

Another Conservation Success Story...

Candler County, Georgia

June 2007

Veteran Conservationist R. E. Hendrix Conducts Conservation Tillage Experiment on Vidalia Onions

When District Conservationist Glyn Thrift was looking for an innovative farmer to try a conservation method known as conservation tillage on Vidalia onions, he wasn't having much luck. "I struck out two times before I talked to R.E. (Hendrix of Hendrix Produce)," said Thrift .

for conservation practices that help the environment. Hendrix, a long-time conservationist, said he has worked with NRCS "since forever."

One of those practices is conservation tillage. Conservation tillage is a conservation practice that leaves residue on the soil to prevent erosion from wind and water. Strip till and no-till are variations of the practice.

Georgia farmers are having a lot of success with conservation tillage. It is being used on cotton—Georgia's fastest growing crop—corn, and soybeans.



R.E. Hendrix and Glyn Thrift in onion field



Hendrix said he was skeptical at first about trying no-till on Vidalia onions. "I didn't think it would work," said Hendrix speaking of conservation tillage. "I mean, I had my doubts about it. I just couldn't see how it was going to work."

Hendrix tried it anyway for the erosion control benefits. "It stops erosion. It's doing that right now. That's the reason we tried it. We

Then, he asked long-time farmer R. E. Hendrix of Hendrix Produce in Candler County. "He said I reckon I just wanna volunteer," he laughed. Thrift is the District Conservationist for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service.

The federal agency works with landowners to take care of their natural resources and provides cost-share assistance

put it on highly erodible land because we get a lot of wind damage." Hendrix said.

"We fixed our land and set our onions out and we overseeded it with rye. You couldn't even see the onions. I had to spray it three times instead of one time," Hendrix said.

The mature crop won't come out of the ground until May. "Right now, it looks healthy," he said.

Hendrix received cost-share funds for retrofitting his irrigation system to reduce water loss and improve irrigation efficiency.

Last year he improved his water source by renovating his pond dam and pool area with cost-share assistance from the Georgia Soil



and Water Conservation Commission. For more information on this and other conservation programs, contact your local District Conservationist.



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