

Another StrikeForce Conservation Success Story...

Wilkes County, Georgia

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EQIP and CSP Help Cattle Farmer Improve Operation

By Amelia Hines, Public Affairs Specialist, Watkinsville

When he leads, they follow. However, this wasn't always the case for Herman Wheatley when it came to running his cattle operation. Moving 100 head of cattle from one pasture to another was a very time consuming and labor intense job. In addition, Wheatley struggled to purchase hay for his livestock.

Fortunately, Wheatley was able to find a solution through his involvement with the agriculture community in his town. He serves as chairman of the Broad River Soil and Water Conservation District and had a working knowledge of the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) programs.

Wheatley applied and was approved for an Environmental Quality Incentives Pro-

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gram (EQIP) contract for grazing lands. The contract included 180 acres and has helped him manage a rotational grazing plan and install heavy use areas, water troughs, a pipeline, and cross-fencing.

Overall, Wheatley said that installing the different practices and using the rotational grazing method have saved him time and money.

"It makes it so much easier to manage them. They will just follow you to the other pasture."

NRCS Grazing Land Specialist, Philip Brown, worked



Wheatley's operation runs roughly 100 head on 250 acres.

with Wheatley to plan and implement the rotational grazing system.

"It's been a pleasure. He works hard at it and really works to make improvements. And, he's good about sharing it with his

community and at numerous field days," Brown said.

The contract also



The water trough pictured above is located in a heavy use area which prevents soil erosion around the trough.

included plans for critical area treatment where erosion was a concern and over-seeding of clover and legumes to help improve forage quality.

"I oversee every year because it helps with hay," Wheatley said.

Wheatley's EQIP contract also covers pest management. In addition to the EQIP contract, Wheatley has also been awarded a Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) agreement. Under CSP, he will be able to continue conserving natural resources on his land.

"You get an opportunity to try new things. Financially, we couldn't have done it without assistance," Wheatley explained.

Wilkes County is a designated StrikeForce county in Georgia. The USDA StrikeForce Initiative is designated to help relieve persistent poverty in high-poverty counties.



Herman Wheatley runs a cattle operation in Washington, Georgia.

Central Savannah River Resource Conservation and Development Council



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Broad River Soil and Water Conservation District

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