

The 2018 Renville County Farm Family of the Year is Johnson Farms of Hector.

Johnson Farms of Hector started out with 160 acres in 1898 that Frank A. Johnson purchased. His two sons Ellsworth and Roy Johnson joined him in farming the land and helped with the purchase of the adjoining acreage.

When Roy's son Frank O. Johnson wanted to join the farming operation, Ellsworth moved in to Hector and began Johnson Realty. Frank O. and Roy farmed together until 1951, when Frank O. purchased land north of Hector and moved his farming operation there. In 1966, his son, Larry returned home to farm with him. In 1995, Larry's son Deron returned home after graduating from the U of M to also join the farming operation.

Frank is now retired, Larry and Kathy are semi-retired and Deron is continuing on with the farming tradition. Johnson Farms of Hector currently raises corn, soybeans and sugar beets out of their home base 5 miles north of Hector. The farm has also raised sweet corn and peas in the past. They state that they value all their employees and in April, Mark Coulter will have 30 years in working with Johnson Farms of Hector. They could not do it without their other employees, Terry Anderson, Carroll Woods and Ray Frericks who have a combined 90 years working with them.

Besides farming, the Johnson's have been very involved on various boards and community events. Frank O. was a founding board member of Southern MN Sugar Cooperative and served as the President and Chairman in the 1970's. Larry also served on the SMSC Board and also was Chairman. Johnson Farms of Hector has been involved in the Farm Bureau on both the county and state level. They are members of the Corn & Soybean Growers Associations, Pro Ag of Renville County, NFIB and Heartland Corn Products. In 2014 & 2015, Deron attended and graduated from the Executive Program for Agricultural Producers (TEPAP) in Austin, TX. His graduating class established a scholarship to attend this program after a classmate's death of which Deron chairs the scholarship committee and to date 3 recipients have attended TEPAP. Deron also currently enjoys serving on the U of M Fan Advisory Board created by Athletic Director Mark Coyle.

As many of you know, they have been an active and financial participant in Relay for Life of Renville County in an effort to eradicate cancer.

We would like to congratulate Johnson Farms of Hector as this year's Farm Family of the Year.