

Another StrikeForce Conservation Success Story...

Dooly County, Georgia

September 2011

CCPI Helps Farmer Address Irrigation Problem

Howard James is no stranger to hard work. He grew up on his family's farm in Byromville and even though he saw that it was a tough job, James knew by the age of five that he wanted to farm for a living.

This became even more apparent a few years ago. "It was a lot of hard manual labor," James said.

The most challenging part of the job involved getting water to his muscadine grapes.

"We took PVC pipes, drilled holes in them and moved them from place to place. Then, we would hook the water line to it," James explained.

Funded through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), a voluntary program, CCPI enhances conservation outcomes to achieve resource conservation objectives.

When James' CCPI contract received approval, his conservation plan addressed his water resource concern. CCPI funds have helped James install a drip-irrigation system in his vineyards.

Drip-irrigation systems are very efficient in providing water to crops. The well that feeds the drip irrigation sys-



Howard James specializes in growing different varieties of muscadine grapes.

"It conserves water tremendously. We can take less water and go farther."— Howard James

After using this very intensive type of manual irrigation for a while, James finally got the information he needed to make his muscadine operation more efficient.

"I was on a trip to Griffin (Georgia) to buy plants for the farm and I received information on drip irrigation," James said.



Howard James (left) and NRCS District Conservationist, Graylen Hall (right) have worked together on a number of conservation plans.

He also learned how the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offered programs that could help him install this type of irrigation system on his farm.

James visited the local office in Vienna and NRCS District Conservationist, Graylen Hall, suggested that he apply for financial and technical assistance through the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI).

James said.

In addition to the CCPI agreement, James has two other NRCS program contracts. A different EQIP contract helped him retrofit pivots for an overhead irrigation system in his fields. Retrofitted pivots reduce evaporation and gets water closer to crops. James' row crop operation includes collards, cotton, peanuts and wheat.

The other contract is under the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). This program is specifically for farmers and landowners like James who make it a priority to continuously have conservation plans in place on their land to address natural resource concerns. James has been able to address soil erosion under CSP assistance.

"I hate to see erosion. I hate it. Rolling hills and rain don't work," James said.

Conservation treatments such as terracing, cover crop planting and strip tilling have helped cut down on soil erosion caused by water runoff in fields. "It's been a benefit for sure," James said about the treatments.

Hall who has worked with James to implement conservation plans on his farm said there's no doubt about James' dedication in taking care of natural resources. "Howard is

tem pumps 70 gallons a minute.

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committed to conservation and water management," Hall added.

James said that the assistance provided through CCPI and the other conservation programs have really benefited his operation. He hopes that his hard



James attributes the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI) for helping him conserve water on his farm.

work to conserve soil and water now will be evident for future generations.

Dooly County is a designated StrikeForce county in Georgia. The USDA StrikeForce Initiative is designed to help relieve persistent poverty in high-poverty counties.



Drip-Irrigation has helped James more efficiently water his vineyards.

 **NRCS** Natural Resources Conservation Service

229-273-4148

**Ocmulgee River
Soil And Water
Conservation District**

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