## Another Conservation Success Story...

## Pike County, Georgia

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## Pike County Landowner Believes In Protecting the Land

By Karen Buckley Washington, Lawrenceville

Pike County landowner, Tom Lacey, grew up on a farm in Iowa growing corn, soybeans and raising pigs, cattle and chickens. That tradition lives on for Lacey today.

After a short tour of duty in the U.S. Air Force, Lacey took a job at a small airport as an aircraft mechanic. During his free time, he took flying lessons, received his private pilot license and worked for Braniff Airlines (which later became Eastern Airlines) until he retired.

In addition to keeping ownership of part of the farm that he was raised on in Iowa, Lacey and his wife, Karen, purchased another small farm in Pike County in 1977. Lacey managed this 125 acre farm, which included



Pictured are pastures separated by cross-fencing. Cross-fencing helps Lacey manage his cattle in a rotational grazing system.

"These practices made my farm operation more productive and environmentally sound."— Tom Lacey

"Although I flew aircrafts for a living, I never got farming out of my blood," said Lacey. "I care about the land and water and enjoy producing something from these resources."

approximately 20 head of cattle and another 20 head of goats, while still working full time as a pilot.

After noticing livestock using streams and wetlands for shade and water, Lacey saw a negative impact on the water and soil, namely fecal matter, sed-

iment and erosion. Having worked with the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) (then Soil Conservation Service) while farming in Iowa, Lacey contacted the Service Center in Barnesville. District Conservationist Carmen Westerfield, assisted him in developing a conservation plan. Through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Lacey installed heavy use areas for his cattle and cross fencing for rotational grazing. He also received incentives for tree planting, nutrient management, a well, pipeline and pasture planting.

"These practices made my farm operation more productive and environmentally sound," said Lacey.

Lacey retired from Eastern Airlines in 1990 to start farming full time, yet his commitment to conservation extends well beyond his own farm. He is currently a Conservation District Supervisor on the Towaliga Soil and Water Conservation District Board, a member of the Pike County Agribusiness Authority, President of Farm Bureau of Pike County and past Pike County Commissioner.

"We must protect land," said Lacey. "In order to ensure rich farm land for the next generation, it is our responsibility to protect it."



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