

Another Conservation Success Story...

Wayne County, Georgia

February 2007

Water Quality is Priority for Wayne County Farmer

Conservation is an on-going priority for Jonathan (“Jonny”) and Toni Harris, fifth generation livestock farmers in Wayne County. The 2,800 acre Greenview Farms, is divided almost equally between timber, pastures and

“We do not do conservation for the cost-share programs or because we are being told to do them, but because our family has always tried to leave the land better for the next generation.”—**Jonathan Harris**

cultivated land. Along with Polled Hereford cattle herd, the Harris’ raise Braford’s.

Lake Grace is a large recreation/flood control lake that is downstream on Reedy Creek from Greenview Farms. Harris wanted to ensure that the water leaving his farm and entering Lake Grace is clean. He also wanted to correct a severe gully erosion problem on some of his newly acquired land.

“We’ve always maintained an excellent working relationship with the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service,” said Harris.

To address water quality issues, Harris fenced his cattle out of the creek and also installed a heavy use feeding pad/manure storage facility. This facility allows him to winter feed his cattle on a concrete pad which reduces soil erosion and runoff into Reedy Creek.

The manure is scraped and stored in a holding area adjacent to the feed pad while liquid wastes are collected in a septic tank.

When the manure dries and the septic tank fills, the wastes are spread on pastures and fields to recapture nutrients and keep them out of the adjacent creek. Some components for this facility were funded through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

The cattle are regularly rotated throughout numerous paddocks to maintain soil and water quality and to provide quality forage.



The Harris Family; Back row: Paul Harris (Jonny’s son) and Jonny Harris; Front row: Toni Harris (Jonny’s wife) and Emily Harris (Jonny’s mother)

The Harris’ also raise all their own feed, which includes corn, oats and rye, as well as cottonseed for supplements. Conservation tillage is used on crop lands to prevent erosion. Through a Forest Stewardship Plan, they regularly thin and prescribe burn their forest land to maintain forest health and increase wildlife habitat.

The Harris family has a long history of farming and conservation in Wayne County, dating back to 1860 when ancestors first purchased the land. Harris’ parents, Winton and Emily Harris, established Greenview Polled Hereford Farms, Inc. in 1942, making it the oldest continuously active Polled Hereford breeder in the state of Georgia.

“My family has been working with the NRCS for many years,” said Harris. “I have copies of conservation plans done for my father for the farm in 1949 and 1952. We have had a very long term relationship with NRCS.”

Harris, one of the 2 district supervisors from Wayne County, treats all of the resources on Greenview Farms equally well, implementing best management practices in all farm and conservation activities.

“My father, the late Winton Harris, always taught us that we should leave the land in better shape than when it came to us. We do not do conservation for the cost-share programs or because we are being told to do them, but because our family has always tried to leave the land better for the next generation.”



Cattle at Greenview Farms are fenced out of nearby Reedy Creek with funded through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

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Satilla River Soil and Water
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