



# TENNESSEE CENTURY FARMS

The Land • The People • The Legacy

A joint program of the MTSU Center for Historic Preservation and the Tennessee Department of Agriculture

Summer 2004

Vol. 1 Issue 1

## Welcome to the first edition of the Tennessee Century Farms newsletter!

Twice each year you, as part of the select group of over 900 families who own a certified Tennessee Century Farm, will receive this publication. It is intended to address issues and events that concern Century Farmers and to keep the Century Farm files current.

The Tennessee Century Farms Program was begun by the Tennessee Department of Agriculture in 1975. As the nation celebrated its bicentennial in 1976, certificates and plaques were awarded to 630 Century Farms by the department. For the next several years, as the department accepted additional applications, it became apparent that this collection illustrating over 200 years of agrarian history was extremely important. The files recorded family and community history, listed crops and livestock grown by succeeding generations, and included photographs of the people, buildings, and the land.

In 1985, Tennessee Commissioner of Agriculture William Walker III contacted the Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee State University to request assistance in preparing a book on the Century Farms. Dr. Carroll Van West authored the 1986 publication, *Tennessee Agriculture: A Century Farms Perspective*, which featured the stories of 783 farms along with photographs and inserts on many agricultural topics. With the joint production of this publication, a long-standing partnership between the department and the Center began. Since 1985, the Center for Historic Preservation has administered the Century Farms Program as one of its ongoing statewide projects.

The Center publicizes the program and maintains the valuable research collection of photographs and information in nearly 1,000 files submitted by Century Farm families. In the past 20 years, the Center has brought the stories of Tennessee's Century Farms to a

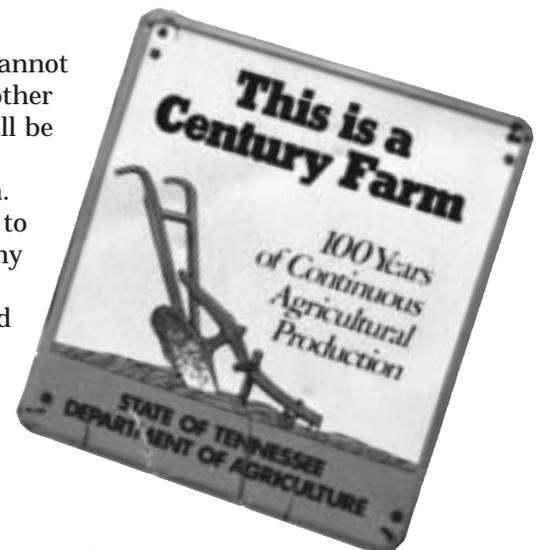
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## Century Farm Signs Available Again

Yes, those yellow metal signs proclaiming "This is a Century Farm," seen on barns and fences across Tennessee, are once again available. Many farms have been certified in this program since these signs were issued to the "charter" Century Farm owners in 1976. Now every Century Farm family is being offered a new sign, compliments of the Tennessee Department of Agriculture.

As part of its 150th anniversary celebration, the Tennessee Department of Agriculture will be presenting signs to Century Farm owners at special programs planned for the four regional state fairs this fall. A form enclosed with this newsletter allows you to make your reservation at the event closest to you (see details on p. 4). Please mark your calendar and reply before

July 30. If you cannot attend the fair, other arrangements will be made for you to receive your sign. We look forward to visiting with many of you at the regional fairs and to seeing these distinctive signs proudly displayed across the state.



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## The Tennessee Ag Tag!



The Tennessee Ag Tag is a specialty license plate. Proceeds from sales of the Ag Tag go to the Agricultural Development Fund, which supports statewide, innovative marketing activities; agricultural youth organizations such as 4-H and the FFA; and agricultural and forestry awareness education and marketing programs. The Century Farms program also receives Ag Tag dollars.

More than \$1.5 million has been granted to date to help Tennessee's Century Farms and farmers and food producers, all through the Agricultural Development Fund—the fund Tennesseans help build when they buy Ag Tags.

Ag Tag projects are aimed at building farm income, helping Tennessee's agriculture industry stay strong through programs that expand or create new markets for Tennessee products, and educating the state's citizens about the importance of Tennessee's farms and forestlands.

The red barn and rising sun of the Ag Tag have become the state's unifying symbol of all aspects of Tennessee's diverse agricultural industry. As part of the state's "Pick Tennessee Products" logo, the Ag Tag barn and sun now appear on many Tennessee food products, and many agricultural groups, from county fair boards to statewide producer organizations, include the image as part of their own logo designs. The Ag Tag creates unity and more recognition for Tennessee agriculture, like a traveling billboard.

When Tennessee farmers stay in business and Tennessee farms remain intact, Tennessee's famous countryside stays country—and that's priceless. Tennessee's beautiful farmlands, forestlands, and rural communities are the foundation of our state's culture, values, and economy, which benefits all its citizens. An Ag Tag is an investment in Tennessee's agricultural past and future. All Tennesseans can help keep the "country" in Tennessee's countryside by contacting their county clerks to purchase an Ag Tag.

## Century Farms Certified since January of 2004

**GODWIN FARM** (photo shown at right)  
County: Perry  
Owners: Herchel and Mary Anne Godwin Perdue  
Date Founded: 1891

**WALKER FARM**  
County: Williamson  
Owner: Carl H. Walker  
Date Founded: 1900

**HAMPTON FARMS**  
County: Obion  
Owners: William and Anna Thomas Hampton  
Date Founded: 1884

**DANIEL'S DAIRY FARM**  
County: Dickson  
Owner: Johnny Wyatt Daniel  
Date Founded: 1861

**JOE D. AND ESTEL SMITH REED FARM**  
County: Cannon  
Owner: Estel Smith Reed  
Date Founded: 1904

**ROBINSON BROTHERS FARM**  
County: Wilson  
Owner: James H. Robinson  
Date Founded: 1904

**MIDVALE FARM**  
County: Giles  
Owner: Carter H. Witt  
Date Founded: 1830

**SULLIVAN FARM**  
County: Dickson  
Owners: Bobby and Hilda Sullivan  
Date Founded: 1796

**BLUFF VIEW FARM**  
County: Dickson  
Owner: Donald Mark Garton  
Date Founded: 1871

**HAYES AND HAYES FARM**  
County: Clay  
Owners: John Mark Hayes and Mark Newton Hayes  
Date Founded: 1902



The GODWIN HOME, according to tax records, was built in 1883. William George and Sarah Meacham Godwin bought the farm and home in 1891. Herchel and Mary Anne Godwin Perdue renovated the home and moved in June 28, 1999. Melanie Perdue Pace, Carter and Mary Rachel are the sixth generation of Godwin descendents to reside in the house.

## The National Register and Century Farms

The National Register of Historic Places recognizes and documents historic buildings and other cultural resources worthy of preservation. Along with providing recognition and a detailed statement of a property's history and significance, National Register listing identifies properties for planning purposes and in so doing assures that these properties will be taken into account in the planning of federally funded or licensed projects.

Entry on the National Register *does not* place any obligations or legal restrictions on the use or disposition of the property by the owner. National Register designation is not the same as historic district zoning or local landmark designation, which often requires maintenance and repair standards. National Register designation requires owner consent and does not encourage public access to the property. Additionally, owners of National Register properties may apply for a 20% income tax credit for expenses associated with certified rehabilitation of income-producing buildings. Farm buildings including farmhouses and/or out-buildings are possible candidates for this program. For further information on the income tax credit program, contact Louis Jackson at the Tennessee Historical Commission, which administers the tax credit program. Jackson's number is (615) 532-1550.

Before a property is considered for the National Register, extensive research and field evaluation for the preparation of a National Register nomination form is conducted by the Tennessee Historical Commission or some other qualified individual or organization such as the Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee State University. The nomination of the property is then presented for approval to the Tennessee National Register Review Board at one of its regularly scheduled meetings. Upon review and approval by the board, the nomination is forwarded to the National Park Service in the United States Department of the Interior in Washington, D.C., for final consideration for the National Register.

Tennessee's Century Farms are well represented on the National Register of Historic Places and several are in the process of being nominated. For example, the Miller Farm in Dickson County and the McDonald Craig Farm in Perry County are current nomination projects for graduate research assistants and staff at the Center for Historic Preservation. For further information on the National Register process or to have your farm assessed for eligibility, please contact the Center for Historic Preservation at (615) 898-2947 or the Tennessee Historical Commission at (615) 532-1550.

## State Agri-Tourism Initiative Seeks to Build Farm Income

Interested Century Farm owners may find ideas and expertise to help them build farm income through the Tennessee Agri-Tourism Initiative. With the financial assistance of USDA's Rural Development; the Tennessee Departments of Agriculture, Tourist Development, and Economic and Community Development; the University of Tennessee Center for Profitable Agriculture; and the Tennessee Farm Bureau Federation, a campaign was launched in the spring of 2003 to increase farm income and make a positive impact in rural communities through agri-tourism.

Agri-tourism is defined as an activity, enterprise, or business that combines primary elements and characteristics of Tennessee agriculture and tourism and provides an experience for visitors that stimulates economic activity and impacts both farm and community income. More than 200 current Tennessee agri-tourism enterprises have been inventoried for information to help promote the industry and to learn more about what makes operations successful. Farm visits, driving tours, and other on-the-farm activities may be of interest to owners of Century Farms.

Print promotions can be found in the nationally distributed *Tennessee Vacation Guide*. Radio advertisements are being broadcast encouraging citizens to visit local agri-tourism venues, and a comprehensive agri-tourism Web site is available. Training materials are being prepared now and area farm management specialists with the University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service are available to help potential and current agri-tourism operators to explore agri-tourism possibilities or improvements for their operations.

Century Farm owners and others interested in learning more about the Tennessee Agri-Tourism Initiative may visit [www.picktnproducts.org](http://www.picktnproducts.org) or contact an area farm management specialist. In West Tennessee,

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**WELCOME****Continued from p. 1**

state, national, and international audience through presentations, articles, booklets, brochures, educational materials for teachers, a traveling exhibit, and the Internet. Developing nominations to the National Register of Historic Places and alerting planners and the Tennessee Department of Transportation to the presence and significance of Century Farms in every county is also a service of the Center.

Commissioner Ken Givens of the Tennessee Department of Agriculture and Dr. Carroll Van West, director of the Center, support the tradition of cooperation between the Department of Agriculture and the MTSU Center for Historic Preservation. This partnership ensures the continuation of the program that identifies, documents, recognizes, interprets, and encourages the conservation and continued production of every Tennessee farm that has been owned by the same family for at least 100 years.

**AGRI-TOURISM****Continued from p. 3**

contact Chuck Danehower, Ripley, at (731) 635-9551 or e-mail to cdanehow@utk.edu. For Middle Tennessee, contact Jerri Lynn Sims, Clarksville, at (931) 648-5725 or e-mail to jsims@utk.edu. For East Tennessee, contact Alan Galloway at (931) 526-4561, e-mail to agallow2@utk.edu, or Alice Rhea, Maryville, at (865)982-5250, e-mail to arhea@utk.edu.

**CENTURY FARM SIGNS****Continued from p. 1**

These signs are a timely symbol of the individual contributions of the Century Farm families, the state's agrarian history and heritage, and the continuing importance of agriculture to Tennessee.

**CENTURY FARM SIGN PRESENTATION DATES****Appalachian Fair**

Gray  
Thursday, August 26, 2004,  
3:30-5:00 p.m.

**Tennessee State Fair**

Nashville  
Sunday, September 12, 2004,  
2:30-4:00 p.m.

**Tennessee Valley Fair**

Knoxville  
Friday, September 17, 2004  
3:30-5:00 p.m.

**Mid-South Fair**

Memphis  
Friday, October 1, 2004,  
3:30-5:00 p.m.

Please make plans to attend the fair closest to you and send in your reservation form (enclosed with this newsletter) before July 30, 2004.

THE TENNESSEE CENTURY FARMS PROGRAM, a joint effort of the Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee State University and the Tennessee Department of Agriculture, documents, recognizes, interprets, and supports the conservation of farms that have been in continuous production and owned by the same family for at least 100 years.

**Please direct comments regarding this newsletter and inquiries about the Tennessee Century Farms Program to:**

CANETA HANKINS  
Director, Tennessee Century Farms Program  
Center for Historic Preservation  
Middle Tennessee State University, Box 80  
Murfreesboro, TN 37132  
chankins@mtsu.edu  
(615) 898-2947

**Please direct inquiries about Century Farm signs to:**

LYNNE WILLIAMS  
Tennessee Department of Agriculture  
Ellington Agricultural Center, P.O. Box 40627  
Nashville, TN 37204  
Lynne.Williams@state.tn.us  
(615) 837-5081

This newsletter may also be viewed online at <http://histpres.mtsu.edu/histpres> Click on "CHP Initiatives" and the "Tennessee Century Farms Program."

**MIDDLE  
TENNESSEE**  
STATE UNIVERSITY

This Tennessee Century Farms newsletter is produced as a public service by the Center for Historic Preservation at MTSU in cooperation with the Tennessee Department of Agriculture.

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# TENNESSEE CENTURY FARMS SIGN PRESENTATION REPLY FORM

Please help us to plan for you to receive your sign by completing the following and returning this form to us no later than July 30, 2004.

County \_\_\_\_\_ Farm Name \_\_\_\_\_

Name of owner who will attend and accept the sign\* \_\_\_\_\_

\* If more than one owner will attend the event, please provide their names, addresses, and phone numbers on the back of this form. Likewise, if another member of the family will represent the owner and receive the sign, please let us know who that person is and provide a phone number and address.

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # (     ) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Web site \_\_\_\_\_

**I will attend the Century Farm sign presentation at the location I have checked below.**

(Please refer to the dates and times of the presentations on page 4 of your newsletter)

Gray       Nashville       Knoxville       Memphis

Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ complimentary admission tickets. (We can send a maximum of four tickets.)

I will not be able to attend the presentation, so please let me know how I can receive my sign.

When we receive your reply and know that you plan to attend the presentation, we will forward your complimentary admission tickets for the date of the program and additional details about the presentation. If you send in your reply and have not received your tickets at least one week prior to your event, please call **Lynne Williams at the Tennessee Department of Agriculture at (615) 837-5081 or e-mail Lynne.Williams@state.tn.us.**

**Return this form by fax or mail by July 30 to:**

TENNESSEE CENTURY FARMS PROGRAM

Center for Historic Preservation

Box 80, MTSU

Murfreesboro, TN 37132

Fax: (615) 898-5614