

## Region 2

Two candidates are running for the Region 2 Director position for a 3-year term.

### Lowell Schafer - 57

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*Incumbent*

Family: Wife - Pat; Sons - Brandon (Wife Monica) - Manage Our Hog Operation, Brian (Wife Heather) - Manage Our Beef Operation; Daughter - Jodi (Husband Joe) - Special Education Teacher/Administrator; 9 Grandchildren

Employment and business experience for past five years

Our farm is a family owned livestock operation. Our beef cow/calf operation is a 500 breeding female seed stock enterprise. The hog operation is a 1600 sow herd with majority farrow to wean. We finish approximately 3000 hogs/year. We operate 830 acres of land with all acreage committed to grass and forage for our cow herd.

Current boards serving on and principal activity of the entity

AgStar Director since 2003, AgStar Board Vice Chairman 2009, Audit Committee Chairman 2006-2009, Audit Committee Member 2003-2009, Member of AgStar Young Beginning Farmer Committee 2003-2009. Director & Secretary of Minnesota Beef Council.

Affiliations/memberships

Member of St. Joseph's Church in Red Wing, Co-Chair of Charity and Justice Commission, a member of local, state, and national Cattlemen's Association and the local, state, and national Pork Producers.

Education

Graduate of Goodhue High School.

Hobbies

I have many interests and goals. Presently 9 grandchildren are the best hobby.

What is your vision for the future of agriculture?

Ag production was the first real model of small business in the American economy. That model was strong because of the innovation, honesty, work ethic and resilience of the American farmer. Although there have been huge changes in production methods and farm business structures, these characteristics are alive and well in American Agriculture. It is interesting that many of the suggested solutions to our economic troubles mention the small business model. Given that we produce a true necessity and knowing the people involved in agriculture, I view agriculture's future with optimism. Tremendous opportunities remain for the American farmer.

## Region 2

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What role do you see AgStar playing in the future of agriculture?

Agriculture has always been a capital intensive business and that is not going to change. Being a reliable source of that capital has to be the primary role of AgStar. With that capital comes an ever increasing demand for services. We must continue to provide the top programs and people to fill those demands. AgStar has a very good program for Young Beginning Farmers. We should expand these programs beyond providing financing to encouraging and enabling these young people to be effective spokespeople, role models, and leaders in the rural communities. AgStar should continue to help and encourage agri-business and those businesses that enhance the quality of life in our rural towns and communities.

What issues do you feel will impact agriculture on a county, state and federal level?

The big issues at the state and local levels will be land use, environmental concerns, funding for schools and adequate infrastructure. As the Federal deficit grows, the ability to maintain the safety net for farm prices may be in jeopardy. The threat of the returning estate taxes and other asset transfer taxes will also be a concern.

If elected to the Board of Directors, what direction do you think AgStar should take on these issues?

Given the diverse nature of AgStar members, AgStar can provide a broad and accurate overall picture of what policies and legislation would be beneficial for our farms and rural communities. With this in hand, the best political value of AgStar is as a respected source of information for our elected leaders. AgStar should encourage its members to become involved and share their views. (The best solutions come from good debate.)

What important lessons have you learned in your business career?

As a fifth generation farmer, I've had the opportunity to study what was done by those that came before me and build on it. I have had the opportunity and challenges of growing a business with enough room to provide for the next generation. I've learned the value of gathering information, collective decision making, compromise, and leadership. Optimistic but realistic goal setting is how I look ahead. When it comes to decision making, I feel you can never obtain too much information.

Are there any other comments you would like to share?

Rural America is now going through some tough challenges. I have spent my entire life on the farm and the past six years as an AgStar Director. All of these experiences have convinced me that the answer to tough times requires effective leadership at the civic, business, and family levels. I have held numerous leadership positions in my life and have also learned from them. AgStar is an effective leader and I am proud to say I have been a part of that. I truly love what I have been blessed to do for a living and I bring that same passion to my position on the AgStar Board. If re-elected, I pledge that my commitment and contribution to this leadership position will be caring and effective.