

## **Onks Receives Agri-Business Award from Maury County YF & R**

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Dr. Dennis Onks, Director of the Middle Tennessee Research and Education Center, received the 2007 Agri-business Award presented by the Maury County Young Farmers and Ranchers.

The award is presented to an agriculture professional who has provided significant support to young farmers and ranchers programs. The award is sponsored by the Tennessee Farm Bureau Federation.



“Dr. Onks makes many contributions to Maury County and the state agriculture communities through his work at the Middle Tennessee Research and Education Center,” says Chris Beard, president of the Maury County Young Farmers and Ranchers. “The Maury County Young Farmers and Ranchers are especially grateful for his contributions to the county’s ‘Country Classroom’ event.”

The first Tuesday of May each year Maury County third graders visit the Middle Tennessee Research and Education Center for the “Country Classroom.” Students travel around the center making stops at educational exhibits and presentations. Participants learn about products that are made from agricultural commodities, hear about all of the skills a farmer needs to run a farm, see cows milked in the dairy and much more.

“The Country Classroom may be the only time some of these students learn about where their food and fiber comes from and how it is produced,” says Beard.

Dr. Onks works with the Maury County Farm Bureau leadership and others to coordinate the educational stops, arrival and departure of school groups, volunteers and all of the other logistical aspects of the event.”

According to Dr. Onks, more than 1,000 students attended the event in May 2007. This was the ninth year of the Country Classroom was held at the Center.

Onks became the Director of the Middle Tennessee Research and Education Center, part of the University of Tennessee Agricultural Experiment Station system, in 1998. Prior to moving to Spring Hill with wife June and sons Cayce and Jason, he served as superintendent of the Highland Rim Research and Education Center for 12 years. Onks earned a PHD in animal breeding and genetics from the University of Tennessee-Knoxville in 1976.

The Middle Tennessee Research and Education Center conducts research for a variety of crops and livestock including corn, wheat, soybeans, forage, blueberries, grapes, peaches, dairy cattle, and beef cattle.

“Serving Maury County with a meaningful research and education program is a goal we constantly strive to attain. Providing young farmers and ranchers with needed information that will allow a reasonable chance of success in agriculture is one goal that must be met,” says Onks. “It is an honor and a privilege to be considered worthy of this award by the Young Farmers and Ranchers.”

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