

# AG-ceptional *Woman of the Year 2010*

Bonnie Schulz was surprised when her name was announced as the first recipient of the AG-ceptional Woman of the Year Award at the 2010 AG-ceptional Women's Conference last November. "I feel so honored to be awarded for my passion and enthusiasm for agriculture," said the rural Battle Creek resident who has been an agricultural business instructor at Northeast Community College since January 1997.



Schulz served as the conference director for the first AG-ceptional Women's Conference. She served this role in addition to her full-time teaching position successfully launching the event. Corinne Morris, associate dean of agriculture, co-founded the event with Schulz in 2009, and credits Schulz for having the incredible vision that brought the conference to life.

The conference committee implemented the AG-ceptional Woman of the Year Award in 2010. Schulz was selected as the first recipient to honor her contribution in establishing the conference and for all of her contributions as a leader in agriculture. Morris said, "Bonnie earned the award because she is truly an AG-ceptional Woman. She shares her love for agriculture and she enriches the lives of students, colleagues and people in agriculture. Bonnie shares her love — whatever that love is — agriculture, technology, teaching, and more. Her enthusiasm is contagious."

Schulz has been involved in production agriculture since 1983 when she married farmer Jerry Schulz. A "town girl" from Madison, she soon became a full-time partner with her husband on their farm southeast of Battle Creek. "The more I was involved in the whole operation, the more I loved all of it," Schulz said. "Only I felt like there was something more for me, hopefully something that would help me contribute more to the farm operation."

In 1990, the farm wife and stay-at-home mother of two young children said she decided to learn more about computers and how they could be incorporated into the family farm operation. That quest whetted her appetite for further education, leading to more classes and the realization that she could teach computer classes. Schulz was offered a part-time position teaching agricultural computer classes at Northeast. "I was so excited," she said. "I would never have thought after going through all I did to finish my degree that I would have a job off the farm that was an ag job!" Her children, Zach and Molly, are now adults. Schulz remains actively involved in the farming operation raising corn, soybeans and alfalfa; they also run a cow-calf operation. As a teacher, she brings real-life application of agri-business operations to her classrooms.

While teaching she went on to continue her education and earn an associate of applied science degree in data processing/computer programming from NECC and a bachelor of science degree in Business Administration of Technical Studies. She is also completing several graduate courses in the Agricultural, Leadership, Education and Communication master's degree program at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Schulz is the current vice president of the Nebraska Agriculture Technology Association (NeATA), and actively involved with the Nebraska Women in Agriculture and South Dakota Women in Blue Jeans conferences. She plays many roles in agriculture.

"I'm proud to be a woman in agriculture," Schulz said. "I love agriculture!"