

Another Conservation Success Story...

Elbert County, Georgia

December

Community Nutrient Management Facility helps Farmer start New Business

Located outside of Elberton, Bailey Farms consists of 944.6 acres. In addition to cotton and hay, Bailey Farms also raises cattle, operates several farm equipment dealerships and has recently entered the poultry litter business.

Using a Community Nutrient Management Facility grant from the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Bailey started the Bailey Farms Poultry Litter business.



Cattle drinking from a watering tub in a heavy use area made of concrete.

Bailey collects poultry litter from surrounding counties and stacks it in one of his two nutrient management facilities until the litter is needed on his farm or by other farmers.

Because of the escalating price of fertilizer, James Lee Bailey, owner of Bailey Farms, looked into the feasibility of using poultry litter instead of commercial fertilizer and discovered that he could get just as much growth from poultry litter as regular fertilizer. He bought a spreader truck for the poultry litter and started using the litter on his fields whenever he could get it.

“We had to go to litter because you can’t afford fertilizer any more. We had been using litter a year or two and we bought the spreader truck. We tried it, it worked well. I don’t think there are any problems on the crop production. If it rains, it would make two bales just like it would if it had fertilizer,” said Chad Bailey.

“The stack houses were the only way I was going to be able to keep on farming because of the cost of fertilizer,” said James Bailey.

Now Bailey not only uses the litter on his own farm, he also supplies litter to other farm-

ers in the area and hauls the excess litter to farms in South Georgia.

Bailey started farming over 39 years ago with his father Robert Lee Bailey. Today Chad, his son and partner, helps with the equipment dealership, cotton, cattle, poultry litter and he serves as the mechanic for the farm. Cheri, Bailey’s wife, does the bookkeeping insuring that the farm stays in the black.

“Chad is a 4th generation farmer. He is farming land that my grandfather farmed,” said James Lee.

Other programs used on the farm are the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP). Heavy Use Areas were installed around watering tanks and for a cattle working area. Fencing was installed to split up large fields for better rotation of cattle and to protect riparian areas. The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) was used to improve wildlife habit and control erosion with Grassed Waterways in his cotton fields.

In everything that Bailey does, his first consideration is whether it is economically practical or not.

“Take care of the land if you’re going to make a living off it.”

—James Lee Bailey

He went on to say, “The stack houses have

been a real asset to us. As for the economics of it, it’s the best thing we could have gotten into.”

James Lee’s conservation philosophy for future generations is simple. “Take care of the land if you’re going to make a living off of it.”



James Lee Bailey standing beside his semi in 2007.

“Consideration of the economics is number one with James Lee,” said Katrina White, Soil Conservationist for the NRCS. “He researches every aspect of a program before getting into it. He runs a farm and he has to make money to keep farming.”

“By keeping the land from washing away we increased our crop yields and with the stack houses we started a new business,” said James Lee.



Above Bailey loads his semi with poultry litter for transport to other farmers in the area and in South Georgia.. Lower left is Bailey scooping up the litter with his enclosed front loader inside one of the stack houses. Lower right is how he used to store the litter before he built the stack houses.

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