

Another Conservation Success Story...

Lee County, Georgia

August 2011

Leesburg Farmer Benefits from EQIP Assistance

Jesse Batten may be a part-time farmer but he is a full-time conservationist. In 1971, Batten started farming with only 50 acres.

Now he runs a 1,000 acre operation that grows corn, cotton, peanuts, soybeans and wheat. When Batten isn't busy taking care of his farming operation in Leesburg, he works as a program technician with the Farm Service Agency (FSA).

"NRCS gives good technical assistance. They help in any way they can," Batten said.—Jesse Batten

Because Batten's office is next door to sister agency USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), he was able to acquaint himself with the technical and financial assistance the agency provides to farmers like him.

"NRCS gives good technical assistance. They help in any way they can," Batten said.

Over the last several years, Batten has nurtured his relationship with the agency and has been able to improve the farm that he and his son Marcus operate.

Through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Batten has installed a number of conservation treatments on J and M Farm.

One treatment involved modifying pivots by retro-fitting them to a low pressure system.

Batten's irrigation system was also converted from a diesel pump to an electric pump. This change is more cost and energy efficient.

"The retrofitted pivots will save me a whole lot of money," Batten said.

A nutrient management plan helps with fertilization. Batten transports chicken litter from upstate and uses it to increase organic matter in the soil and help improve plant growth.

The Battens also needed to address soil erosion. Planting grass in critical treatment areas and utilizing the strip till method have helped cut down on the erosion problem. Batten said EQIP has made a big impact on his farming operation.



J and M Farm specializes in producing corn, cotton, soybeans and wheat.

Batten on completing practices on his land. Golden said Batten has taken that extra step and has made it a point to inform other farmers about the NRCS programs.



EQIP funds helped Batten retrofit pivots on the farm's irrigation system. They are now low pressure which conserves water.



NRCS employees Rich Hosmer and Melissa Golden have worked with Jesse Batten (center) to install conservation treatments around his Leesburg farm.

"I like taking advantage of the program. It cuts the cost of farming. It provides a lot of savings and more people should take advantage of it," Batten explained.

NRCS Soil Conservation Technician, Melissa Golden, worked with

"He steers a lot of applicants our way," Golden said.

Batten who was named Conservationist of the Year in 2008 for the Lower Chattahoochee River Soil and Water Conservation District believes that more farmers should take a more active role in conserving natural resources.

"I let them know to take advantage of conservation programs because we need to conserve natural resources like soil because we need to save all the top soil we can," Batten said.

 **NRCS** Natural Resources Conservation Service

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**Lower Chattahoochee River
Soil And Water
Conservation District**