

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
December 7, 2017

## **Agricenter International Establishes Organic Resource Center and Hires Organic Resource Center Farm Manager**

MEMPHIS, TN – John Butler, President of Agricenter International, has selected Chris Lankford to serve as the Farm Manager for the newly created Organic Resource Center (ORC). The ORC is a new model serving as laboratory and demonstration farm, a place for additional collaboration between producers and consumers, and a hub to learn about new markets and emerging trends.

Since its first agricultural research trials in 1984, Agricenter International has conducted field trials at its 1,000-acre campus. Annually, Dr. Bruce Kirksey, Director of Research, monitors 11,000 test plots and works with over 50 companies. The ORC is a new addition to Agricenter’s research and is designed to provide growers of the Mid-South with data that they need to be successful in producing crops organically. The ORC will evaluate soil carbon stocks, greenhouse gas emissions and crop productivity between organic and non-organic cropping systems. It will also establish a long-term trial to compare organic and non-organic cropping systems in a southern, sub-tropical climate. The Organic Resource Center is a three-year grant funded operation funded by an anonymous donor.

**Dr. Kirksey states “We are glad to announce the expansion of our research into the organic arena. This will allow us to fill a much-needed gap in the region.”**

Chris Lankford, Organic Resource Center Farm Manager, has operated his family farm in Ripley, TN for 27 years. His farm supplied Memphis Kroger with trailers full of delicious Ripley tomatoes for over 20 years. Lankford most recently comes to Agricenter from the position of Farm Manager at PictSweet Company where he grew sweet corn, edamame, turnip greens, collard greens, green peas, black eyed peas, and kale. His responsibilities at Agricenter include managing the ORC, assisting in additional research, and various farm duties. Lankford has a degree in Plant and Soil Science from UT Martin.



**John Butler, President, said “I look forward to working with Chris and am extremely excited about how this research can impact the community and region. He will make a great addition to the team.”**

*Agricenter International, the education, agribusiness, research and agricultural hub of the Mid-South has a \$524 million annual economic impact on the region, hosts over 1.3 million visitors annually, and has educated tens of thousands of students. For more information visit [www.agricenter.org](http://www.agricenter.org) or call 901-757-7777.*

###