

Oregon Century Farm & Ranch Program Awards 2021
Family Narratives
As of 8/6/21

Century Awards:

Alderson Farms: Founded in Polk County in 1921 by Richard Alderson.
Applicant is Dennis & Ron Alderson.

In 1921, Richard Alderson purchased a 60-acre dairy farm north of Independence Oregon. He married Audrey Holmes in July 1921 and they moved to the farm at that time. The first crops included 50 hens that Audrey tended and sold eggs to local grocery stores to supplement the milking operations of the farm. The couple had three children and William the son spent his entire life on the farm. In 1943, William added 30 acres adjacent to original farm. Up until 1956, all the farm acreage was used to produce feed for livestock and the dairy operation. At that time Richard and William purchased a neighboring farm and started raising grass seed and grain crops to sell. A tragic fire in 1972 destroyed the barn and 32 Jersey cows, and it was then the farm transitioned to produce grass seed and grain exclusively. Today the grandsons of Richard, Dennis and Ron, currently continue the production of commercial grass seed and grain crops. Dennis and Ron are the grandsons of the found Richard Alderson.

Barnett Farm: Founded in Polk County in 1921 by Martin & Tressa Conger.
Applicant is Linda M. Barnett.

Martin Conger came to Oregon in 1902. He worked in the hop fields around Buena Vista. He married Tressa in 1908 while still working in the hop fields. In 1910, they moved to a 187 acre farm they leased until purchasing it in 1921. The early crops raised on the farm were wheat, barley, grasses, sheep, chickens, and hay. The orchard had apples, royal Anne cherries, pears, , pie cherries, and walnuts. They also raised a variety of grapes, berries and a annual garden. Martin farmed with horses early on until he bought a tractor. The farm was taken by government in 1941 for Camp Adair during World War II. After the war was over they were able to buy back their farm in 1947 and Martin farmed until about 1958. His grandson Alan Benedict leased the farm in 1958. The farm passed to Martin & Tressa's 3 daughter's upon his death in 1971. It transferred to granddaughter Linda Benedict Barnett and husband Frank in 1976. Alan continued to farm it during these years. Linda's son in law Leo Mulkey is the current farmer and today the farm raises meadowfoam, radish, red clover and grass seed. The orchard still remains as well and is harvested every year. Linda is the granddaughter of original owners Martin and Tressa Conger.

Cruickshank Brothers Farms: Founded in Polk County in 1920 by David & Annie Cruickshank
Applicant is John W. Cruickshank.

David and Annie Cruickshank bought a state of the Art 60 head Dairy operation called Oak Ridge Stock Farm in July 1920. The early crops raised were wheat, grey oats, white oats, barley, alfalfa for hay, milk cows (dairy), pigs, chickens, goats, and farm/forest timber. Work was accomplished by horses at first and most of the grains raised stayed on the farm to feed livestock. Upon David's passing in 1943 sons Bob & Bill farmed with their mother until her death in 1952 when they took over. They continued to raise similar crops although they only had a few milk cows and transitioned to beef at that time. They farmed together until about 1968 when they divided the farm in half and they each continued to farm with their own families. Bill raised mainly small grains and beef cattle. His son John W. started to take over the farm in the 1970's. Upon his father Bill's death in 1979, he inherited his dad's portion and continued to

raise wheat, oats, barley, grey oats, Austrian peas for hay, and pasture for the cattle. He added to the farm in 1989 when he purchased 43.66 acres. In 2017, John Jr., his son started to farm with him and now the farm primarily raises grass seed. John W. is the grandson of the founders David and Annie Cruickshank.

Norman Farm: Founded in Clackamas County in 1921 by John & Anna Norman. The applicant is Shirley Norman.

John & Anna immigrated from Sweden in 1914. They purchased the property consisting of 200 acres in 1921. A small log home was on the property it had no doors or windows until they installed them. In the early years John worked to clear the timber and brush from the property. They raised turkeys, dairy cows, and strawberries in the later years. He built a 2-story barn in 1931 with the help of neighbors and friends. The first story held livestock and equipment and second story lots of feed and hay. The couple had 3 children. They added additional acreage to the farm during their time there. They raised Hereford cattle and hay for the animals. John passed in 1962 and Anna had her son Edward and wife Shirley move out to farm at that time. Some of the acres were sold to neighbors and the other children to get to the 40.78 acres it is today. Edward built a new barn after the original barn became weak and in ill repair. Edward raised alfalfa. In the early 1990's, instead of hay and cattle they decided on Christmas trees. Today the farm raises Christmas trees, timber, wildlife, recreation, pasture for horse boarding, and the home sites. Shirley is the surviving wife of Edward who was the son of the founders John & Anna Norman.

Ogle Ranch: Founded in Lake County in 1919 by Clarence Wilson(C.W.) "Jim" Ogle. Applicant is James W. Ogle.

Clarence "C.W." Ogle purchased the land in 1919 with his brother-in-law George McCoul. C.W. and his family moved from Nebraska to Oregon in 1908. At twelve years old he began working transporting cargo with his team of horses and wagon, including bricks for the new courthouse, before the purchase of the ranch. He and his brother-in-law farmed the property together for two years until its division in 1921, the same year C.W. married his wife, Nellie. C.W took the north section of the property, now known as Ogle Ranch. The early crops and livestock were barley, wheat, Hereford cattle and feeder calves. From 1935 to 1940 the ranch became a dairy. It was one of only two grade "A" dairies in the area. It became a dairy once again in 1945 when C.W.'s son, James W. Ogle, returned home from WWII. In 1970, after all of the dairies in Oregon were consolidated, there wasn't a need for local milk, so the ranch again returned to primarily beef cattle. During that time it operated under the name of Ogle and Son. James Ogle lived with his wife Dorothy on the ranch their entire married lives, until her passing in 2019. Their daughter, Sara Ogle Lea, now owns part of the original parcel (south section) that George McCoul owned at the 1921 division. James is still very involved in the ranch, which currently raises beef cattle in a cow/calf operation. James is the son of founder C.W. Ogle.

R.T Gilliland Farm: Founded in Umatilla County in 1914 by Robert T. & Willie Gilliland Applicant is Donald H. Bensenl.

Robert T. (R.T.) purchased 160 acres that was homesteaded by the Smith family in 1914. He added another 160 acres from Ephrus Shafer in 1919 as well as another 160 acres in 1920 from Frank Curl. R.T. married Willie and they had 3 daughters two of which died as children of diphtheria. The early crops raised where dryland wheat, alfalfa, and some milk cows. They farmed with horses until about 1919. He built a house, barn, granary, and sheds during this early period. A 1923 fire destroyed most of the home except the living room; it was salvaged and moved with a team of horses across the creek to site where new home was built in 1926; the living room was made into the kitchen in new home. This home still stands today and is occupied by family. Willie passed away in 1939 and R.T.'s brother Bayard and

his sons helped him keep farm going at the time. Wheat and Alfalfa are still the main crops of the farm today. Donald H. Bensele is the grandson in-law of founder R.T. Gilliland.

Rueck's Grandview Farm: Founded in Washington County in 1921 by George Sr. & Anna Marie Rueck. Applicant is Marvin C. Rueck.

George Rueck, Sr. and Anna Marie Rueck, who were German immigrants from Russia, arrived in this country in 1903, and after being in the garbage business in Portland for several years, purchased the original 53 acre farm which began as a dairy farm in 1921. They arrived on the farm with their 9 children. The 2 oldest worked off the farm, but the others all helped by milking the cows and other chores, while Anna Marie churned butter with a small churn and made butter to sell. The boys with George, Sr. would deliver the butter to Portland. Over time, the farm transitioned to a poultry farm and the eggs were delivered to Portland, as well. Berries were grown on the farm in the early days as well. Eventually, the profits of the egg business diminished and the farm was transitioned by George, Sr. to walnuts and hazelnuts which is the main crop to this day. They were handpicked in the early years, but then they transitioned to the use of harvesting machines. More property was purchased over the years so now it totals approximately 100 acres. Sons George Rueck, Jr. and Carl Rueck and daughter, Katherine, were deeded the farm by George, Sr. in 1956. The four children of Carl and George Jr.; Marvin, Dolores, Kathleen, and Eileen (Don's widow) are the grandchildren of founders George, Sr. & Anna Rueck---and make up the owners of the Rueck Grandview Farm, LLC.

SC Ranch LLC: Founded in Lake County in 1918 by S.B. (Sol) Chandler. Applicant is Lytle & Tamara Ann Simms.

S.B (Sol) Chandler came to the area and homesteaded multiple claims in 1871. He met and married wife Hattie and they had six children. He continued to homestead property in the area as did Hattie. As his land increased after acquiring homestead claims from others, so did his sheep. In 1899 they made a substantial 10,000 acre purchase that also included 7500 sheep. In 1915, he sectioned off 1600 acres and sold it. The purchaser wasn't able to meet his financial obligations and in 1918 he foreclosed on the property and took ownership back and that was start of the SC Ranch. Sol and Hattie's daughter Lottie married Lytle and he worked as Sol's sheep manager. Due to grazing regulations, Sol's sheep empire began to crumble and in 1926 he deeded the 1600 acres he'd foreclosed on to Lytle and Lottie. With that deed though came a substantial mortgage for Lottie and Lytle. They raised their own band of sheep as well as dairy cows. They stayed viable by selling potatoes and cream to a creamery in Lakeview. After World War II the ranch started to transition to cattle and planted more wheat, oats, barley to raise. They still had sheep but were increasing their cattle numbers as well. In the 1970's less grain was produced and more cattle and hay. Today the ranch raises black Angus cattle and hay with fields of alfalfa and triticale in the valley near the ranch. Lytle is the great grandson of the founder S.B. Chandler

Timber Hill Farm: Founded in Polk County in 1920 by David & Annie Cruickshank. Applicant is Kenneth David Cruickshank.

David and Annie Cruickshank bought a state of the Art 60 head Dairy operation called Oak Ridge Stock Farm in July 1920. The early crops raised were wheat, grey oats, white oats, barley, alfalfa for hay, milk cows (dairy), pigs, chickens, goats, and farm/forest timber. Work was accomplished by horses at first and most of the grains raised stayed on the farm to feed livestock. Upon David's passing in 1943 sons Bob & Bill farmed with their mother until her death in 1952 when they took over. They continued to raise similar crops although they only had a few milk cows and transitioned to beef at that time. They farmed together until about 1968 when they divided the farm in half and they each continued to farm with their own families. At this split Bob's son Kenneth began to transition over the majority of the farm

responsibilities. They added a variety of crops due to the added irrigation capabilities out of Mill Creek. While they still raised grains, dairy cows, and sheep they also added red clover, mint, and perennial ryegrass for seed. This addition of crops enabled many improvements to the farm over the years. Ken's son Bryce and his family continues work side by side with Ken and make improvements. Kenneth is the grandson of the founders David and Annie Cruickshank.

Welter Family Farm LLC: Founded in Marion County in 1919 by Albert F. and Mary B. Welter. Applicant is Welter Family Farm LLC (Tom Welter).

Albert, Mary, & 3 boys moved to Sublimity area in 1914 where his parents had located 2 years earlier. They had 2 more children before purchasing the farm in 1919 on Fern Ridge Road in Stayton. Albert worked outside of the home as a clothing salesman but Mary raised all 8 children on the farm. Their oldest son Edward leased the farm from his parents for a few years in the late 1930's. Their second oldest son Frank purchased the farm in 1945 after he returned from serving in the US Navy during World War II. The early crops were timber, grass, grain for feed for the livestock. Livestock included cattle, sheep, pigs, chickens and a few milk cows. Apples, and berries were also grown for family use. Frank and Margaret raised their 4 boys on the farm from 1946 through 1970. Today the farm is managed in a family living trust in which Tom is the manager. The main crops today are timber and Christmas trees. Tom is the grandson of the founders Albert and Mary Welter.

Tucker Ranch: Founded in Umatilla County in 1916 by Eugene "Eaph" Tucker. Applicant is Samuel E. Tucker.

Eugene Tucker was one of 11 children of John and Susan Tucker who settled in the Weston Mountain area in the 1880's. He was born in 1889 and moved from the home on the mountain in 1916 when he purchased the present century farm known as the "Tucker Home" now. His only son Wendell was born on the farm and lived and worked there his entire life. The early crops were wheat, hay, & potatoes. The Weston mountain potatoes were a fairly well known crop in the 1930's. That continued up until World War II when the farm was transitioned to a wheat/pea combination until about 1985. Since then the ranch has been in CRP as well as raising beef cattle on the ranch. Wendell's son Samuel also grew up in the Tucker home. His daughter, Molly now lives with her children in the same house where her great grandfather, Wendell, was born in 1919. Samuel is the grandson of the founder Eugene "Eaph" Tucker.

Von Derahe Orchards: Founded in Umatilla County in 1914 by A.A. & Lois E. Bixby. Applicant is Von Derahe Orchards LLC (Mike & Chuck Von Derahe).

A.A. & Lois first purchased a 67 ½ acre parcel, a portion of the Century Farm, in 1908. In 1911, they sold a portion of the original parcel to an unrelated person, A.A. Keeler. Before Mr. Keeler could pay off the property he passed away and the deed was never officially transferred to him. His estate assigned the parcel back to A.A. and Lois Bixby in 1914. The early crops on the farm were prunes. They also raised a milk cow and chickens for family use. A.A. died in 1928 and the farm was left to Lois until her death in 1942. They had five children that were deeded the farm at that time. In 1952, after a series of transfers within the siblings, Luella Bixby was deeded the current Von Derahe property about 2.6 acres. Shortly after that it was sold to her son Marcus Von Derahe. His passion was farming and he added 35 acres adjacent to the original 2.6 acres. It was all planted in orchards. Occasionally when trees were small cannery crops such as corn was planted between the rows. Today the orchard produces Granny Smith apples, Fuji apples, Gala apples, Bing Cherries, Italian prunes, and Empress and President plums. Michael & Charles Von Derahe are the great grandsons of founders A.A. and Lois Bixby.