in 2019, Farm Rescue began recognizing two honorees with this annual award.

Chyle and Baumgarten's combined service to Farm Rescue spans more than 2 decades. Through their dedication, hard work and leadership, these volunteers have helped grow the organization's impact in rural communities, as well as its base of supporters. They have touched the lives of many farm families throughout Farm Rescue's 17-year history and inspired many other volunteers to follow in their footsteps.

Kenneth Chyle was born and raised on a family farm near Auburn, KY, where he still resides today. He says his childhood years mainly revolved around farming and church. After his father's passing in 1957, 9-year-old Kenneth joined his older brother, Robert, in continuing the family operation. In addition to milking cows twice a day for many years, the brothers raised Black Angus cattle, tobacco, wheat, corn and soybeans, as well as operating a used machinery business. Kenneth is also a military veteran. He married his high school sweetheart, Betty, in 1968. Sadly, just four years later, she was involved in a vehicle crash that claimed her life. Kenneth was remarried to Gwynne in 1984 and they spent nearly a decade together before her passing in 1993, following a long battle with cancer. Kenneth is the proud father of three daughters who all live within 30 miles of his home. Outside of farming, he has also driven truck, worked for a local equipment dealer and is currently helping one of his daughters build a new home. Around 15 years ago, Kenneth was introduced to one of his greatest passions when a magazine article about Farm Rescue caught his eye. After a bit of online research, he decided to sign up as a volunteer. In his first year serving with Farm Rescue, Kenneth originally planned for a 2-week trip to assist during planting season. After doing such an impressive job, he was asked to stay on for a full month as a team leader. Kenneth has returned each year since, often making multiple trips to Farm Rescue's service states throughout the growing season to assist families in crisis with planting, harvest and hay hauling support. In 2016, Kenneth married Darlene, who was well-aware of his dedication to Farm Rescue and has been very supportive of his volunteerism with the organization. He has impacted the lives of dozens of farm families and continues to be one of the nonprofit's most devoted and knowledgeable volunteers. Kenneth is now entering his 13th year of service with Farm Rescue.

"I was truly shocked when Bill Gross called to tell me I was a recipient of this award," said Chyle. "I feel like there are other people out there more deserving, but I'm very honored. The windows for planting and harvesting are so small in much of the Midwest, with fewer neighbors than years past. Without Farm Rescue stepping in to fill that void, I think there would be a lot less family farms in operation. It's a life saver for farmers and ranchers."

Mark Baumgarten was also raised on a family farm near Casselton, ND. He and his two sisters helped tend to a thousand acres of land, as well as stock cows and hogs. Mark says much like his father, he was born a farmer, but chose to attend North Dakota State University in pursuit of an engineering degree. He met his wife, Jackie, during college and the two were wed in 1979. They went on to have three children and eventually two grandchildren. After graduation from NDSU, Mark was hired by John Deere and spent 36 years with the company. Throughout his career, the Baumgartens moved 9 times across 5 states before finally settling in Bettendorf, IA, prior to Mark's retirement. Several years back, Jackie was reading a magazine article about Farm Rescue and its founder, Bill Gross. Mark says it was an hour before church service when she handed him the article and said, "Before we get to church, I want you signed up for this." Mark obliged and began serving Farm Rescue that same year. Much like Kenneth Chyle, Mark's talent and knowledge were quickly recognized and he was asked to serve as a team leader in his first spring of volunteering. He has continued in that leadership role each subsequent year and says he truly enjoys the opportunity to train and develop new crew members for the organization. Mark typically volunteers for two weeks each year during the spring planting season but has also assisted with harvest operations. Outside the field, one of his greatest gifts to Farm Rescue has been the recruitment of additional volunteers. More than a dozen current or retired John Deere employees have followed Mark's lead in serving the nonprofit's mission. He also played a key role in cultivating the organization's early relationship with John Deere leadership. Deere & Company has been one of the largest sponsors of Farm Rescue throughout its history. Mark has devoted additional time to the organization in the development of volunteer training manuals and protocols, manning booths at various farm shows and events, as well as performing additional outreach on behalf of the nonprofit. Mark is now entering his 10th year of service with Farm Rescue.

"To be honest, I didn't believe it when Bill told me I was receiving the Good Samaritan Award," said Baumgarten. "With so many people helping out, I don't feel I deserve this honor more than anyone else. I was surprised to say the least. I think the need for Farm Rescue is greater now than ever before. Everyone is moving fast these days and if we can fit within the window of need during planting, haying and harvest, it helps put the farmer at ease. Not only do we have the equipment to get it done right, but in a timely manner. It's been a very fulfilling experience."

"Kenneth Chyle and Mark Baumgarten exemplify the good samaritans that make our mission a success," said Bill Gross, Founder & President, Farm Rescue. "May God Bless them for their selfless acts of helping others in a time of crisis."

Previous recipients of the Good Samaritan Award, include Agnes Liudahl of West Fargo, ND, Reuben Liechty of Jamestown, ND, the Engelstad Family of Las Vegas, NV, Gene Spichke and Warren Zakopyko of Kief, ND, Erwin "Smokey" Wright of Minot, ND, Bill Krumwiede of Voltaire, ND, Charlie Bartsch of Velva, ND and Garry Deckert of Bismarck, ND.



Photo: Farm Rescue volunteer, Kenneth Chyle of Auburn, KY
**CLICK TO DOWNLOAD HIGHER RESOLUTION IMAGE.*



Photo: Farm Rescue volunteer, Mark Baumgarten of Bettendorf, IA
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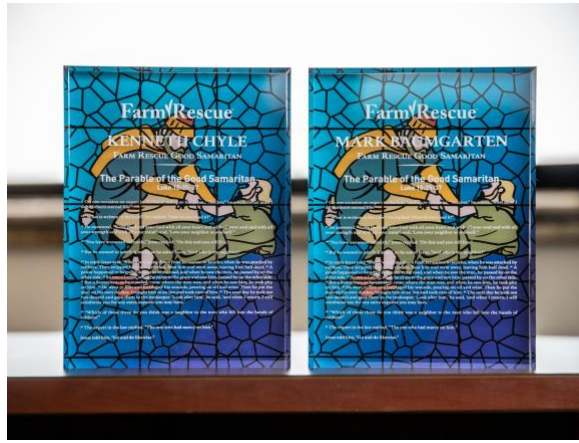


Photo: 2022 Farm Rescue Good Samaritan Awards
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About Farm Rescue

Farm Rescue was founded in 2005 and has helped nearly 1,000 families since its inception. The organization's mission is to help farmers and ranchers who have experienced a major illness, injury, or natural disaster by providing the necessary equipment and volunteer labor to perform time-sensitive services. Applications for assistance are currently being accepted and can be obtained at www.farmrescue.org or by calling 701-252-2017.

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