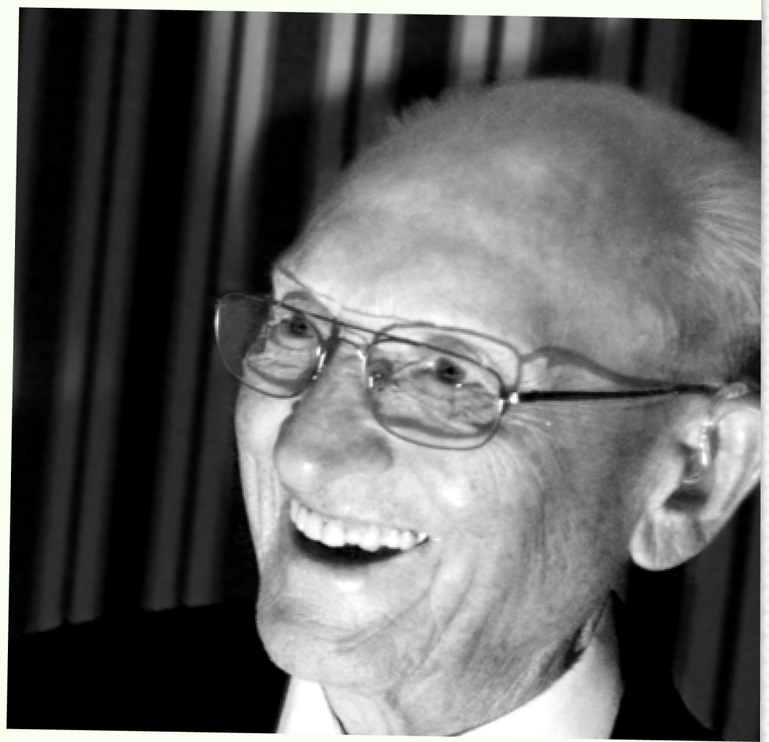
Retired Extension Agent Still Working Hard at 100



Lloyd Hunsaker, 2008

Lloyd Hunsaker couldn't meet for an interview until after 2 p.m. First he had to take care of his responsibilities delivering Meals on Wheels to 16 senior citizens in Cache Valley. Once his deliveries were finished, he talked of his other projects: moving sprinkler pipe, caring for large vegetable and flower gardens at his Logan residence, mowing the yard and a summer project of tearing down an old barn on his property, hauling soil and planting grass and alfalfa.

That's a busy schedule for anyone. But it is a particularly busy schedule for a 100-year-old.

Hunsaker, a retired USU Extension county agent and administrator, turned 100 on Sept. 30, 2008. Interestingly, the organization where he worked approximately one-third of his life turned 100 in 2007.

He said the secret to living for a century is being blessed with good health and keeping busy.

"I never had a moment when I wasn't busy and having work to do," he said. "And I still have work to do!"

Extension was the beneficiary of that work for more than a third of a century. Hunsaker graduated from USU in 1935 and was hired as an agricultural agent in Piute County the next year. He then transferred to Cache County as an agricultural agent in 1943 and later worked as Extension dairy specialist. In 1956, he became supervisor of agricultural programs. He later was county agent supervisor and finally associate director for Extension until his retirement in 1970.

Noelle E. Cockett, vice president and dean for USU Extension and agriculture, applauds Hunsaker's contribution to Extension.

"It's people like Lloyd who make Extension what it is," she said. "We appreciate his many years of service and dedication to an organization that is roughly his same age. His contributions as a county agent and an administrator have been an asset throughout the state."

Hunsaker fondly remembered his relationships with the people in Extension. He said they were always very good to work with.

"I developed special relationships with the other county agents," he said. "They would call from all over and I'd visit their counties and we would work on problems together. The best job I ever had was as a county agent."

He recalled a conversation with USU President Louis Madsen. Madsen asked Hunsaker how he liked his new position in the dairy department.

"I told him it was dead up here," Hunsaker said "I was used to being in the county where things were moving. He told me I would get used to it. I did. I had to. Luckily I had a great staff of people to work with. But I missed being out working as a county agent and helping educate the farmers."

During his tenure with Extension, Hunsaker saw many changes, including a shift to work more with the urban areas.

"We had to start working to meet all needs, not just those in agriculture and home economics," he said. "The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program was just beginning. The 4-H clubs were expanding, and it was wonderful to see the value of those programs to the youth."

Clark Israelsen, Extension agriculture agent for Cache County, said that even though Hunsaker retired from university service more than 30 years ago, people still talk about his impacts. Hunsaker made a difference for many people and was especially influential with his leadership in community development and dairy science.

"I have known Lloyd as a university professor, church and community leader and caring friend," said Israelsen. "He is one of those unique individuals who always bring out the best in others."

In addition to Hunsaker's university assignments, he was also heavily involved in community, professional, church and family service. He served as a stake president for the LDS Church for 15 years and as president of the Logan LDS Temple from 1973 to 1977. He and his wife, Thelma Layton, had four children and 18 grandchildren. She passed away in 1990, and he later married Sonja Wettstein, who worked for Extension for 15 years in the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program.

"We married when Lloyd was 82," she said. "We have now been married for 18 years, and I plan to keep him for a long time yet."

And as Hunsaker said, he still has work to do. He has meals to deliver, sprinkler pipes to move, projects to work on and a garden to tend.

"That is what is so wonderful about Lloyd," Israelsen said. "He is always forward thinking. He has one of the most impressive vegetable and flower gardens in Cache County. He enjoys managing his well-fenced pastures. But most importantly, he plans for the future as if he were a young man." ■

Lloyd Hunsaker, 1965

Lloyd and Sonja Hunsaker