

# Another Conservation Success Story...

## Lumpkin County, Georgia

June 2007

### Love for Cowboys & Chickens Leads to Conservation Nutrient Management Plan

Sound strange? Not to Ray Dover of Lumpkin County, Georgia. Ray's life revolves around cowboys and chickens.

The field representative for Cobb Poultry is passionate about his chickens and his favorite hobby, Cowboy Mounted Shooting.

Dover is even more passionate about conservation on his 36 acre pullet and cattle farm.



Ray Dover poses in front of one of his three pullet houses.

Dover has won several awards pursuing his hobby, and was selected by the Upper Chattahoochee River Soil & Water Conservation District this year as the Lumpkin County Farm Family of the year.

Dover grew up on a broiler farm in Hall County and knows the value of hard work and dedication. He and his wife, Debbie, moved to their farm in 1994, starting the poultry and cattle farm from scratch.

“We decided to call it ‘R Farm’, because it belonged to Debbie and me and the bank,” joked Dover. All joking aside, the Dovers maintain a well-groomed farm, partly because of the biosecurity issues, (grandparent stock must be free of any potential health hazards) but also out of a love of the land itself.

Ray initially approached the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in pursuit of a Comprehensive Nutrient Management



Upper Chattahoochee River Soil & Water Conservation District Supervisors, Kenneth Beasley (L) and Tracy Grizzle (R) meet with Ray Dover to view his completed stackhouse.

Plan (CNMP). With the help of NRCS Soil Conservation Technician Todd Powers, Ray developed the CNMP for his 3 pullet houses.

While working with NRCS, Ray learned of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). “Ray initially approached me concerning the development of a CNMP for his farm.

After meeting with Ray, we decided that EQIP could definitely help Ray with his poultry litter storage,” said Powers.

Dover's application for EQIP was approved and work began immediately on a Stackhouse to temporarily store poultry litter from his three pullet houses.

**“If I'm going to do something, I'm going to do it right and get it done as quickly as I can,”—Ray Dover**

“The Stackhouse allows me to temporarily store litter when conditions on my farm do not allow me to apply the litter immediately to my pastures,” stated Dover. Ray's pullet houses, and entire farm, are closely monitored for any biosecurity issues.

With full-time help from his wife, Debbie, Ray grows grandparent stock for Cobb Poultry.

Because of the genetic importance of the grandparent stock, Ray's farm must be free of any potential health hazards to the 18,000 pullets.

“I spread excess litter from my farm on my neighbor's pastures so that litter from other chicken houses does not get close enough to my farm to spread any diseases,” explained Dover.

“I don't think the ink had even dried on the EQIP contract before I got a call from Ray that he was starting on the stackhouse”, said Powers.

Dover believes in getting the job done quickly and correctly. “If I'm going to do something, I'm going to do it right and get it done as quickly as I can,” he said.



Poultry litter is applied to Ray Dover's pastures based on a Conservation Nutrient Management Plan developed by him and NRCS.

Chestatee-Chattahoochee  
RC&D Office  
706-894-1591

 **Natural Resources  
Conservation Service**  
770--536-6981

Upper Chattahoochee River  
Soil and Water  
Conservation District

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.