



Born April 4, 1916 in Williamsville, IL in Sangamon County, John R. Cooper is the fifth generation of Coopers to have lived in the area that is known today as the Williamsville School District.

John grew up on Pleasant Hill Farm east of Williamsville. The farm was a grain and livestock enterprise most of his life. When John was young his parents also owned and operated Pleasant Hill Dairy where they milked cows, bottled fresh milk, and daily delivered to a customer base in a horse drawn wagon. John also delivered the evening paper to about a hundred customers after school. John was a 4-H member and he showed cattle at the Illinois State Fair. He found time to play sports in high school and graduated valedictorian of his class from Williamsville Community High School in 1934.

He went to the University of Illinois where he graduated with an Ag Degree in 1938 and became an Ag Instructor for the next four years in Pike County IL (New Canton and Griggsville). His teaching career was cut short when WWII broke out. He served his country as an army officer for the next four years. He was in Europe near the Elbe River when that conflict ended.

John returned to the farm in the spring of 1946 and started farming with his parents. He married Doris M. Casteel ( a farm girl and WWII Nave Wave from Detroit, IL) in 1948. Together they worked hard and managed to keep the original 240 acre family farm intact over the years. The farm is currently operated by their son and daughter-in-law, Roger and Joyce Cooper, their son-in-law and daughter, Tom and Susie Foran, and their grandson, Kevin Foran. In March of 2011 the Pleasant Hill Farm has been owned and physically farmed by the same bloodline for one hundred years. Doris passed away in 2001 but John still lives on the farm in the house his parents built when he was born.

John has been a lifelong Farm Bureau member. He has served on the Williamsville School Board, the HIA Committee, the FHA Committee and various Williamsville Methodist church committees over the years. He has been a member of that church since he was eight years old. John Cooper has stayed “true-blue and devoted” to country, to family, to the family farm, to hard work and his long career in agriculture all his life.

**2011 Recipient  
John R. Cooper  
Williamsville, Illinois**