

Alabama – 2009



Jack Odle **Publisher of *The Progressive Farmer***

4-H Efforts: Emerald 4-H Club member seven years in Elmdale, KS; projects included beef heifers, woodworking and record book. Campaign for Alabama 4-H chairman, raising \$7 million. Campaign funded 4-H programs statewide and constructed the Alabama 4-H Environmental Science Education Center - first 4-H building to receive the U.S. Green Building Council's gold certification in Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED).

Honors: First class of the Alabama 4-H Wall of Fame. National Magazine Award finalist, American Soybean Association Communications Award and the National Agri-Marketing Association Ag Communicator of the Year. Received the Henry R. Luce Award and the Jesse H. Neal Award business media editorial honors.

4-H motivated Jack Odle to work hard, be dedicated and aspire to achieve. He continues that commitment as publisher of *The Progressive Farmer* and by his philanthropic endeavors with the Alabama 4-H Club Foundation, the American Baseball Foundation and organizations promoting farm safety. Odle joined *The Progressive Farmer* in 1976. As editor in the early 1990's, Odle and his staff began a crusade to reduce accidental deaths and injuries of farm and ranch children. They launched the Progressive Farmer Farm Safety Day Camp - now the Progressive

Home: Birmingham, Alabama
Nominated by: Alabama 4-H
Year Inducted: 2009

Agriculture Safety Day. "To know we have done something to help save the life of a child or prevent a child from being injured is a priceless gift," he said

From 1995-2004, Odle was president of the Progressive Agriculture Foundation. Due to his passion and dedication, farm safety days grew from 19 to an estimated 380 in 2008 in the U.S. and Canada. The program has reached more than 656,000 children and adults since 1995. Odle is a member of the American Baseball Foundation and the Farm Foundation, and a former board member of the Alabama Agribusiness Council, the Advisory Board for the Clemson (University) Agricultural Research Center and the Conservation Technology Information Center. He is former president and board member of the American Agricultural Editor's Association. He has served on USDA honor awards evaluation committees.

Quote: One important lesson I learned through 4-H related to my heifer project. The first year I showed a heifer, I finished dead last. I was upset and the local county agent came over and put his arm around me and said he would work with me and show me how to select, feed and groom the heifer. The next year, after a lot of hard work, my heifer finished third and the next year I won the class. Those heifers became a cowherd that paid for my college education. I owe 4-H my education and set the course for my career.



Jack Odle accepts a "Faces of 4-H" print for his service as chair of the Alabama 4-H Club Foundation Board of Directors.



Jack Odle learns the fine art of "Chicken Que" from one Alabama competitor.



Jack Odle talks to Alabama 4-H'ers.