

# 2000 Environmental Quality Incentives Program



## Customer Focus—

Antonio and Mercedes Fleites, a Cuban couple, make their living from their family farm. The Fleites live on a 25-acre farm in Glades County, Florida. They raise yucca, boniato, and sugarcane, as well as chickens, pigs, and goats. They also maintain a herd of 21 cows. The Fleites have managed to show a profit by producing commodities that meet the demands of the local Hispanic marketplace.

Although the Fleites speak only Spanish, they have been working with the USDA, NRCS LaBelle Service Center since 1996. They have had an EQIP contract since 1998. That contract includes food plots for wildlife, prescribed grazing, fencing, conservation crop rotation, filter strips, and assistance with an irrigation system. According to Rosa Reyes, NRCS soil conservationist, they are eager to learn new practices and do not believe in credit.

Although Antonio prefers to work the farm himself, he gets more than a little help from his wife. Mercedes collects and sells fresh eggs, makes and sells cheese, and runs their household. In addition to helping the Fleites participate in NRCS conservation programs, Rosa helps them work with other Federal, State, and local agencies.

## Florida Summary

### Overview

Florida had overwhelming Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) interest in 2000. Nearly 800 landowners applied for funding, which totaled over \$7 million. NRCS assisted landowners to develop 428 contracts, which obligated nearly \$3.8 million of Federal cost-share assistance. In 2000, Florida had 19 conservation priority areas and two statewide concerns.

### Accomplishments

From 1997 to present, EQIP has been active in Florida. Landowners participated in the program by solving water quality, water quantity, grazing, animal waste, and wildlife concerns. As a result, landowners have been paid over \$2.9 million in cost shares for installing over 4,060 separate conservation practices.

### Outlook

Practices associated with EQIP are critically needed in many areas in Florida. Additional funding would ensure cleaner water, properly utilized water, more efficient grazing, improved habitat for wildlife, and appropriate disposal of animal waste. In 2001, Florida will align its priority areas with the State's TMDL priorities.

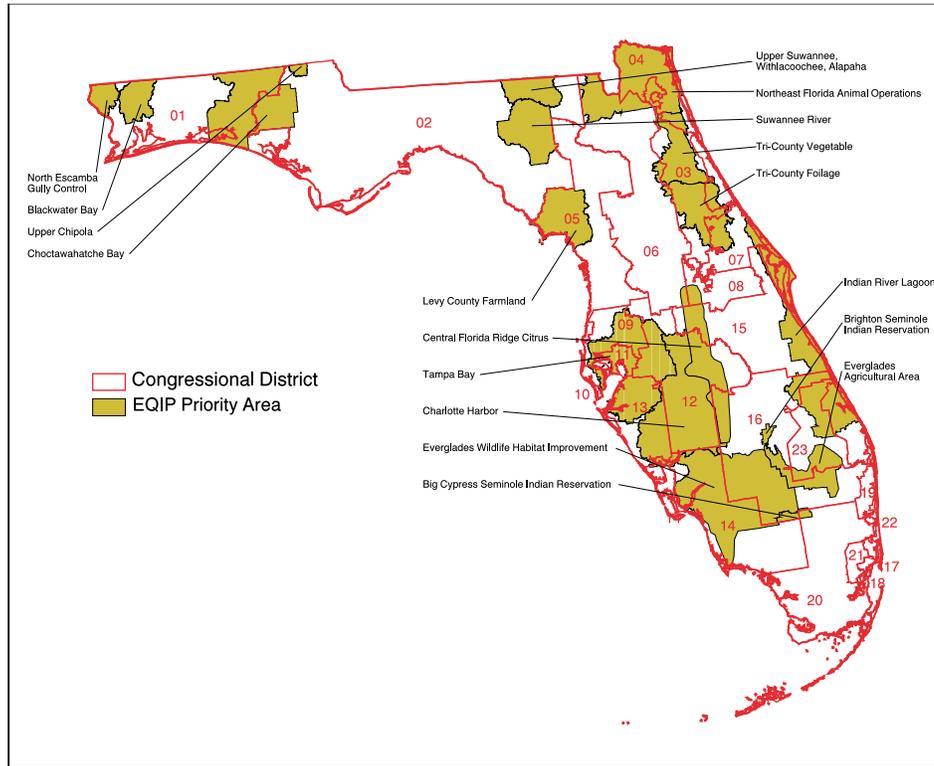
### State contact

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*(left to right) Roel Herrera, NRCS civil engineering technician, and Antonio Fleites discuss how prescribed grazing has worked on his farm.*

## Florida EQIP Priority Areas Within Congressional Districts



## Florida EQIP Dollars and Contracts by Congressional District

Congressional Districts	Fiscal Year 2000		Cumulative Total (97-00)	
	Obligated Dollars	Number of Contracts	Obligated Dollars	Number of Contracts
District 0	\$707,819	84	\$3,235,385	470
District 1	175,272	47	455,143	100
District 2	1,213,072	99	3,459,681	426
District 3	199,291	8	880,832	67
District 4	47,711	2	471,074	20
District 5	72,151	5	72,151	5
District 9	180,449	22	466,366	53
District 12	188,235	29	525,664	71
District 14	145,508	16	682,674	54
District 15	303,171	18	1,024,053	81
District 16	377,431	47	2,427,946	309
District 23	70,508	3	571,614	18
<b>State Totals</b>	<b>\$3,680,618</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>\$14,272,583</b>	<b>1,674</b>

Note: EQIP contracts for each Congressional District are estimated from Conservation Priority Areas which may include more than one district. Congressional District 0 = EQIP Contracts for Statewide Natural Resource Concerns which can be in any Congressional District in the state.

Source: FSA Recordet type01, data through 4th quarter FY2000

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