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County honors Macomber Farms for century of production

Snohomish County will honor Macomber Farms during this year's Evergreen State Fair for 100 years of continued agricultural production.

Family members will be recognized during the opening ceremony of the fair, which is scheduled to begin Thursday, Aug. 27.

"Diversification has been key to the Macomber Farms long-term tenure in this county," said Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon. "That and the ability to adapt to changes in agriculture are what make farming economically viable."

Since 1908, family descendants have farmed land in Granite Falls, beginning with Jake and Theresa Spichiger, who purchased 40 acres for \$2,500, and shortly after added another 40 acres and a homestead without water or power.

During that time, Jake Spichiger, a Swiss immigrant, operated a butcher shop in Snohomish and Theresa Spichiger, a German immigrant, owned a restaurant in Granite Falls. Their one and only child, George, was born in 1915, necessitating a bigger house, which took three years to complete. The house still stands and is in use today.

A diversified farming operation that included three large chicken houses grew in 1923 to include a Holstein dairy where the family produced milk for Darigold. The main barn still houses cattle today.

In 1928, Jake and Theresa Spichiger purchased the neighboring 70 acres for added pasture and hay land. In 1943, they purchased another 40 acres across the street for \$6,115. In 1945, George Spichiger took over the farm, adding strawberries and raspberries, transitioning out of the dairy business. George Spichiger married Evelyn Westlund and together they had one child, Jackie.

The Evergreen State Fair

Celebrating 100 years of fun . . . *that's what it's all about!*

August 27 through September 7, 2009

Jackie met her future husband, Frank Macomber, and the two married in 1963, followed by three children: Todd, Toni and Tim. At different points, Todd and Tim Macomber helped their father run the farm, raising beef cattle and putting up hay.

Todd Macomber continues to run the farm today with his mother, Jackie Macomber. They can be seen at local farmers' markets selling grass-fed beef. Jackie Macomber, a member of the Snohomish County Agriculture Advisory Board, owns more than 20 quarter horses, which she uses to host natural horsemanship clinics. And for more than 35 years, Monday night has been 4-H night at the old farmhouse.

Including Macomber Farms, there are 30 Centennial Farms in Snohomish County. Many of the families are entrenched in Snohomish County history and have added products to their farms through the years to remain productive. These farms and farmers have helped to grow Washington state agriculture into a \$7-billion-a-year industry.

For more information on Snohomish County's Centennial Farms program, contact Linda Neunzig, Agriculture Project Coordinator, at 425-388-7170 or linda.neunzig@snoco.org. To see a list of honored farms, go to www.snoco.org/County_Services/Focus_on_Farming/Information/Centennial_Farms.htm.

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