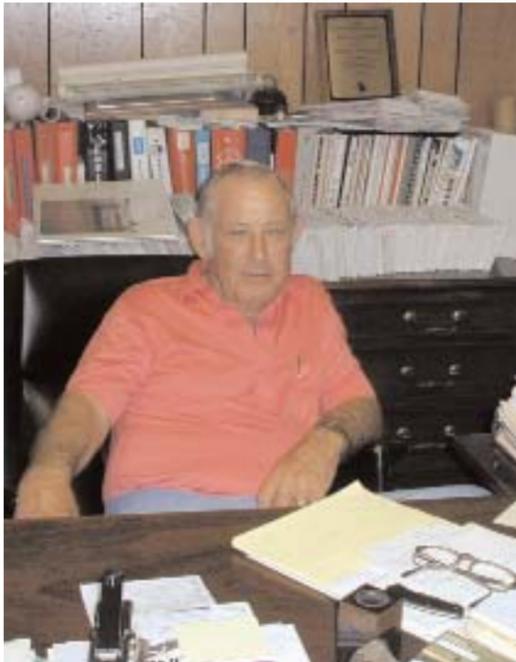


Another Conservation Success Story...

Chatham County, Georgia

October, 2006



Pete Waller sits in his office at Ottawa Farms.

Conservation a Long-term Venture for Bloomingdale Native Pete Waller

Pete Waller's name is synonymous with natural resources conservation in Georgia. A third generation farmer who lives in Bloomingdale, Georgia, Waller said that "Conservation runs in the family."

Local residents may know Ottawa Farms as a "U-pick" strawberry farm, but there's more to the farm than that. He also grows wheat, corn, sunflowers, rye, blueberries, watermelon, cantaloupes, and pumpkins.

In addition, Waller runs about 100 head of beef cattle, and uses a conservation practice known as rotational grazing to reduce wear and tear on the land.

Pastures are fenced and when the grass has been eaten to a certain level, the cattle are moved to a fresh pasture. This allows the first pasture to regenerate and



and

Waller often hosts tours of his operation to encourage other farmers to adopt conservation practices.

"If one farmer does it, everybody wants to do it," he said. "We were the first ones that really started no-till in this state; RC&D Council provided drills and tractors to overseed. Every generation (of Wallers) has improved on what was here," he adds.

Fences allow cattle to be moved from one pasture to another giving the grass a chance to regenerate on its own.



Conservation ponds are functional as well as beautiful.

provides a continual food supply for the animals.

"Rotational grazing is the only way to go; every two weeks we turn the cows into another pasture," Waller said.

Recently, he planted longleaf pine trees in another conservation practice known as silvopasture.

As the pines grow, grass will be planted underneath for cattle. As the cattle eat the grass, they will also fertilize the pine trees.

An added advantage is that the grass will not have to be mowed. It is a natural recycling system. A long-time conservationist,

"I got two grandchildren. If the children will improve the land as much as the past three generations, they'll have a paradise to live in," Waller said.



This new stackhouse allows excess poultry litter to be stored until it can be safely and beneficially applied.

The latest addition to the conservation farm is a community nutrient management facility. "Chicken litter has saturated north Georgia; but it is needed in South Georgia.

It's going to eventually end up in a river somewhere (if we don't do something about it),"

Waller said when asked why he volunteered his farm as the site for the multi-farm project. Extra nutrients in the water supply can lead to increased growth of the vegetation and end up depleting the water of oxygen.

This new facility will allow the litter to be composted and stored in an environmentally safe manner until it is needed.

Four other farmers joined with him to get the project going.

Funded through the Environmental Quality Improvement Program, the project stands as a testament to innovative thinking and partnerships in conservation.

"Every generation has improved on what was here," –Pete Waller

Coastal Georgia RC&D
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 **Natural Resources Conservation Service**

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