



Oregon Century Farm & Ranch Program

A program of the Oregon Agricultural Education Foundation

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

September 13, 2023

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Oregon Century Farm & Ranch Program

Awards Century Status to 11 Farms & Ranches in 2023 & holds ceremony at Oregon State Fair (Salem, OR) –

Five farms and ranches were honored this year as Century Farms or Ranches and six will be awarded the Sesquicentennial (150-year award) they are from six different Oregon Counties bringing the total number of Oregon Century Farms and Ranches to 1,257 & Sesquicentennial to 57. The 2023 families were honored at this year's awards ceremony at the Oregon State Fair on *Saturday August 26, 2023.*

2023 Century Farm Families being honored are:

Craig Family Ranch: Founded in Summerville, Oregon in Union County in 1901 by Daniel & Lydia Craig. Applicants are Dallas and Bonnie Craig.

The Craig family immigrated to Oregon from Iowa in 1889 and settled in the Grand Ronde Valley in Union County Oregon after their wagon had broken down. In 1901 Daniel and Lydia Craig purchased 70 acres of land in Summerville from E. Smith, where they started a large garden to feed their family, and eventually built a new home. The couple had five children; the farm would later be purchased by their eldest son George and his wife Dot in 1938. George was known as a skilled woodworker and made small furniture and toys. In 1949 the farm was purchased by Thomas and Dorothy Craig; they primarily raised cattle, sheep, and pigs along with hay and grain for livestock. Thomas also trained and worked teams of horses and would buy and sell horses for extra income. He also had an interest in timber and would become an active tree farmer. Their son Dallas and his wife Bonnie took over the farm, building a herd of cattle and sheep, along with growing hay, oats, barley, and wheat. They improved irrigation on the farm and remodeled the house Daniel and Lydia originally built. Unfortunately, in 1991 the house was destroyed by fire. The day-to-day farming of the land is managed by Dallas' brother Stephen and the farmland is currently rented out for cattle grazing. The Craig's continue to engage in



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management of timber on the land. A new home was built by Dallas and Bonnie on the same site as the original in 2011. Dallas is the great grandson of founders Daniel and Lydia Craig.

Maney West Farm: Founded in Umatilla County in 1882 by David Gordon Jr. Applicant is Benjamin Maney.

In 1872, David Gordon Jr. left Pennsylvania with his wife and baby son, Fred, and settled first in the Stanfield area of Umatilla County. David and his wife divorced, and she returned to Pennsylvania. In 1882, with his dream of a wheat farm, David and son, Fred, moved to a wind protected property in the rolling hills of South Juniper Canyon, 20 miles north of Pendleton. David hand-dug a well, built a two-room homestead over a hand-dug cellar, and began clearing the land of tall sagebrush and bunch grass. In 1888, David Gordon married Lieuvicia Newkirk and they settled into their Juniper homestead where in 1890, Florence, their first of nine children was born. In 1892, the U.S. General Land Office granted David's claim on his 160-acre homestead and that same year, Chester C. Gordon was born. During the next decade, David added six more quarters to his farm and realized his goal of raising wheat with the help of hard working hired men, mules, and horses. In 1916, his sons Chester and Charles were old enough to take over the farm operation as a partnership. In 1917, Chester Gordon married Esther Narkaus, moved into the 1882 homestead, and a year later, their only child, Norma, was born. In 1919, Chester bought out his brother's share of the partnership. At that time, Esther devised her own moneymaking contribution to the farm by raising chickens and selling whatever eggs she did not need to grocery stores. At 40 cents per dozen, she nearly paid for all the groceries for her family and hired men. For three decades, she cared for 300 chickens and would clean and pack 10-15 dozen eggs every week to go to Pendleton. During the '30s, improvements were a two-bedroom addition to the 1882 house, a new chicken house, and a diesel-powered tractor to replace the mules. In the '40s, the farm built a large wooden grain bin for bulk-storage of 20,000 bushels and added an adjoining 640 acres. In 1946, Chester's son-in-law, Fred Westersund, became a partner in the farm operation. Fred converted five surplus US Army GI trucks into farm trucks; and in the '50s, the farm added a large metal machinery repair shop and a new ranch-style house for Fred, Norma, and their two daughters. In 1976, Patrick Maney (husband of Fred's daughter, Trudy) began farming with Fred Westersund and soon after the farm added mustard and canola to its crop rotation. In 1993, field terraces were built on all the slopes to prevent erosion. Today, Pat's son Benjamin Maney operates the farm. Ben and wife, Julie, live in David Gordon's original 1882 house while they build a new home on the property. Their young son, Rhett, is the sixth generation of family on the farm. Ben is the great-great grandson of founder David Gordon Jr.

Orchard View: Founded in The Dalles, Oregon in Wasco County in 1923 by Walter & Mabel Bailey. Applicant is Brenda Thomas.

In 1921, Walter Bailey moved from Centralia, Washington to The Dalles with his wife Mabel and in 1923 purchased 100 acres of farmland. This became the roots of Orchard View. Walter maintained sole ownership of Orchard View Farms from 1923-1966. He planted and grew several types of crops on that land, including apples, apricots, cherries, grapes, peaches and



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prunes. In 1925 Walter's brother Fred purchased land adjacent to the farm and leased it to Orchard View. In the following few years, Walter bought an additional 380 acres to expand crop production. In 1956 his son Donald purchased the land and became sole owner of Orchard View Farms. He incorporated the business in 1962 with a stipulation that shareholders must be direct bloodline descendants and/or legal partners of a bloodline descendant of Don Bailey. Don oversaw more land expansion for the business, and eventually built the original packing facility and cold storage warehouse. Don's son Bob Bailey took over as General Manager in 1980, and under his leadership the farm transitioned to a primarily cherry-growing farm. His leadership in signing several land leases also helped to grow Orchard View's farming land significantly. In 2009 Bob's daughter Brenda (Bailey) Thomas was promoted to President of the company and is the 4th generation of Bailey to run the business. In her tenure Orchard View has continued to grow in both the orchard side as well as with technological advancements in packing and warehousing. In the early days of the farm, there were only a select few varieties of cherries being grown. Today over 20 different varieties are planted in Orchard View orchards, with new varieties coming along every few years (only Bing cherries remain from the original varieties grown in the early days). Yield and technology has also significantly improved over the early days. Orchard View is capable of harvesting upwards of 400 tons of cherries per day, and its packaging line can handle over 35 tons of cherries an hour. There are currently two generations of family members involved in the farm operation, and Brenda Thomas is the great granddaughter of founder Walter Bailey.

Pimm Farms, Inc.: Founded in Linn County in 1917 by John Pimm. Applicants are the Pimm Family Limited Partnership/Eric Pimm.

In 1917, the John Pimm family moved from Philomath, Oregon to Linn County where he purchased a farm near Shedd, Oregon. Early crops included a prune orchard, wheat, and vetch. In 1921, a portion of the farm was deeded to John's son Frank, so he would have a place to live while he taught at the Greenback school across the road from the property. In 1924 Frank inherited the remainder of the property from his father. He raised prunes until 1938 when he took out the orchard to grow more profitable crops. The following year, Frank married Myrtle Stevens, and they expanded the farm property while raising a family. They had two children: Richard and Mildred. Richard and wife Doris Smith would spend time in Idaho farming, returning occasionally to Linn County help his parents at the family farm. Richard and Doris would buy property in nearby Halsey and go on to run a successful blueberry operation which employed hundreds of local youths for many years until the mid-1990s. They also purchased farmland in Canada where their son John eventually moved with his family to raise crops & cattle. The farm stayed under Myrtle's ownership until 1992, when it was transferred to Richard and his sister Mildred. Richard's eldest son, Jack, had begun farming full time with his father in 1972, and the farm was eventually transferred to him and his wife Bonny Jo Fieber in 1995, with this farm eventually being transferred into the Pimm Family Limited Partnership in 2000. Today Pimm Farms grows a variety of grass seed and cover crops. Eric Pimm is the great-great grandson of founder John Pimm.



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Roth Farm: Founded in Albany, Oregon in Linn County in 1923 by David & Elizabeth Roth. Applicant is Larry Roth.

In 1923, David and Elizabeth Roth purchased 160 acres from Henry McElmurry in anticipation of the marriage of their son Ed to Ann Schrock. The existing house was razed and a new home was built for Ed and Ann; they lived on the farm until 1962, retiring to a parcel two miles north. Early crops included barley and oats for livestock and clover for seed. Hogs were the main livestock enterprise on the farm with Berkshires being Ed's preferred breed. After Ed and Ann's retirement, their son Larry and his wife Myrna took over daily operations of the farm. Larry continued the hog operation until 1982; he also harvested lumber from the black walnut trees originally planted by McElmurry. A number of items have been made from these trees including coffee tables, bookcases, and smaller items like bowls. Larry added annual ryegrass, tall fescue, and winter wheat. Larry has retired from farming but continues to live on the property and still has an active role in taking care of the farm, hosting an annual homemade donut and cider making day where family members gather to press apples from a tree Ed planted 100 years ago. Larry rented farmable acreage to his nephew Robert Sherfy, great grandson of founder David Roth. Larry's son Brian began using the hog barn in 2002 and has raised hogs ever since. Larry's daughter Brenda purchased two acres of the property in 2004 for a house and flower farm. Larry Roth is the grandson of David and Elizabeth Roth.

2023 Sesquicentennial Families being honored are:

Harnisch Farms Inc.: Founded in Linn County in 1863 by JJ Davis . Applicant is Esther Harnisch.

In 1863, JJ Davis purchased land in Linn County from John Miller. JJ had been living in Oregon since 1852, first settling in Santiam City where he helped run a ferry and store. After he married Mary Miller, the couple purchased land and started to farm. JJ died in 1889 and the farm then passed on to his son JB Davis, who had a farm of his own, but returned to the family farm with his wife Rosa. Early crops on the farm included wheat, barley, flax, vetch, oats, potatoes, and field corn. When JB died in 1904, CB Harnisch, JB's nephew, inherited the property. CB Harnisch was known for his hog butchering; he was also a skilled carpenter and had built the first house on the property in 1885 for the JB Davis family. During his tenure on the farm he also built the Honeymoon house and several barns. CB's son Henry took over the farm in 1948 and along with his brothers Walter and Albert. They grew some of the earliest sugar beet seed for the West Coast Beet Seed Company. They also grew beets during World War II, as well as cannery squash, and grains. Along with farming, Henry was an engineer, and he would step back from farming operations to work for Pacific Power and Light Company as a field estimator. Albert's son David and his wife Esther would take over the farm in 1967. David was very active in FFA and was awarded the American Farmer Degree. David would introduce a number of crops to the farm over his tenure including peppermint for oil, filberts, grass seed, wheat, dill for oil, garlic, and numerous specialty seeds. A small herd of beef cows have also been maintained on the property. In 2006, 1.5 acres of mixed conifers were planted by the family and the forest is managed and thinned, with trees reaching 50 feet in height. Currently there are three homes



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located on the property. Esther lives in the main house, which replaced the original home built by CB Harnisch. Her daughter Beth and her husband Craig Christopherson live in an apartment attached to the main dwelling. The Honeymoon House is used as a rental. Esther's other daughter Jane and her husband Guy Coram live in a home located next to the former site of the mint still. Esther Harnish is the great great granddaughter of founder JJ Davis.

Midway Ranches: Founded near Heppner, Oregon in Umatilla County that later became Morrow County in 1873 by Albert Wright. Applicants are Gerald & Dianna Wright Hoeft.

In 1872, Albert Wright along with his wife Julia Ann Barry Wright and children purchased 120 acres of land on Rhea Creek in what is now Morrow County. The family had arrived in Oregon from Stueben County, Indiana and first settled in Oregon on a 316-acre donation land claim in Oregon City in 1853 before moving to Eastern Oregon. Albert and Julia would retire in 1883, leaving their son Silas Albert Wright to take over. He, along with his brother George Evans Wright, acquired land to expand their ranching operations. Due to Silas' declining health, his sons Alonzo and Moses helped with farming operations, and in 1916, Silas' third son Orian leased the ranch at the age of 18. Orian, with the help of his brother Silas Delbert, worked the ranch, raising sheep, cattle, and hay. Orian later suffered a heart attack and asked his son Orian Albert to come back to the ranch to help out. Orian Albert would end up taking over the ranch, plowing new ground for wheat fields, improving alfalfa fields, and making diversion ditches to prevent soil erosion. The ranch received a Century Farm & Ranch designation in 1973. Orian Albert's second son Dean would join his parents and became a partner in the ranch in 1978. They named their partnership "Wright's Century Ranch." Orian's daughter Dianna Wright moved to the ranch in 1980 with her husband Gerald Hoeft and joined the partnership. The ranch is now named Midway Ranches, reflecting the homestead's history of serving as a mail stop between The Dalles and Canyon City in the 1880's. The original homestead is now a museum of their family history. Dianna is the great great granddaughter of founders Albert and Julia Ann Wright.

Loosley Ranch: Founded in Klamath County in 1873 by John and Lucy Loosley. Applicants are Randall and Jeanie Kizer.

In 1871, John Loosley traveled with his wife Lucy and eight of their 11 children to Klamath County from the Willamette Valley. John intended to operate a gristmill for the US Government at Klamath Agency but was so taken with the level grassland in the Wood River Valley he filed for a homestead in 1872 on the banks of a crystal-clear stream near the fort. The couple started out raising beef cattle until the winter of 1889-90, when a particularly bad winter caused the loss of the entire herd. After that the family began dairy farming and were instrumental in starting the first creamery in Klamath County, producing full-cream American cheese. The only two times they exhibited the cheese at the State Fair, they won first place both times. Their son Fred and wife Mary took ownership of the ranch around 1894 and expanded the property by 100 acres. They continued to run the dairy but found that transportation was a problem as the milk and butter would freeze and not travel well. Fred and his brother George built a flat-bottomed sternwheel steamboat they named the "City of Klamath" in hopes of navigating the Wood River to move freight more quickly. Fred and Mary transferred the ranch to their son Raymond



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Loosley and wife Willeska in 1923. In addition to the dairy, Raymond raised clover and harvested and sold clover seed for many years. In 1945 the dairy herd was lost to banges disease. After that he raised hay until 1963, when the farm was transferred to his daughter, Maxine Loosley Kizer, and her husband, Hollis Kizer. Maxine and Hollis returned to the ranch to raising beef cattle, which continues to this day. Randall and Jeanie Kizer took ownership of the ranch in 2010. Randall is the great-great grandson of founders John and Lucy Loosley.

Lee Family Farm: Founded in Milton-Freewater, Oregon in Umatilla County in 1871 by Hiram Benoni Lee. Applicants are John Dale and Deborah Lynne Barker Lee.

In 1867, after serving in the Union army in the Civil War, Hiram Benoni Lee and his family emigrated to the Walla Walla Valley over the Oregon Trail. In 1871, Hiram filed a land claim for property close to his mother and stepfather. He built a small cabin and used the bunch grass on the land for livestock grazing.

Hiram married Sarah Emily Moore of Mt. Airy, NC in 1877 and they would go on to have six children. They built their original home on the property in 1877/8. Later, beginning 1866 and again in 1892, two large brick structures became the stately farm home for the Lees. Hiram was active in the community; he served on the Dry Creek school board and was elected an Umatilla County commissioner. When Hiram retired in 1915, his youngest son, Robert Hamilton and wife Ada Ann Bannister Lee, took over farming operations. The farm is situated on an earthquake fault line and in 1936 the brick home was severely damaged with several repairs needed. It also led to continued issues with irrigation on the property; because of the subsequent shortage of water, the Lees have experimented with a variety of crops including wheat, barley, hay, dryland sunflowers, milo, peas, dry peas, and straw. In 1957, Robert Hamilton turned over operations to John Eldon and wife Patricia Ann Porter Lee and their family of 6 took up residence on the Dry Creek farm. Additional irrigated land was purchased 6 miles to the north and other crop varieties were farmed. In 1972, John D. Lee became a partner in the Lee farming operation. In December 1974, John and Deborah Lee were married and in 1976 moved to the Lee Century Farm. They were able to restore and extend the 1878 home in 1981 to modernize the structure. In 1989/1990 John and Deborah established Lee Century Farms, a gourmet food company. The company sold marinated vegetables and wheat snacks until 2014, winning many national and international awards. In 2011, John and Debbie purchased a small farm 8 miles from the Lee Family Farm and moved after 38 years on Dry Creek. In 2006, son, Nathan Lee married Nika Carter Lee. They took over the Lee home and farmstead in 2011 and live there with their three sons, Henderson, Tillman and Kipton Lee. John and Deborah's two sons Andrew John and Nathan Howard Lee are committed to managing the family farm along with their families. Today the farm raises dryland wheat and straw, horses, chickens, ducks, and goats. Six generations of Lees have lived on this revered 1871 homestead near Milton-Freewater, Oregon. John Dale is the great grandson of founder Hiram Benoni Lee.



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Pimm Farm Inc.: Founded in Halsey, Oregon in Linn County in 1870 by Robert L. Smith. Applicants are the Pimm Family Limited Partnership/Eric Pimm.

In 1870, Robert L. Smith purchased 240 acres from Anderson Deckard who homesteaded the property in Linn County. Robert raised cattle and grain until his death in 1911. The plot of land was originally split between his four sons, Walter, George, John, and Angus. Two years later, Dr. William E. Smith and Clara Smith Beal, also children of Robert, purchased the property from their other siblings. William and his family farmed the land until 1941, when Clara and her husband moved back to the farm from Camp Adair. They would later buy out William's share of the property. Clara's grandniece, Doris Smith, began farming the property in 1947 with her husband Richard Pimm. Doris and Richard continued to farm the property after Clara's death in 1979, with Clara's daughter Enid Johnstone inheriting ownership of the farm. When Enid died in 1996, her three children inherited the property and immediately sold it to their cousin and tenant Jack Pimm, Doris' son. In 1999, Richard, Doris, Jack, and his wife Bonny, put their holdings in a Family Limited Partnership and passed this farm onto Jack and Bonny's sons, Eric and Rick. Today, Eric Pimm, owns and operates Pimm Farms with his wife and young sons. Early crops on the farm were vetch, wheat, ryegrass, clover; it also was used for raising livestock. Today Pimm Farms grows a variety of grass seed and cover crops. Eric is the great-great-great-grandson of the founder Robert L. Smith.

Thayer Farm: Founded in Linn County in 1853 by Peter and Nancy Cyrus Powell. Applicants are Robert Dale and Vicki Lynn Thayer (Trust).

Peter Powell emigrated over the Oregon Trail in the spring of 1852 with his father, Joab Powell, and several members of their family. Peter was married to Nancy Cyrus Powell and already had four of their eleven children at the time of their move to Oregon. They settled near the Santiam River and their Donation Land Claim of 1853 encompassed part of a valley near the base of Green Peter and Bald Peter Mountains. Family genealogy history suggests that Peter Powell may have been the namesake for Green Peter and Bald Peter Mountains. The farm's early livestock included cattle (Herefords, then Angus), sheep, and turkey. Peter and Nancy's sixth child, Rachel Arminta Powell took over the farm in 1906 and continued raising cattle. In 1915 she transferred the farm to her daughter Goldie and her husband Richard Wolfenbarger. A large portion of the original Donation Land Claim was sold to Richard and Goldie's son, William (Bill) Wolfenbarger in 1946, the same year he married Edith (Connie) Constance Lansberry. In subsequent years, other portions of the original DLC were sold to other family members, splitting up the original acreage into several parcels. In 1964 Bill Wolfenbarger was able to purchase these parcels from other family members to consolidate the acreage to 220 acres of the original land claim into one parcel. In 1991 the farm was placed into the Edith C. Wolfenbarger Trust and shortly after the farm transitioned from a livestock and cow/calf operation to establishing a tree farm, grass hay growing/baling operation, and renting pasture for others' cattle. In 2004 the farm was deeded to the Thayer Trust, and the great-great granddaughter of founder Peter Powell, Vicki Lynn Thayer and husband Robert, work the farm today. The farm continues to focus on trees (which include Douglas Fir and Willamette Valley Pine) and grass hay. The seventh generation of family is already involved in the farm with an eye toward



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continuing the long legacy of this Sesquicentennial Farm. Vicki Lynn Thayer is the great-great granddaughter of founders Peter and Nancy Cyrus Powell.

Every Oregon farm and ranch has a unique history and special family story. The Oregon Century Farm & Ranch program encourages agriculture families to share, with a broader audience, these stories. By promoting family stories, rich cultural heritage is passed down to future generations while educating Oregonians about the social and economic impact of Oregon agriculture.

The Oregon Century Farm & Ranch Program began in 1958 to honor farm and ranch families with century-long connections to the land. To qualify for a century or sesquicentennial award, interested families must follow a formal application process. Members of the Application Review Committee review each application against the qualifications, which include continuous family operation of the farm or ranch; a gross income from farm use of not less than \$1,000 per year for at least three years out of five prior to application; and family members must live on or actively manage the farm or ranch activities. Application documentation may include photos, original deeds, personal stories, or other historic records. These records help support Oregon's agricultural history by providing valuable information about settlement patterns or statistics on livestock and crop cycles. All documents are archived for public access.

Award recipients receive a certificate signed by the Governor and Director of the Oregon Department of Agriculture. Historic roadside signs are imprinted with the founder's name and the year the ranch or farm was established.

The Oregon Century Farm & Ranch Program is administered by the Oregon Agricultural Education Foundation. It is supported by a partnership among the Oregon Farm Bureau, the State Historic Preservation Office, OSU University Archives, and by generous donations of Oregonians. For information about the Oregon Century Farm & Ranch Program, contact Andréa Kuenzi, Program Coordinator, at 503-400-7884 or cfr@oregonfb.org. The application deadline for 2024 is May 1. Please see our website for more information: www.centuryfarm.oregonfb.org