

Another Conservation Success Story...

Fulton County, Georgia

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NRCS Helps Beginning Farmer in Fulton County

By Karen Buckley Washington, Lawrenceville

Arthur Ferdinand was looking for a way to stay active and reconnect with nature. So, he and his wife Betty bought a 38-acre plot of land in Chattahoochee Hills, which had been abandoned for years.

Ferdinand had a vision for Chaguana Farm, but possessed little knowledge on how to get started. A call to George Hadley at the Fulton County Extension Office led him to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

The Ferdinands' land was covered in kudzu and after four painstaking years of clearing the brush, destroying kudzu pods and planting

grass, they were ready for some direction on how to best use the land.

District Conservationist, Valerie Pickard, provided Ferdinand and his wife with the conservation plan that they needed to make their land sufficient for farm use. They worked with Pickard to develop ideas on how to use the land and attended NRCS workshops and informational meetings, of which Betty became a 'regular.'

After some deliberation, they decided to purchase twenty-two Black Angus cows and try rotational grazing.

With cost share funding through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), the Ferdinands have installed watering facilities, cross fencing to separate their land into sections for rotational grazing, as well as heavy use areas to protect the paths that his cattle would use day-to-day and pasture planting.



Arthur and Betty Ferdinand, owners and operators of Chaguanas Farm.



One of the practices cross fencing installed under EQIP.

Establishing these practices has increased the quality of grass and hay supply on their land, diminishing the need for extra additives in his cattle's food supply. The watering facility is a low maintenance,

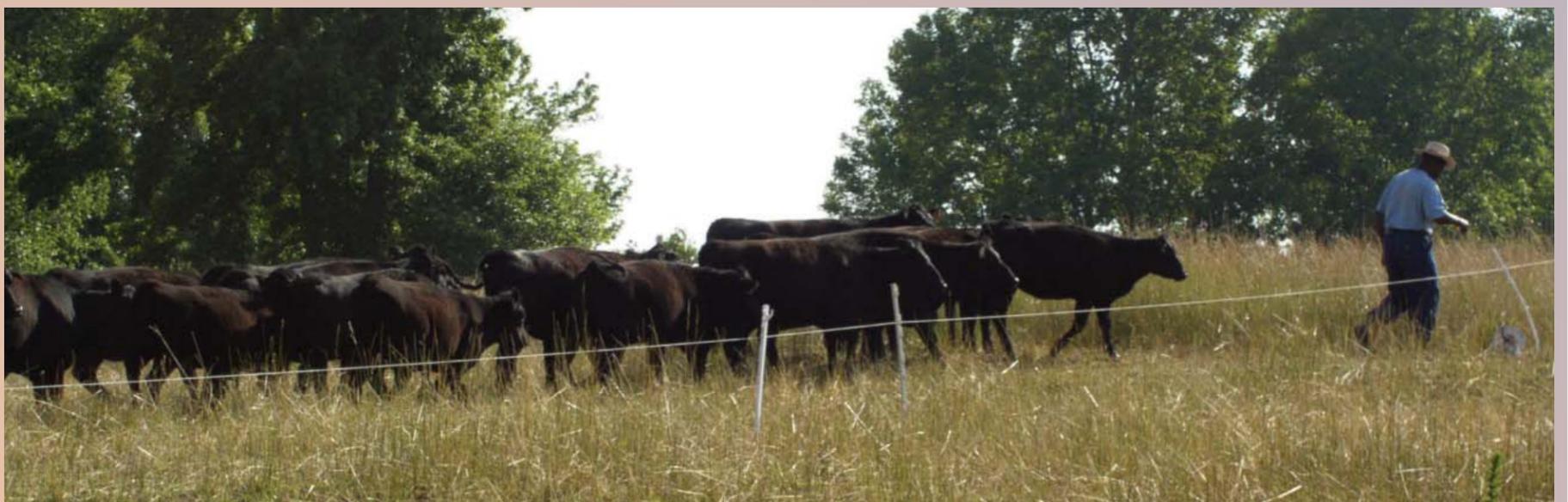
protective alternative to provide the cattle with drinking water. All of these practices cut down on the daily upkeep of the land, thus lowering overall cost.

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In the future, the Ferdinands hope to incorporate an all natural grazing process, to cut

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down on cost. Their goal is to show future generations that it is less expensive to work with nature rather than against it.



Ferdinand rotating his cattle to their next grazing paddock.

 **NRCS** Natural Resources Conservation Service
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Fulton County Soil And Water Conservation District

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