

Lloyd R. Larson
2001 Friend of Education

Lloyd R. Larson, now deceased, was an early leader in the field of vocational education and a dedicated Beaver Dam High School teacher. He began the high school agriculture program in Beaver Dam in 1927, when the concept of vocational education at the high school level was new. Beaver Dam was among the earliest school districts to see the benefits of vocational education that continue to this day. Larson made it his mission to encourage farmers to permit their sons to enroll in high school, and worked out compromises to make it possible. To give these students some extra support, Larson organized the Beaver Ag Club, a forerunner of the Future Farmers of America (FFA) organization. He then made sure that Beaver Dam was one of the charter chapters of the state and national FFA associations. He was also an early leader in the establishment of the Wisconsin Association of Vocational Agriculture Instructors. Since those were the days of the depression, many of his students suffered economic difficulties. Larson became a special friend to them by taking them on camping trips and organizing 4-H clubs in the rural elementary schools. Beyond those initiatives, Larson instructed the sons of the farmers during the day and taught agriculture to their fathers in his night classes. Alumni attest that because Larson taught progress in agriculture, he saved farms. Larson organized his Beaver Dam graduates into the Wisconsin Junior Agriculture Association. The group was like an extended family and the "Lloyd Larson Group" continues to meet quarterly. During the 1940's, Larson went against the traditional standard and welcomed young women into his agriculture program. He established the BDHS Girls Ag Club thirty years before the FFA accepted female members. When he retired from teaching in 1946, his apple and turkey farm was central to the community. He was a community leader and, by his example, many of Larson's students became leaders in Beaver Dam and the surrounding area. Testimonies accredit him with "forward thinking, compassion, and intelligence for bringing together the lives of many people and fostering the ideal of learning for several generations."