SOUTH DAKOTA FFA FOUNDATION

NEWS RELEASE

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**Knutson Family Receives "FFA Family of the Year" Award**

The Jason and Alicia Knutson family of rural Centerville has received the South Dakota FFA Foundation’s 2022 “Family of the Year” award. The award honoring a family's long-term involvement in the SD FFA/Agriculture Education program was presented on April 25 at the State FFA Convention in Brookings. In addition to Jason and Alicia, the Knutson family includes their four adult children and their spouses: Jaclynn (husband Luke Engen), Alison, Shania and Kasandra.

The Knutson family has a long history of involvement in the South Dakota FFA, spanning three generations. Each of the family’s FFA members have held chapter and district offices and have received their state FFA degree. They were especially active in showing sheep and leadership and career development events, with each of the Knutson children being part of state champion teams. Their favorites were Creed Speaking, Extemporaneous Speaking, Marketing Plan, Land Judging, Ag Sales and Floriculture. Collectively, the family has two state officers, numerous state proficiency winners, one National proficiency winner, three American degree recipients, two Honorary Chapter FFA Degrees, two Honorary State FFA Degrees, and one Honorary American FFA Degree.

“This award recognizes a South Dakota FFA family that goes the extra mile for this organization,” said FFA Foundation Exec. Dir. Gerri Ann Eide. “The actions of the entire Knutson family through multiple generations have modeled the FFA mission of developing premier leadership, personal growth and career success.”

Jason was a high school FFA member in Centerville, while Alicia was a member in Sturgis, where they both served as chapter officers, and participated in judging events, camps, and conferences. They even met through FFA. Jason served as State FFA Secretary, both he and Alicia are lifetime FFA Alumni members, and both have served on the Viborg-Hurley FFA Advisory board.

All four of their daughters were active in the Viborg-Hurley FFA chapter, where they served as chapter & district officers, led service projects, had dynamic SAEs, showed sheep and were involved in every FFA activity possible. Jaclynn served as State FFA reporter, was an American Star in Ag Business finalist, SD FFA intern, and a National FFA proficiency winner. She now teaches Agriculture education in Windom, MN where she and her husband Luke also farm. Alison was State Star Farmer, competed at National Land Judging and currently serves as the Brandon Valley Agriculture Education instructor and FFA advisor. Shania was a finalist for Star Greenhand and competed at Nationals in Floriculture. Shania was Miss Teen SD USA 2018, which she used to advocate for agriculture and is a senior at SDSU with a Business Entrepreneurship major and has started her own company in floral design. Kasandra was a State Star Greenhand Finalist, and a State Star Farmer finalist and is a SDSU freshman, works for the seed lab, Boys and Girls Club and volunteers for numerous organizations.

Jason shares, “I don’t know how to put into words what FFA has meant to us. It has always been a huge part of our lives and there is something for everyone to learn and excel at in FFA.”

Beyond their time as active FFA members, the Knutson family has given back to the organization as well. Family members have served as judges for local and state events numerous times, driven to and chaperoned events and service projects, conducted chapter and state officer interviews, served as “Mom” to the State Officer candidates, and been instrumental in starting a local FFA alumni chapter. Two of them are currently ag teachers, passing on their passion for agriculture to others. The family has also sponsored various activities including the State Fair FFA sheep showmanship awards through the South Dakota FFA Foundation.

The entire family has given freely of their time and talents, with a reach far beyond FFA. They are active members in the National Suffolk and Rambouillet Sheep Associations and received the Master Lamb Producer Award in 2017. The family has a farrow to finish pig operation, and sells them as all natural to Niman Ranch, where they were family of the year in 2020. They all volunteer for their churches, help with service projects and fundraisers for their school and community, and serve as a pageant director. They are all actively involved in running the family farm, raising row crops, cows, pigs and sheep, advocating for agriculture and operating JAK’s Bridal in Viborg.

The South Dakota FFA Foundation presented each family group with an "FFA Family of the Year" photo frame and thank you for their tremendous impact on agriculture education and FFA.

**Photo caption**: Knutson family members: Rodney, Beverly, Jason, Alicia, Kacie, Shania and fiancé Pierre Lear, Alison, Jaclynn and husband Luke Engen received the SD FFA Family of the Year award April 24th at State FFA Convention.