

# Another Conservation Success Story...

## Gilmer County, Georgia

January 2011

### Ellijay Couple Benefits from CSP Assistance

Reece Orchard sits deep in the heart of the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. For 16 years, Rachel Reece and her husband John have managed a farm operation that includes fruit trees, truck farming, agro-tourism and poultry in Gilmer County.

The operation is a sizeable source of soil, water and other natural resources that the surrounding agriculture community depends on.

This facility will also provide a secure storage area for the chemicals and an emergency washing area for personnel working with this aspect of the operation.

Any time more land is considered for the introduction of cropland or orchard; the Reeces follow the proper steps to stay compliant with the 1985 Farm Bill.

Maintenance associated with the vegetable and fruit production operations is never ending, especially when such intensive care is given to conserve the natural resources associated with those operations.



Reece Orchard has been producing local fruit and vegetables for 16 years.



Reece Orchard sits in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Along with this dependence, the Reeces realize the importance of conserving those resources and ensuring that use can continue. The couple has utilized the technical and financial assistance provided by the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to support them in those conservation efforts.

To address the potential nutrient loading of neighboring water resources by their poultry operation, the Reeces have installed a dead bird composting facility and a waste storage facility. They practice comprehensive nutrient management on their cropland and orchards.

In addition to the nutrient management needs of the cropland and orchard operations, cover crops are planted on vegetable croplands, while permanent vegetation is established between the rows of the orchard.

Integrated Pest Management is strictly followed to ensure no improper applications of pesticides occur.

An Agriculture Chemical Mixing Facility is currently under construction to provide a completely confined system, which will prevent spillage from reaching surface and ground water resources.

To help offset those financial inputs, Rachel sought assistance from NRCS through the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) so that they could continue doing a good job of caring for the land while improving on some other areas of the business

the legume cover crops, crop rotations, and other practices associated with the vegetable operation.

“Future generations will have to take care of the land for it to produce if they are going to make a living doing it. That’s what we want our kids to understand,” Rachel Reece said.

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“The public wants to buy locally, and that’s something we want to provide for them,” Rachel Reece said.

The Reeces have already seen the benefits of utilizing



The Reece operation includes fruit trees, agro-tourism, and poultry production.

**Limestone Valley RC&D**  
706-625-7044

 **Natural Resources Conservation Service**  
478-745-2794

**Limestone Valley Soil And Water Conservation District**

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