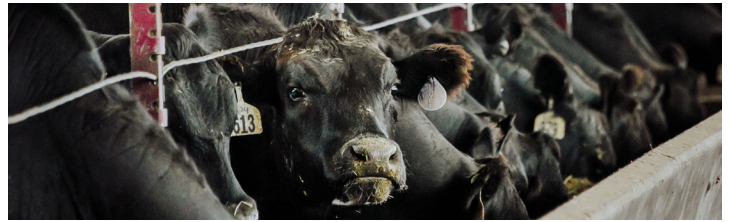


MEET YOUR BOARD



MEET MARK PHILIPS, CVA BOARD MEMBER FROM AKRON, IA. MARK REPRESENTS REGION 8 WHICH CONSISTS OF LE MARS, AKRON, OYENS AND HINTON IOWA.

The Central Valley Ag Board of Directors is made up of local, agricultural leaders, who are recognized for their industry expertise, as well as economic and community development skills. The board currently has 21 directors and three associate directors. These individuals are located in your communities throughout the CVA territory.

Mark Philips is a CVA Director for Region 8; his operation is located in Northwest Iowa, just a few miles east of Akron. Mark runs a cattle feeding operation and raises corn, soybeans, winter wheat, oats, cover crops and alfalfa. He's a fourth-generation farmer and noted that one of the cattle yards has served that purpose for 100 years; its only previous job being native grass.

He enjoys the job's challenges and has a strong interest in technological advances in the agricultural industry. "Technology is an aid to help you make better decisions. Gathering data, managing data, sorting data – one of my favorite aspects of feeding cattle or growing crops is the harvest portion. I like collecting that data, looking at the results, so I can figure out what worked, what didn't work, and prepare for the next round," said Mark. "I think that's why I like feeding cattle; I can get multiple crops in one year. If you take care of the animals, they'll take care of you."

Mark's passion for data and strategic planning is one reason he enjoys serving on the CVA Board of Directors. He likes talking about the future and visualizing what the co-op will look like someday. His family isn't new to the cooperative system; Mark is a third-generation co-op member. "My father taught me the value of collective bargaining. Independent farmers are absolutely critical to rural America and being efficient and productive. But sometimes, individuals can't do it alone, and we need to come together and

collectively bargain. That's where your co-op comes in. You can act as a large entity and have a little leverage in your procurement or sales."

When Mark initially took the step to serve on his local Cooperative Board of Directors, it was 2008, and the Hinton based cooperative was still named Farmers Cooperative. "I was kind of "voluntold" to run, initially I was a bit reluctant, but it's been a

The Board of Directors' mission is to provide leadership of CVA's current direction and initiatives, in addition to positioning the organization for future success and profitability for members. Mark spoke to the importance of being involved in your cooperative, and taking that step to serve on the

board, "It's your duty to be an active member in the co-op. It's your co-op. It's not my co-op, it's not the CEO's co-op, it's your co-op. These are your assets that we own collectively together. So it's important to make sure that this thing stays resilient and is here for the next generation." Even if member-owners don't serve on the Board of Directors, it's still important that all co-op members exercise their control by voting for the directors.

Mark takes his role on the board seriously and tries to stay connected with local member-owners through basic conversations about their operation. "You interact with your fellow co-op members just naturally through the community, whether it be at church or a ball game." His family is very involved in the

community, so Mark has plenty of opportunities to have these conversations. Mark and his wife, LeAnne, have three children; Libbie, Ben, and Sam. They stay busy with their kids' various activities, whether it be athletics or other extracurriculars. The family is active in their church, and LeAnne teaches religious education classes. Mark also serves on the board for the Producers Livestock Association based out of Omaha. Mark and LeAnne both serve on the community theatre board in Akron and other various organizations. "We think it's important to volunteer our time, and it's a gratifying thing to do." • • •



wonderful experience," laughed Mark. In 2016, FC Co-op merged with Central Valley Ag, and Mark was chosen with another director to be a part of the CVA board. "Serving on the board of directors for the co-op is a challenge, reward, and learning experience, all wrapped in one. It's very gratifying to know that you are part of an organization that really would not exist without individual producers like myself, my peers, and my neighbors. I enjoy the professionalism and camaraderie of serving on the board. You have to make tough decisions. It's a lot like farming. There are times when it makes you uncomfortable, but most of the time, it's rewarding to serve because you're serving the members."

