

# Another Conservation Success Story...

## Towns County, Georgia

October 2011

### Hiawassee Couple Uses Rain Runoff to Improve Irrigation

Tammy Walls is a farmer who understands the importance of using resources wisely. "You can have the resources but if you don't utilize them correctly, it can be a waste," Tammy Walls said.



The tanks pictured here can hold a combined total of 3,000 gallons of rainwater runoff.

Tammy and her husband Larry each have a hand in their small farming operation in Hiawassee.

For the most part, Larry looks after the few cattle on the couple's Towns County property. Tammy takes care of the chickens, five of which are roosters. She sells the organic eggs to buyers across the state.



Organically grown eggs are sold to consumers across the state.

In 2000, Tammy started growing a variety of vegetables using raised-bed gardening. She grows asparagus, blackberries, tomatoes, broccoli, kale, chard, cabbage, peppers, field corn, and squash.

Over the last decade, Tammy struggled to find a sufficient source of water for her crops and livestock.

Technical and financial assistance provided through an Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) agreement with the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has helped the Walls address their water quantity concern among other natural resource challenges.

"She really needed a better irrigation system than she had,"

Doug Towery explained.

Towery is the District Conservationist in the NRCS's Blairsville Field Office. He has worked side by side with the Walls to improve their irrigation system. A well serves primarily as a drinking source for the couple's livestock but also serves as a supplementary source of water for the Walls'

drip irrigation system for the gardens.

They also have water storage tanks that can hold up to 3,000 gallons of rain runoff. The runoff is used to water the raised-bed gardens.

"It's been a great experience dealing with Tammy and Larry and to see their level of conservation. They want to protect their resources and have those resources used for the future," Towery said.

Their EQIP agreement has also helped the Walls install a fence between the Hiawassee River and

the family's cattle. Now cattle are able to drink from watering troughs protected by a heavy use area.

"We are pretty picky about doing things right," Larry Walls added.



Tammy Walls (left), Larry Walls (center), and District Conservationist Doug Towery (right).

The Walls say they are particular because they want to live up to their conservation philosophy.

"Using what we have efficiently so that we can be good stewards is our main goal. It goes from one generation to the next. We need to use things in a way that provides for the next generation," Tammy Walls explained.

**"You can have the resources but if you don't utilize them correctly, it can be a waste."—Tammy Walls**



The Walls raise hens and roosters on their Hiawassee property.

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