

# Growing in Agriculture

## South Dakota Families

By Lucas Lentsch, Secretary of Agriculture

**Thursday, May 9, 2013**

Mother's Day is this month. This, my first letter as your Secretary of Agriculture, I'd like to dedicate in memory of my Mom, Karen.



Like many mothers in agriculture, my Mom was hard working. She was a faithful wife and worked side by side with my Dad and our family. Her days always seemed to be longer than ours, up before us and to bed after us.

Over the years, I remember many times looking at her cracked fingers from the chores often associated with hands-on dairying. I can still see her washing and preparing the cows for milking and humming a tune. She was tough too. The first time I remember seeing her take a kick from a Holstein impressed me. Always a lady, she rarely shared an expletive.

It is fitting we celebrate our mothers in May when new life is springing up all around us. Without you, there'd be no us.

The many generations of hard working mothers and grandmothers throughout South Dakota need to be thanked. They truly are the unsung heroes behind the generations of men who have also worked to build our agricultural economy. The women of our farm and ranch families play a critical dual role for the success of their operations. They not only have tended to the needs of the household, but have also been a big part of the day to day chores, especially in animal agriculture.

All across our great state, many operations are a working partnership between husband and wife and still a critical part of their success. This calving season, the women of agriculture may have tended to an orphaned calf or tried to warm up a cold one that was just pulled from the mud. Maybe it's a mothering instinct, but we know women can be as good if not better caretakers of livestock.

This month, let's celebrate the lives of our mothers and the roles they play as our unsung heroes of agriculture. If you can, give them a hug for the rest of us who wish we still could.

It is my honor and privilege to serve as your Secretary of Agriculture. As my mother also taught me, I will work hard for you and do my best. Have a safe spring and thank you for your time.

*Lucas*