

November 15, 1990

RON

TO: W J T, K L, S C, E F
FROM: R B

Several professors at Oregon State University, Corvallis have taken an interest in the Century Farm Program and are interested in undertaking a research project involving the study of the farms, as described on the attached, updating information, and an analysis which would include the publication of their findings.

I've encouraged them to pursue this project through conversations and meetings.

Three things come to mind-

1. this is a collaborative project between OHS/OSU
2. this is a good example of a project benefiting from an historical society-academic institution connection.
3. We will benefit greatly from their work

(the attached mention of Proposed Budget relates to a grant they are working from- they are not asking us for funding.

Ron- This is great. Keep EF + even Rick informed, as there may be a NEWS article or a Quarterly article out of it. News releases, too.
Kll

OREGON CENTURY FARMS:
A CASE STUDY IN SUSTAINABILITY

Kathy Goetz
935 W Isabella
Sebanon 97355
258-7517 Home
737-4515 OSU.

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS:

Sheila Cordray, Asst.Prof., Sociology
Mary Lynn Roush, Asst.Prof.Sr.Res., Crop & Soil Sci/Forest Sci
Kathy Goetz, G.R.A., Anthropology
Helene Murray, LISA Project Assoc., Crop & Soil Science
Barbara Judge, M.A.I.S. student, Historical Preservation

BACKGROUND:

In 1958, during the Oregon Centennial, the Oregon Historical Society began a program of certifying farms that had been held by the same family for at least 100 years as Century Farms. The first applications were taken at the 1958 State Fair and the program has grown to include almost 700 farms.

In addition to being owned by the same family for 100 years, the farm must never have been rented or leased and must be at least 10 acres in size and have provided a minimum income from farm uses for at least three of the five years preceding the application. Once certified, the farm remains a Century Farm even if ownership is transferred subsequent to the certification.

While keeping a farm in one family for one hundred years says nothing about the type of farming practiced, it is certainly one definition of sustainability and has the potential to tell us a great deal about successful family farms and family farming. An analysis of the cropping systems, rotations, and other farming practices used on these successful farms could point the way to additional research on sustainability. Particularly interesting would be a comparison of farming practices between Century farms which are still in the hands of the original families and those which have been sold.

OBJECTIVES:

The proposed research would have three phases:

1. Describe Century Farms in terms of locations, crops, family structures, and other information available from the applications on file at the Historical Society office in Portland.
2. Update information to follow the fate of these farms since registration, and to expand the database to include additional agronomic and social variables.
3. Analyze trends in cropping systems, agronomic practices, and social variables, using the Century Farms as a sample, to identify the agronomic and socioeconomic factors that influence the Sustainability of Oregon farms.

EXPERIMENTAL PLAN:

Phase 1: Describe Century Farms. Photocopies of the files on the currently registered Century Farms are necessary for this analysis. We propose to collect, code, verify, and analyze the data already in the Historical Society files for descriptive purposes.

Phase 2: Update database. We will follow the fate of the registered farms and broaden the range of variables for each farm. Current ownership of each Century Farm will be determined. In addition, all Century Farms registered with the Historical Society will be updated to include additional agronomic and social variables describing family structure, farm inheritance patterns, and cropping systems and practices. This update would require the administration of survey to all Century Farm residents. The names, addresses, year of founding of the farm, and year of certification are available from a database currently available to the project. We propose to make a telephone contact followed by a mail-out survey to collect the data.

Phase 3: Analysis. The update will allow comparisons of Century Farms still in the hands of the original family with those which have been sold during the past 30 years. In addition, trends over the last 100 years in agronomic practices and whole farm and farm family traits will be documented. We will look for correlations among agronomic, economic, and social factors, and Sustainability. From these relationships, we will hypothesize how these factors may influence or be influenced by the Sustainability of modern farms in Oregon.

The comparative and trend analyses will link with other Sustainable Agriculture projects at OSU. In particular, the NWF/OSU/Tilth Sustainable Agriculture project will interface with this study. Causal relationships that are hypothesized among the agronomic factors, economic factors, social factors, and Sustainability of Century Farms can be tested with the project model, through Soft Systems group process with growers, and with on-farm research.

PROPOSED BUDGET

Funds are needed primarily for data acquisition and input:

Salary (Hourly pay)	Student workers	\$3,400
Services and supplies	Photocopies	\$2,000
(printing and postage)	Telephone	1,600
	Survey	2,500
	Office supplies	500
	Travel	500
	Sub-total	\$6,600
		<hr/>
Total		\$10,000