

**Oregon Agricultural Education Foundation / Century Farm & Ranch Program
NEWS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release
December 26, 2008

Media Information Contact:
Glenn Mason, Program Coord.
Ph: (503) 297-5892
Email: orcentury@juno.com

**SESQUICENTENNIAL AWARDS TO BE GIVEN TO 5 OREGON FARM &
RANCH FAMILIES AT STATE'S BIRTHDAY PARTY**

The Oregon Century Farm & Ranch Program, celebrating its 51st year of recognizing active family-owned farms and ranches throughout the state, is pleased to announce the honorees for the 2nd year of its newest award program, the Sesquicentennial Award. On February 14, 2009 in a special ceremony at the capitol building as part of a day long celebration held there for the state's 150th birthday, the award will be given to 5 Oregon families who have continuously farmed portions of their original family acreage for 150 years or more.

Families being honored in 2009 are: **Donald C. Goodrich & Eunice M. Goodrich**, William Goodrich farm, founded in 1848, Yamhill County; **Marian L. Gray**, Jeremiah Rowland farm, founded in 1844, Yamhill County; **William Hoyt**, Ira Hawley farm, founded in 1852, Lane County; **Leland R. Montgomery**, William Grimes Montgomery farm, founded in 1855/1866, Linn County; and, **Rebecca Owen**, Nicholas Sprenger farm, founded in 1852, Linn County. All of this year's Sesquicentennial Award families received their Century Farm award status in the 1958/1959 years.

The families will be recognized by the program directors of the Oregon Century Farm & Ranch Program and speakers representing its partners, including the Oregon Department of Agriculture, the Oregon Farm Bureau, and the Oregon Department of Parks & Recreation, among others. The public is invited to join the families, legislators and partners in support of this notable accomplishment and its reflection of the spirit and endurance of Oregon family farmers and ranchers. A special joint resolution passed by Oregon's 74th Legislature in honor of the inaugural year of the Sesquicentennial Award also will be read that day. The award ceremony will be in Hearing Room F, in the Capitol

Building at 1:00 p.m., with a reception following at 2:00 p.m. in Hearing Room 50, located in the lower level of the Capitol.

Of the 1,082 recognized Century Farms and Ranches in Oregon, there are over 400 that were established prior to December 31, 1859, the year Oregon became a state. It is estimated that a percentage of those early farms and ranches are no longer in the same family ownership, having been sold out of the family during the last fifty-one years since the Century Farm & Ranch Program was established in 1958.

Many of those that do remain have deep roots in Oregon agriculture thanks to the Oregon Donation Land Law of 1850. That federal legislation validated legal title to land already claimed by white settlers in Oregon Territory and served as an inducement to encourage additional immigration to Oregon by offering substantial acreage of free land. William Robbins, in his book, Landscapes of Promise: The Oregon Story 1800-1940, states that before the act expired in 1855, an estimated 25,000 to 30,000 immigrants, mostly of Euro-American descent, entered the territory. Many of those new immigrants had a farming background, so most of the early Donation Land Claims (or DLCs) were staked out in the fertile Willamette, Umpqua and Rogue valleys. In the later 1850s, as most of the river valley bottomlands were already claimed, settlers began to seek out unclaimed land in the coastal lowland valleys or into the higher-elevation interior valleys, and finally to eastern Oregon.

The Oregon Century Farm & Ranch Program is administered through the Oregon Agricultural Education Foundation (OAEF) in Salem and is supported in part by a partnership of the Oregon Farm Bureau, Oregon State Parks & Recreation Department, Oregon Department of Agriculture, and the Oregon Historical Society, along with additional funding from the Wheat Growers Association, the Hazelnut Marketing Board, Tillamook County Creamery Association, other agri-businesses, various Oregon county farm bureaus, and many individuals.

###

The Oregon Century Farm & Ranch Program is a program within the Oregon Agricultural Education Foundation. OAEF is an Oregon 501(3) non-profit organization and is included in the Oregon Cultural Trust's list of organizations eligible for the Cultural Trust matching gift program. For more information about the OAEF, please call (503) 399-1701, or send inquiries by mail to Janice Reed, OAEF, 3415 Commercial Street S.E., Salem, OR 97302.

