

Another Conservation Success Story...

Madison County, Georgia

March 2009

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) helps “Out of Control” Farm.



Terry Chandler and Carol Boss laughing at Terry's dog Lucy (not shown) for drinking from a concrete trough.

Terry Chandler, owner and operator of Stillwater Farms outside of Danielsville in Madison County, purchased an “out of control” farm in 1977. Today he is the Governor’s Environmental Stewardship Award for Agriculture winner for District II.

“There existed severe erosion and weed issues when Terry Chandler purchased the farm. The entire farm was unproductive and “out of control.” Parts of the farm were flooded, particularly the forested areas, due to activity by beavers. Soil fertility was extremely low, which resulted in very poor forage productivity,” said Carol Boss, district conservationist for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Commerce.

Chandler is not the only one that farms in his family. “My parents, aunts, and uncles all farm. Last year, Terry and Kim (Chandler’s daughter) won the Georgia Young Farmer Farm Management Quiz,” said Chandler.

As a teenager, Chandler had exposure to the NRCS (then Soil Conservation Service) through Forrest Ferguson, then a soil technician, with row cropping issues on the family farm.

Chandler’s conservation concerns were severe erosion, water quality issues, lack of soil productivity and poor soil fertility.

“Using the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), Chandler began to actively manage the existing resources to improve forage health, productivity and vigor.

Alternative watering facilities (including troughs, pipeline and heavy use area protection) were installed to distribute livestock watering areas over the acreage, thereby minimizing damage to the forages. The pastures have been overseeded with the desired forage species and a rotational grazing system implemented by subdividing the fields into smaller, 10-acre paddocks. All fertilizer nutrients are applied to the land at rates consistent with yearly soil and litter analyses,” said Boss.

Boss went on to say, “A barn was built for storage of hay with funding provided through one of the very first Georgia Grazing Lands Conservation Coalition (GGLCC) grants. This allowed the hay to be protected from the weather reducing degradation due to environmental exposure.”

“The hog operation that existed when Terry purchased the farm is no longer in operation. However, before receiving either EQIP or a GGLCC grant, Terry actively managed the lagoon and utilized funds from the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission to pump the lagoon out and apply the effluent to the land based on soil and effluent tests, according to a nutrient budget prepared by the UGA Cooperative Extension Service office in Danielsville,” said Boss.

“The lagoon pumpout program through the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Program provided funds too for a traveling gun and some of the underground pipe to remove effluent from the lagoon and apply it to the land in an environmentally safe manner,” said Boss.

Chandler says his operation has benefited from the application of the conservation treatments from the soil to the aesthetics of the farm. “Building soil and restoring soil fertility, improved forage and cattle performance, improved water quality, and improved overall aesthetics of the

“EQIP helped accelerate the pace of land rejuvenation and the restoration of soil and forage productivity.”— Terry Chandler

farm - that’s our benefits from the treatments,” said Chandler.

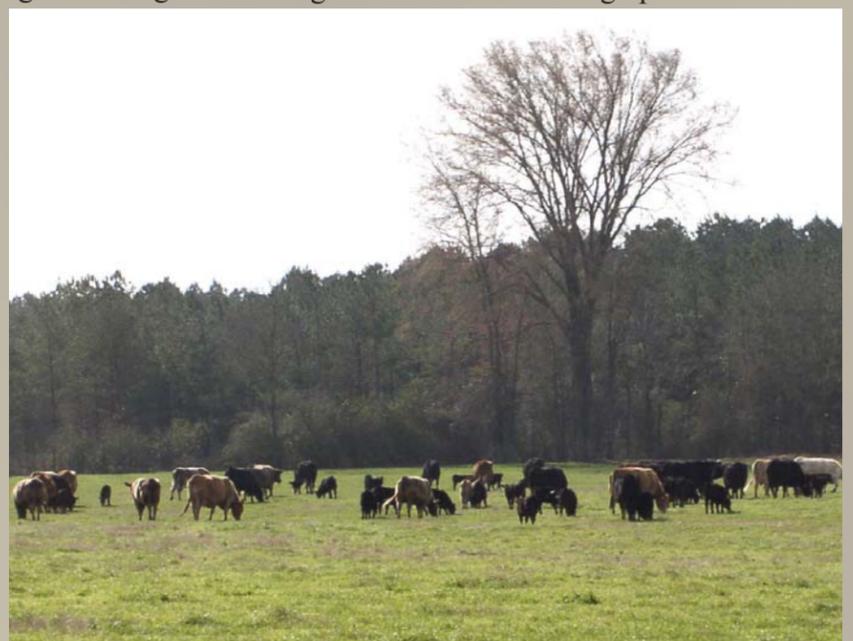
A few years ago the lagoon was taken out of use and converted to a containment area to capture roof runoff from the barns and the chicken houses. This runoff is then used for irrigation of the fields.

Chandler credits EQIP for the rejuvenation of Stillwater Farms. “EQIP helped accelerate the pace of land rejuvenation and the restoration of soil and forage productivity”.

Chandler’s conservation philosophy is all about stewardship. “We’re not really owners, we’re stewards. It’s important to understand that we’re only here for a short period of time. It’s vital for us to leave our environment in a better condition than we found it for future generations.”

He went on to say, “Stewardship is more of an attitude, or a way of doing your business, rather than a particular practice or idea. All of the conservation and management practices have helped move us toward our goal of good stewardship of the resources that we have been entrusted with. The assistance we received from the Extension Service, NRCS, and others has been tremendous.”

Chandler was approved in 2008 to receive funding through the Conservation Security Program as a Tier 3 farming operation.



Part of Terry Chandler’s cattle herd just being moved into one of the grazing fields; EQIP funds were utilized for construction of the fence.

Oconee River RC&D
706-769-7922

 **Natural Resources Conservation Service**
706-335-7145

Broad Riverk Soil And Water Conservation District