

Another Conservation Success Story...

Rockdale County, Georgia

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Rockdale County Horse Farm Thrives With EQIP Funding

By Karen Buckley Washington, Lawrenceville

Rockdale County landowners Nigel and Cheryl Pritchard combined their agricultural and equine knowledge to create a wonderful marriage - with one another and on their farm.

Prior to meeting in 2001, Nigel relocated from England to Atlanta and worked in the fast-paced corporate environment at CNN. Equally, Cheryl held impressive roles with Coca-Cola, as well as other corporate giants. Yet, both dreamed of living out their passion for farming.

Nigel has an agricultural background, holding academic credentials from a top agricultural college in England and serving on the agriculture training board at the Agriculture Ministry of England. Cheryl has extensive horse farming experience from her upbringing in Lexington, KY. In 2004, they purchased their new farm, even holding their wedding in their barn.

Simply Dun Farm is a 34.5 acre property in Conyers. The property had been vacant for about 5 years, so the Pritchards began working to put in new fencing as well as assessing their pasture land and water resources.

“We have a number of lakes on the property, three in particular and the climate is such in Georgia where it can be in the hundreds in the summer, to strangely, snow in the winter, to torrential rain sometimes,” said Nigel. “So, erosion was something that I was concerned about. We were very keen to know that we were in a water conservation area. When you’re working with horses, most are inside at night and outside during the day, so we had a situation where we wanted to make sure that we had proper concrete paths put in. We wanted to be able to get water to the fields because horses drink gallons and gallons of water and using hose pipes across 32

acres becomes difficult (laughter).”

The Pritchards knew that conservation resources for landowners with their concerns existed, but Cheryl’s Internet searches didn’t yield the results they were seeking. While attending a conservation workshop on another farm in their area, Cheryl met District Conservationist, Jerome Brown, with the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and began to find solutions to their concerns.

With incentives through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), the Pritchard’s installed heavy use areas, a watering facility and cross fencing. By using cross fencing, the Pritchards are able to fence off watering areas, allowing them to use more of the land than before. This has



Cheryl and Nigel Pritchard pose with their horse on Simply Dun Farm.

improved the water quality of their ponds when it rains.

“We’re lucky enough to work with NRCS and have proper water systems put in place which has made a big difference for us.”— Nigel Pritchard

Today, the Pritchards have left corporate America behind and dedicated themselves to their farm full time. Simply Dun

Farm offers horse boarding in their custom built facility, camps for children, fishing and events. They also have formed a nonprofit organization that offers horse education to autistic children.



Children take horseback riding lessons on the Rockdale County farm.

“We’re lucky enough to work with NRCS and have proper water systems put in place which has made a big difference for us,” said Nigel. “Once we found NRCS and the door was opened, it’s been wonderful. They’ve offered a lot of communication – a lot of feedback. They’ve taken a real interest in what we’re doing here. We’re not just a number, we’re real people. They have ideas and they also listen to what we have. They’re willing to be flexible and adapt to those ideas. That makes a big difference.”

Upper Ocmulgee River Resource Conservation and Development Council



Lawrenceville Service Center

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Rockdale County Soil and Water Conservation District

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