

**Don Surrency reviews plant materials (seed) allocations with Jerome Jones that will be used for critical area stabilization and wildlife habitat improvement. (Columbia Co., Georgia)**



**Amos Jones planting 'TUKA' eastern gamagrass near Madison, Georgia**



**Mack Evans planting native grasses in Early County, Georgia.**



## Partners

**USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center,  
Americus, Georgia  
Fort Valley State University  
Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission  
Georgia Association of Conservation Districts  
Lower Chattahoochee River Conservation Districts**

For more information on plants for your farm, contact your local USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service Office or USDA-Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center, Americus, Georgia or visit the PMC website at [www.ga.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/pmc/pmc.html](http://www.ga.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/pmc/pmc.html).

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# PLANT MATERIALS ASSISTANCE TO SMALL FARMS



Small farms have unique ecosystems. The ecosystems are very rare because they are often unchanged for over 50 years. They contain small fields and hedgerows with native and natural vegetation that protect lakes and streams and provide habitat for wildlife. Small farmers usually apply less fertilizers and pesticides on their crops, resulting in improved water quality and healthier ecosystems, both on and off site. Small farms are a unique and steadily diminishing resource in most agricultural watersheds.



**On the Evans Farm, the silvopasture offers diversity for Small Farmers by providing income opportunities from timber products, forages, and livestock. The grazing area consists of Pensacola bahiagrass and crimson clover.**



**Mack Evans with Don Surrency, Malcome Kirkland, USDA-NRCS and Dr. Mary Goodman, Auburn University observing silvo-pasture demonstration..**

Farm demonstrations exist to meet customer needs for cost effective solutions that address natural resource problems. Plant material field demonstrations can positively impact the small farmer/limited resource program by providing new plant technology. Improved plant varieties will ultimately improve production, control soil erosion, and improve the quality of life.

These demonstrations have given small farmers the opportunity to see first-hand the value of plant technology and how it can improve their farming operation. The Kennedy Farm, located in Cobbtown, Georgia, has been a demonstration site since 1996. The 1,300-acre farm enterprise includes approximately 130 brood cows, catfish production, goats, fishponds, and horses. They grow sugar cane, sweet potatoes vegetables, small acreage of soybeans, and corn. They also harvest pecans, and sell pine trees for pulp and saw timber.

The **Natural Resources Conservation Service, Plant Materials Program**, is assisting small farmers and providing the state of the art plant technology to more efficiently manage their farm operation. To demonstrate rotational grazing on their pastures, electric fencing was installed to create smaller fields, or paddocks, within larger pastures.

The Fort Valley State University assisted in these efforts providing training on soil fertility demonstrating good animal health and nutrition to small farmers by inoculating to prevent diseases, worming, using implants, and recommending supplemental feed requirements based on the (GLA) grazing land nutritional balancer.

### On the cover:

Donald Surrency, plant materials specialist discusses plant materials plan with H. Jerome Jones, landowner, Willow Oaks Farm, Columbia County. Dove field has been planted with 'Dove Proso' Millet and 'Atlantic' Coastal Panicgrass.

Livestock production is the most important value-added industry in the United States. To sustain this industry, forages are produced on more than half the land area of the country. Current livestock production in the southeast relies heavily on forages and grains whose intense production has had adverse effects on the ecosystem.

The demonstration farms are expected to show the potential of native warm-season grasses as an alternative source of forage in the southeast. They also show how the use of cool-season legumes interseeded into warm-season grasses will increase total forage biomass production, and be efficient, inexpensive, and a nonpolluting source of nitrogen for succeeding grasses.

The demonstrations will provide the small farmer with site specific information on the management of native warm season grasses for production of good quality grazing system in a sustainable, low-input system.



**Eastern gamagrass, a warm season grass, can support a large herd of cattle when used with and efficient rotational grazing system.**