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news@mtsu.edu ■ 615-898-2919

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[341]STATEWIDE PROGRAM RECOGNIZES FOUR HICKMAN COUNTY FARMS

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CONTACT: Caneta Hankins, 615-898-2947

STATEWIDE PROGRAM RECOGNIZES FOUR HICKMAN COUNTY FARMS

Addition of Quartet of Farms Brings County's Designated Century Farms to 17

(MURFREESBORO)—The Lockett Farm, Tim Mathis Farm and the Mathis Angus Farms I and II, all located in the Duck River community of Hickman County, have been designated as Tennessee Century Farms, announced Caneta S. Hankins, director of the Century Farms program at the Center for Historic Preservation, which is located on the MTSU campus.

Gayle Lockett Mathis prepared the applications for each of these farms that continue the agricultural traditions of the area and illustrate the history and significance of family farming to Tennessee yesterday and today, Hankins said.

- The Lockett Farm, the oldest of the four farms, was founded in 1893 when Athelia Adeline Hassell and husband John Hardeman Hassell purchased 125 acres near her parents, Zebulon Hassell III and Nancy Totty. John and Athelia had three children: Clara, who died at birth, and Mary Z. and William Hardeman. Athelia outlived all of her children. She died in 1953 and is buried, along with her husband, in the Little Lot Methodist Cemetery.

The second owner of the farm was William Hardeman Hassell, who obtained the farm in 1928 through a life estate. Married to Minnie Bryant Easley, the couple had two children. Minnie suffered from tuberculosis, and four days after giving birth to her daughter, also named Minnie, she died. Eventually, William remarried and fathered three additional children. Livestock and field crops were raised on the farm during this time.

In 1954, a fourth cousin to Athelia and the great-great-great grandson of Zebulon Hassell II—Wilson Lockett and his wife, Clara "Tillie"—acquired the property. Wilson, who has been a full-time farmer since 1944, has been an active community volunteer. He helped to establish Hickman County Farm Bureau memberships by going door to door.

Wilson and his father Britt, with whom he farmed for more than 40 years, helped string the electric line and set poles for the Meriwether Lewis Electric Cooperative and cleared right of ways for telephone

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lines when these services were first offered. Wilson served on the board of the Farmers Home Administration and the USDA Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service. The Lockett farm has produced hogs, cattle, tobacco, corn, silage, wheat and hay. The Locketts had three children—namely, Stephen Wilson, who died in infancy, and Gayle and Judy. Both daughters were active 4-H members. Two grandchildren of Wilson and Tillie, Amanda and James Mathis, were active 4-H members and showed prize-winning swine and cattle. James earned the state's FFA degree, won 4-H Level II Swine at Round Up and received the 4-H VOL State Award. Today, Wilson and Tillie remain the owners of the historic farm. Their daughter, Gayle, along with her husband, Gary Mathis, and Gary's brother, Tim, are involved in the day-to-day farming operation that produces cattle and hay.

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- Along the Duck River in Totty's Bend are three family farms owned by the Mathis Family, including the Tim Mathis Farm, which was founded by Zachary Taylor Coleman in 1894. Married to Rhoda "Rody" Angeline Totty Coleman, the couple had seven children: Florence Malina, S. Lillian, A. Aden, Harrell S., Mollie, H. Alvin and Arthur L. On the 100 acres, the family raised corn, hay, hogs and cattle. In 1912, the founder's son, Aden, purchased the property. He and his wife, Louanna Harvill Coleman, also had seven children: Della, Mamie, W. Y., George, E. L., Leonard and Albert.

In 1957, Aden's son, Albert, acquired the land. According to the family's reports, Albert bought the property for his son, Paul Foriest Coleman, who was not yet 18 at the time. Albert kept the farm for a month and turned it over to Foriest, who then owned the property from 1958 to 1992. Foriest and wife Joyce were the parents of four children. On March 2, 1992, Foriest sold the farm to Tim Mathis, the great-great-grandson of the founder. Tim was an active 4-H member and showed cattle.

Today, the property pastures registered Black Angus cattle and holds five hog barns for the farrow-to-finish hog operation owned by Tim, his father Jimmy Mathis, and his brother, Gary Mathis. The University of Tennessee and Columbia State Community College have used the hog operation for judging team practices and classroom learning. In addition to colleges, school groups and Leadership Hickman representatives, 4-H members have also visited the farm.

Additionally, while managing the farm, Tim has also served two terms on the Hickman County Farm Bureau Board of Directors.

- Mathis Angus Farms I and II have related histories. In 1903, Harrell S. Coleman purchased 40 acres. Coleman was married first to Minna Hendrix, with whom he had two children, and then to Mattie G. Coleman. He and Mattie were the parents of five children. The second owners of the farm were Grady Mathis, the husband of Coleman's niece, Mamie Coleman Mathis, and Albert Coleman, Harrell's nephew. They and their families raised corn, wheat, cattle, hogs and hay. Today, James W. "Jimmy" Mathis, son of Grady and Mamie Coleman Mathis, owns the farm with wife Wilma.

According to the farm's Century Farm application information, farming has been the only life Jimmy has known. He began plowing with a mule at age 12 and bought his first tractor after graduating from Hickman County High School in 1946. As a teen, he showed

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cattle and had the Hickman County Farm Bureau Junior Farmer's Grand Champion Beef in 1945 and 1948. Today, Jimmy currently serves on the Hickman County Farm Bureau Board of Directors and as an elder at Twomey Church of Christ. He has been a longtime member of the American Angus Association, Tennessee Cattleman's Association and the Tennessee Pork Producers. He served as chairman of the Hickman County Agricultural Board and as a board member of the Tennessee Pork Producers and Hickman Farmer's Co-op. Jimmy and his wife Wilma, a Totty's Bend native, are the parents of two sons, Gary and Tim, and the grandparents of Amanda and James Mathis, whose maternal grandparents are the Lucketts. In 1905 A. Aden and Harrell S. Coleman, children of Zachary Taylor Coleman and Rhoda Angeline Totty, purchased 40 acres, which adjoined Harrell Coleman's original 40 acres. The brothers and their families raised corn, hay, hogs, and cattle. Grady Mathis, son-in-law of Aden, and Albert, the son of Aden, continued the family's —more—

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ownership in 1943. Wilma and Jimmy Mathis, the grandson of Aden and the nephew of Harrell, acquired this property in 1987. Jimmy, his sons Gary and Tim, and grandson James produce hay and registered Black Angus cattle on this and additional acreage. "The Century Farms Program congratulates the families, past and present, of the historic Lockett and Mathis Farms," Hankins remarked. "With these four farm additions, Hickman County now has 17 certified Century Farms."

About the Century Farm Program

The Century Farm Program recognizes the contributions of Tennessee residents who have continuously owned, and kept in production, family land for at least 100 years. Since 1984, the CHP at MTSU has been a leader in the important work of documenting Tennessee's agricultural heritage and history through the Tennessee Century Farm Program, and continues to administer this program.

The Tennessee Department of Agriculture began the Tennessee Century Farm Program in 1976 as part of the nation's bicentennial. Today, the TDA provides a metal outdoor sign, noting either 100, 150 or 200 years of "continuous agricultural production" to Century Farm families. To be considered for eligibility, a farm must be owned by the same family for at least 100 years; must produce \$1,000 revenue annually; must have at least 10 acres of the original farm; and one owner must be a resident of Tennessee.

"The Century Farmers represent all the farm families of Tennessee," Hankins said, "and their contributions to the economy, and to the social, cultural and agrarian vitality of the state, both past and present, is immeasurable. Each farm is a Tennessee treasure." For more information about the Century Farms Program, please visit its Web site at <http://histpres.mtsu.edu/histpres>. The Center for Historic Preservation also may be contacted via mail at Box 80, MTSU, Murfreesboro, Tenn., 37132, or by telephone at 615-898-2947.

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ATTENTION, MEDIA: To interview the farms' owners or request a jpeg of the Century Farm metal sign that is placed on designated properties, please contact the CHP directly at 615-898-2947.

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