

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
NEWS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release: June 1, 2009
Media Contact: Candi Hettinger, 605-353-7340

Country Music Legend Mel Tillis to Perform at South Dakota State Fair

Huron, S.D. – The South Dakota State Fair is proud to announce that country music legend Mel Tillis will perform at the grandstand on Friday, Sept. 4.

Tillis, whose successful career spans more than 50 years, is a member of the Grand Ole Opry and the Country Music Hall of Fame. His hits include "I Ain't Never", "Good Woman Blues", and "Coca-Cola Cowboy."

The famed musician started performing during the early 1950s with a group called The Westerners while serving in the U.S. Air Force. This inauspicious start was notable because Tillis had to overcome a serious speech impediment—stuttering—that hindered his ability to communicate.

In 1956, he received his big break when singer Webb Pierce recorded one of Tillis' songs, "I'm Tired." Two decades and several hits later, in 1976 Tillis was inducted into the Nashville Songwriters International Hall of Fame and was named the Country Music Association's Entertainer of the Year.

The accolades continue to pour in. In 1999 Broadcast Music, Inc. named Tillis the songwriter of the decade for two decades. And in 2001 he won the Golden Voice Singer Award and the Golden R.O.P.E. Songwriter Award.

The South Dakota State Fair will take place Sept. 3-7 in Huron. Tickets for all grandstand events are scheduled to go on sale in mid-June. One more major concert announcement will be coming to round out the 2009 SD State Fair concert line-up. For the latest information, check the State Fair website at www.sdstatefair.com.