

# Another Conservation Success Story...

## Habersham County, Georgia

October 2010

### Cornelia Farmer Committed to Conservation

Gilbert Barrett knows the science behind producing quality chicken. Barrett runs a genetic stock operation in Habersham County.



A stack house now enables Gilbert Barrett to store chicken litter and keep it dry so that it can be used as fertilizer to grow hay.

“We get day old birds and raise them until they reach 21 weeks of age,” Barrett said.

At that point, those birds are sent off to breed and their offspring are sold to integrators like Tyson. That offspring is used to produce broilers or meat birds.

But in the process of raising chickens, Barrett faced several conservation challenges.

The main two concerns were water quality and nutrient management on his Northeast Georgia property. Barrett did not have a structure that would help keep chicken litter in dry storage.

He needed a way to preserve the litter that he uses as fertilizer to grow hay on a few acres of his Cornelia land.

After the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) awarded Barrett an Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) contract, he was able to improve litter storage and address water quality concerns.

District Conservationist Russell Biggers’ technical assistance helped Gilbert Barrett get a stackhouse built on his property.

The stackhouse now keeps the chicken litter stored and dry.

Barrett said that he could not have made his plans a reality without help from the Environmental Quality Incentives Program.

“EQIP gives us the opportunity to make improvements on the farm. The funding option is good. The engineers and specialists are great,” Barrett said.

A couple of heavy use areas have been installed around the Habersham County property.

Water troughs are located in these locations, surrounded by a geo-textile material and gravel that cuts down on erosion around the troughs.

“They’re drinking clean 60 degree water year round. When you can provide clean water, they will drink more. This benefits

the animal through better health,” Barrett explained.

A Resource Conservation and Development Council (RC&D) Mud Creek 319(h) grant



District Conservationist Russell Biggers (left), Gilbert Barrett (center), and Soil Conservation Technician Harold Thompson (right)

awarded by the Chestatee-Chattahoochee RC&D addressed Barrett’s erosion and forage quality concerns.

A stock trail provides a make shift roadway for the cattle; this cuts down on erosion leading to the heavy use areas.



Cross fencing serves as a buffer between cattle and pond on the Cornelia property.

**“When you can provide clean water, the cattle will drink more. This benefits the animal through better health.”--Gilbert Barrett**

A buffer fence was installed around Barrett’s pond.

Rotational grazing addresses the forage quality. In-depth training helped Barrett determine when to move his cattle to different pastures for grazing and give other pastures time to regenerate grass.

District Conservationist Russell Biggers says throughout the years, Gilbert Barrett has been good to work with because he is committed to doing things the right way.

“He’s on all the boards. He’s a board member of the Upper Chattahoochee Soil and Water Conservation District. You have to be committed to volunteer for organizations like that,” Biggers said.

Barrett said that his overall conservation goal revolves around leaving the land better than he found it so that it’s in good shape for his three children.

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Upper Chattahoochee River Soil And  
Water Conservation District