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## John Charles Wilson Set to Retire From Agricenter International

MEMPHIS, TN --- John Charles Wilson, President of Agricenter International, will be stepping down July 1, 2016 after 15 years with the organization, but will continue on as consultant on an as-needed basis. The Agricenter Board of Directors has been actively looking at a field of candidates for his replacement.

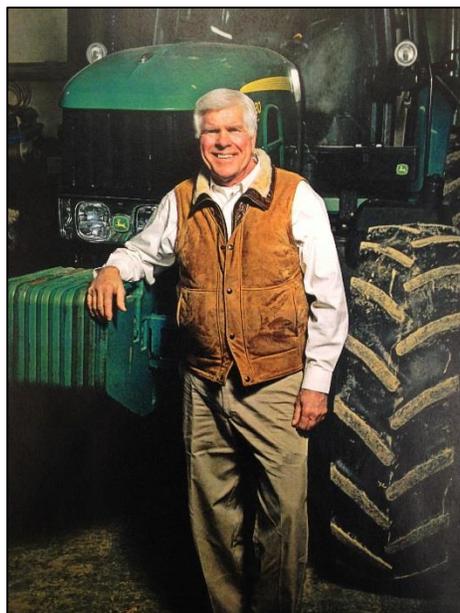
John Charles Wilson is known as the Agricultural Statesman of West Tennessee. His knowledge of agriculture in West Tennessee and throughout the Mid-South has benefited farmers and their families, educated children and the general public overall, provided food for the hungry, encouraged companies to expand their research, and demonstrated a servant leadership.

John Charles Wilson said, **“I am humbled to have been entrusted to lead this organization for 15 years. I appreciate the many people in my life that have provided support, encouragement, and opportunities that have led to any measure of success which I may have had. I have also been blessed to have the fulfillment of working in the life which I love, agriculture.”**

Under Wilson’s leadership, two global agricultural corporations, Bayer CropScience and Helena Chemical Company, invested \$20 million in high tech facilities on the Agricenter property. This major expansion occurred without any government or taxpayer incentives. Startup companies like Delta BioRenewables and AgSmarts also leverage the Agricenter’s research farm capabilities, bringing economic development opportunities to agriculture.

Shelby County Mayor Mark H. Luttrell, Jr. stated, **“Over the past 15 years, John Charles has contributed to the economic development of Shelby County in bringing in new agribusiness. I am grateful for the work he has done in research as well as educating youth about agriculture.”**

John Charles Wilson comes from a 120-year family farm lineage and was active in full-time production farming for 30 years in partnership with his father on Wilson and Wilson Farms of Arlington, Tennessee before starting at the Agricenter in 2001. Wilson is passionate about environmental education and the importance of engaging school aged children with their food source. Each year, Agricenter hosts over 4,000 children from across West Tennessee learn about sustainable agriculture and the importance of healthy eating. Also under Wilson’s leadership, the Farmers Market vendors donate what they do not sell at the market, 19,000 pounds of fresh produce and bread annually, for needy families across the Memphis area.



Wilson has been an advocate for conservation stewardship in Tennessee for 40 years. He has been involved in the Shelby County Soil Conservation District since 1979. In 1986 he served as Chairman of the Tennessee State Soil Conservation Committee and in the 1990s he served as President of Tennessee Association of Conservation Districts and council member of the National Association of Conservation Districts. In the late 1990s, he was appointed by Governor Don Sundquist to serve on the State of Tennessee Water Quality Control Board. He is an active member of the Memphis Agricultural Club, Tennessee & American Soybean Association, and West Tennessee No-Till Farmers Association.

Steve Shields, Chairman of the Board of Directors, added that **“Through the leadership of John Charles, Agricenter’s average annual revenues have nearly doubled and he has put Agricenter on strong financial footing.”**

Wilson has garnered many honors in recognition of his conservation efforts beginning in the 1970s. Some awards include: Soil and Water Conservation Society of America’s Outstanding Conservationist Award, Young Farmer of the Year for Tennessee, Progressive Farmer Magazine’s first Environmental Stewardship Award winner and its’ Man of the Year in Service, United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region IV Water Quality Award (for the Beaver Creek Study), Memphis Agricultural Club’s Agribusiness Member of the Year, Memphis Business Journal’s Who’s Who Power Players in Agriculture. In 2014, Wilson was honored with placement in the prestigious Southeast National Association of Conservation Districts Hall of Fame for his lifetime commitment to conservation and agriculture. In 2015, Wilson received the Governor’s Environmental Stewardship Award for Lifetime Achievement which is given to an individual who has devoted at least 25 years of effective and valuable service to Tennessee's environmental protection or conservation stewardship.

Wilson and his wife of 43 years, Susan Hall, still live on the farm where they reared their two children, Natalie and SY. In retirement he plans to spend more time with his wife, children, and grandchild.

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