

Director Candidates: Region 2 - Wis. (1-year term), Candidate 2 of 2



Charles Crave

66 years old
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Farm Credit Member Since: 1978

Family: My wife, Joni, and I have been married 40 years. We have four adult children, Karl, Jordan, Andy and Marlee.

Jordan and Andy are partners in the business. Marlee resides in northern Wisconsin. Karl, Jordan and Andy's spouses are also involved in the business. Joni and I have nine grandchildren.

Brief Description of Agricultural Operation and Employment/ Business experience for past five years: I'm a founding partner of Crave Brothers Farm, LLC. Since the very beginning, I've focused on being the chief administrator of business functions. As a result of a business-like approach, the farm has developed into a 3,000 head dairy and replacement operation. We also have a cheese factory, digester and agronomy operations. I've been a partner with three brothers, two sons, a nephew and even initially with my UW Farm and Industry Short Course professor.

Boards or Committees in the past five years (and principal business): I am serving on the board of the Wisconsin 4-H Foundation as well as the Wisconsin Rural Opportunities Foundation. Both organizations have been impactful for my family and community. This spring I was elected to the Waterloo School Board.

Community Involvement/Government Service: Community involvement has been a focus for Joni and me. We both have been 4-H leaders. One of the highlights for me was being a guest of honor at the 60th anniversary of 4-H in Taiwan. We are committed to our faith. We're involved in the parish, Knights of Columbus and have taught religious education for a combined 40 years. I've previously served on the local FCS board in the 1990s and was also a Professional Dairy Producers (PDPW) board member.

Education: As a graduate of the UW Farm and Industry Short Course, by hunkering down with a full class load I was able to receive a three-year certificate in two years. My family has availed itself to numerous educational forums over the years. It is necessary to lean in, not just show up.

What is your vision for the future of agriculture? What a tremendous change has occurred in agriculture. Thankfully so many have been able to transition. None of us would care to make a living working like a peasant. My vision involves more than the farm. Really, how can we work with our stakeholders to develop a common vision? How can that vision be implemented? Land, capital, cattle, technology and value-added will be constantly in the works. What is most important are the people and relationships that can make modern agriculture flourish.

What do you believe are the primary issues facing agriculture and Compeer Financial? There is a broader spectrum of beginning, operational and transitional challenges than most of us realize. The cost of land compared to its earning ability is partially what forced many of our ancestors to migrate to our country. Land ownership can be a barrier for so many today.

The knowledge to compete in a commodity market is formidable. Specialty markets are brutal too. Thus, is Compeer in a position to work with those who need us the most? With smaller families we'll be seeing the transition of farms, both land and operations, to an increasing number of non-family farmers. Compeer must be prepared to meet both parties' needs.

Why I want to serve on the Board of Directors of Compeer Financial? The well roundedness of a board is paramount to its effectiveness. The experience I can offer involving the dairy farm, cheese factory and digester operations, as well as business transitioning is relevant to the board's function. The Farm Credit System has been there for my family. Your vote would be appreciated so I can be there for yours.