

**Profile of
Gary Onan**

**Chair and Professor of Animal and Food Science, University of Wisconsin–River Falls
2019 Regents Teaching Excellence Individual Award Recipient**

Highlights from nomination materials:

- PhD, MS, and BS, Meat and Animal Science, UW-Madison.
- Has taught a variety of general as well as discipline-specific courses across both lower and upper divisions over his nearly 21-year career at UW-River Falls (UWRF); appreciated by colleagues for his versatility in teaching a wide variety of courses, as well as his willingness and ability to fill in and provide quality instruction during instructor vacancies or for special course needs; has been invaluable to the Department and College in establishing and maintaining a quality Animal Science program; regularly advises 50 or more students.
- Supervises numerous undergraduate research projects, including some within the McNair Scholars Program; has mentored student managers and workers in the animal enterprises on the UWRF Mann Valley Farm.
- As Chair of the Animal and Food Science Department, successfully leading the Animal Science program during a time of significant enrollment growth and rapid programmatic change; Animal Science is now the largest program at UWRF and has added an emphasis in Companion Animals, both to meet industry needs and better serve pre-veterinary medicine students.
- Co-authored the following two books with a long-time Romanian colleague: a laboratory manual for general introductory Animal Science courses, *Animal Production, Practical Exercises for Veterinary Medicine*, and a general swine management text, *Alternative Swine Management Systems*, currently going to press.
- Highly sought after as a judge for county and regional fairs in Wisconsin and Minnesota, often serving in that capacity for 20 to 25 fairs each summer; for his support and assistance with livestock judging, he received the 2014 Friend of the County Agent Award from the Wisconsin Association of County Agricultural Agents even though he did not have a formal appointment in Extension.
- Other select awards/honors: UWRF Distinguished Teacher Award (2015); College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences (CAFES) Outstanding Teacher Award (2006).

In Gary Onan's own words:

- “It is crucial for maintaining a high level of instruction for students that one be engaged in the industry one is teaching about. It is also crucial for the institution that its members be of service to broader industry and society. Because of the significant impact youth livestock activities had in my early life, and because of their importance as a pool of potential Animal Science students, I devote a considerable amount of my energies to supporting those activities.”

In the words of colleagues:

- “Along with other members of the Animal and Food Science Department, Dr. Onan works to provide meaningful undergraduate research opportunities for students. This is especially important for students who want to be competitive in veterinary school placements, participate in the McNair program or are planning to pursue a graduate degree.” —*David Travis, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, UW-River Falls*
- “He has a deep interest in and commitment to students and their successes. His general philosophy and style of teaching, along with personal experiences in agricultural production that are brought into the classroom, result in a combination rarely encountered these days in a college professor. And it fits with our students in CAFES in a very powerful and meaningful way.”
—*Dale J. Gallenberg, Dean, College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences (CAFES), UW-River Falls*