

Another Conservation Success Story...

Carroll County, Georgia

February 2007

Urbanite Returns to the Land and Becomes a Conservationist

Sheila Simpson grew up in a small mountain town in Colorado where she had the opportunity to visit and work with several long-term ranchers who willingly shared their knowledge and techniques.

Simpson was fortunate to receive hands on training as local ranchers rounded up and branded their livestock. She and her family were also avid participants in 4-H, showing and raising horses and cattle. But only recently did she return to her ranching roots after 15 years in corporate America.



Sheila Simpson and her Dad, Roger Anderson, who flew out from Colorado, spend a hot July day installing pipeline.

"I wanted a career change and most importantly I wanted to teach my kids to have a love and respect for the outdoors, animals, and the land," Simpson stated. So, two years ago with 15 acres and three dairy goats, the 7B Bar Ranch was born in Carroll County.

"The conservation plan developed by NRCS and the financial assistance provided to me have been crucial to the success of my ranching efforts."
—Sheila Simpson

With limited acreage, Simpson searched for agricultural products that could be produced on her land and ones in which she could

make a profit. The Carroll County Cooperative Extension Agent urged her to consider sustainable ranching and that took the form of goats and ducks. Simpson currently raises dairy goats for pet milk, soaps, and lotions, as well as duck eggs for

Atlanta pastry chefs. Simpson found a niche market for her products and through her involvement in the Farmer's Fresh Food Network, her products reach consumers in the surrounding areas, including Atlanta.

As with anything new, there was a learning curve for Simpson and with increased knowledge, she became aware and desired to practice environmentally sound ranching practices on her land.

Simpson needed help with how to improve the quality and quantity of forage, the source and availability of water for her livestock, and ways to improve soil quality. After learning about the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) from the local

extension agent, Simpson contacted District Conservationist Sam Sharpe.

Sharpe recommended a rotational grazing system to increase the quality and quantity of forage available to the goats, a well in conjunction with heavy use area protected watering facilities for an alternative water



Sheila Simpson, son Sam and daughter Rebecca, with dairy goats at the new watering facility installed with EQIP cost share assistance.

source, pasture and hayland planting and critical area planting in areas where erosion was occurring and where soil improvement was needed.

Simpson applied for the EQIP program and was funded as a Limited Resource Farmer. Simpson was solely responsible for coordinating, installing, and assuring that all EQIP funded conservation practices were installed according to NRCS standards and specifications.

EQIP allowed Simpson to make much needed conservation improvements in a timely manner, which otherwise would have taken years to complete. When asked what she liked best about EQIP Simpson stated that "the conservation plan developed by NRCS and the financial assistance provided to me have been crucial to the success of my ranching efforts."



Sheila Simpson, left, and Di Hodge, NRCS Soil Conservation Technician, discuss duck egg production on the 7B Bar Ranch.

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