

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

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**INAUGURAL SESQUICENTENNIAL AWARDS TO BE GIVEN TO
14 OREGON FARM & RANCH FAMILIES**

The Oregon Century Farm & Ranch Program, celebrating its 50th year of recognizing active farms and ranches throughout the state, is pleased to announce the inaugural award honorees of its newest program, the Sesquicentennial Award. The award will be given to 14 Oregon families who have continuously farmed portions of the original family acreage for 150 years or more.

Families being honored in 2008 are: Robert Friedrich (Clackamas County); Jack E. Johns (Clackamas County); William MacFarlane (Clackamas County); Victor Ted Birdseye II (Jackson County); Stephen Ford / Ford Farms (Lane County); Dwane Richardson (Lane County); Donald & Dona Coon (Linn County); Frank E. Herrling (Linn County); Joyce Jackson Martinak & Art J. Martinak (Linn County); Richard Rice (Linn County); James & Timothy Heater (Marion County); Dean Arthur McKay (Marion County); Guy & Mary Ann Scott (Marion County); and, Ann D. Vasconi & John H. Davenport (Marion County).

The families will be honored in a special ceremony to be held at the Capitol campus in Salem on February 14, 2008, Oregon's Statehood Day. The public is invited to join the families, legislators, program board members and other friends of the Century Farm & Ranch Program in recognizing the spirit and endurance of these Oregon family farmers and ranchers. A special joint resolution by Oregon's 74th Legislature will be read in the Senate at that same day. The award ceremony will be in the Veteran's Services Administration Building at 700 Summer Street, N.E. at 12:30 p.m., with a reception following at 1:30 p.m. in the Oregon Department of Agriculture Building, 635 Capitol Street N.E., which is adjacent to the Veteran's Building.

Of the 1,076 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 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.

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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.