



Keeping It in the Family...

The "Century & Heritage Farm" Program

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How old is your tree farm? Has the property passed from generation to generation, remaining in your family for a hundred years or more? The Century and Heritage Farm program is designed to recognize and honor those farms that have been in operation as a family farm over a long period of time and have played a significant role in Alabama history. Beginning June 1, 2014, the Department of Agriculture and Industries will accept applications for the 2014 Century and Heritage Farm program.

A "Century Farm" has remained in the same family continuously for at least 100 years, and currently has some agricultural activities on the farm. The farm must include at least forty acres of land and be owned by the applicant or nominee.

A "Heritage Farm" has been operated continuously as a family farm for at least 100 years. It must possess interesting and important historical and agricultural aspects, including one or more structures at least forty years old. The farm must be at least forty acres of land owned and operated by the applicant, who must reside in Alabama.

The idea for the Century and Heritage Farm program was born in 1976 when the director of the Alabama Historical Commission and a representative from the Alabama Department

of Agriculture and Industries met to discuss a way to recognize small family farms that had been in operation over a long period of time. It was decided that recognition should be given to these farms because they had played such a significant role in Alabama's history.

At that time, the population in rural Alabama was rapidly changing as people moved to urban areas. The number of family farms was also diminishing rapidly then as it still is today. It was agreed that farms with over one hundred years of ownership should be awarded a certificate to recognize this significant achievement, and the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries would administer this program. The first certificates of recognition were presented in December of 1977 at an Alabama Farm Bureau meeting in Birmingham. To date, over 560 farms have been recognized from all across the state.

If you feel your farm meets the above qualifications and you are interested in applying for the 2014 program, please contact Amy Belcher at (334) 240-7126 or by e-mail at amy.belcher@agi.alabama.gov. All applicants must complete an Ownership Registration Form supplied by the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries. The application deadline for the 2014 Century and Heritage Farm program is August 29. ☞