

AG LEADERS

2021 Ag Leaders Luncheon honors Ag Leaders & Supporters of the Montgomery Agricultural Center and Fair with a special tribute to Michele Cropp

Michele, along with her husband Craig and their sons Michael and Matthew, raised Angus cattle on their leased farm south of Damascus. Michele loved farming, and her care for both her animals and people was evident.

Michele grew up in Rockville; the only animal her family had was their family dog. Craig told us that he and Michele gave cattle to each other as a first wedding anniversary gift. Despite Michele having no prior experience with cattle, and Craig only having his childhood 4-H steer experience, they drove up to the Westminster Livestock Auction and bought two young heifers. They loaded them in the back of their pickup truck and drove home. Craig recalls that they were lucky the heifers did not jump out!



On their farm, the Cropps practiced rotational grazing. In addition to the cattle, over the years they also had pigs, sheep, goats, chickens, guinea hens, ducks, horses, a donkey, and farm cats. Craig says that Michele loved all animals, except for possibly snakes.

Michele was a great advocate of agriculture and never missed a chance to promote the benefits of agriculture as well as the role that farmers have in protecting the environment. She would often review drafts of local and state legislation to better understand them and then work with elected officials to convey the possible impacts – positive and negative – on agriculture.

Michele was elected President of the Montgomery County Farm Bureau for two terms and was a member of the Montgomery County Agricultural Advisory Committee, Montgomery Agriculture Producers, and the American Angus Association. She was also very active with Montgomery County 4-H for over 20 years, and served as a livestock superintendent during the Montgomery County Fair.

In 2019, Michele was featured in a documentary produced by the American Angus Association called "Losing Ground". This documentary does an excellent job highlighting the impacts of urban sprawl on farmers and American agriculture. You can find it on YouTube.

Michele was proud to be a Montgomery County farmer, and was a valued member of our agricultural community. She was a strong, vibrant, passionate, funny, kind, and dedicated woman who is deeply missed.

The Ag Leaders Purpose

To provide an opportunity for leaders in the agricultural community to come together during the annual Agricultural Fair to commemorate the importance of agriculture, share ideas, concerns and successes impacting our county.

The Luncheon, held during the Montgomery County Agricultural Fair includes an educational program with important information on current legislation, agricultural land use issues, trends in agricultural production and demographic trends. The Luncheon also serves as an opportunity for interaction and exchange of information among invited guests with the intention of facilitating communication in the future.

The Luncheon is also the occasion in which a farmer or a farm family are inducted into the Montgomery County Agriculture Hall of Fame. The farmers are honored for their extraordinary contribution to the agricultural community in Montgomery County as well as the State of Maryland. The honoree is generally submitted for induction into the Maryland Agriculture Hall of Fame.

Invited guests include agricultural producers of all types in Montgomery County, elected officials from County and State government as well as the following agencies who support the agricultural communities: Agricultural Services- a division of the County Department of Economic Development; USDA Farm Service Agency; USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service; Maryland Department of Agriculture- Soil Conservation District; University of Maryland Extension.

The Ag Leaders Luncheon is sponsored by: Montgomery County Agricultural Center, Inc., the Montgomery County Office of Agriculture and the Montgomery County Extension Office.

The Montgomery County Fair officially opened in 1949. It was made possible by many volunteers, contributors, families, and government officials who, over the years continue to make the Fair a place for youth and others to gather and show results of their work, to enjoy camaraderie and to educate others about agriculture.