

Another Conservation Success Story...

Peach County, Georgia

January 2008

Peach County Cattle Farmer Utilizes Georgia Grazing Land Conservation Coalition

According to Henry Terhune, Peach County cattleman, the assistance of NRCS and Extension in helping make soil improvements on marginal land for forage production was a contributing factor in prompting him to apply for the Georgia Grazing Land Conservation Coalition (GGLCC) project. "I recognized the need to change the soil structure of the land that had been farmed for years as a peach farm and then abandoned to grow up in scrub sweet gum and hickory, states Terhune. The application process helped me see that the soil fertility and usefulness of the land could be changed with specific practices put into place."

Terhune cut salvageable trees and removed stumps, trunks and scrub trees to reclaim marginal land for additional pasture. To improve soil quality prior to planting hybrid bermudagrass pasture, Terhune planted rye grass in the fall and millet in the summer for temporary grazing, ground cover and mulch. Bermudagrass was established in strips over three summers starting in 2001. Soil samples were taken twice a year to adjust soil fertility levels with commercial fertilizers. Terhune raised the soil pH of the land from an average of 5.5 to 6.1. Herbicides were used to control broadleaf weeds, while spot spraying was often employed to keep from over applying chemicals. Wide-span spraying was used to control crabgrass, which was Terhune's biggest problem.

"We increased our forage area from approximately 47 acres to 100 acres, explains Terhune. We increased cow numbers as the pasture increased and improved. We continued to use artificial insemination to breed our cows and kept the best replacement heifers. Our cow number increased from 26 head in 2000 to 56 head in the spring of 2003; and we increased our Boer goat herd to 20 head. The high point of GGLCC cost-share assistance has been that we were able to reach our goals five years earlier than expected. We would have had to delay what we have accomplished until 2010 because of a lack of available personal capital."



Henry Terhune of Peach County utilized the GGLCC Program to achieve his goals a decade sooner than he would have been able to without assistance.



Terhune was able to double his herd size as the pastureland increased.



Terhune's pastureland was increased by 55 acres bringing his total to over 100 acres.



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