

Projects . Successes . Partnerships

 **NRCS** Louisiana
Conservation Update
United States Department of Agriculture . Natural Resources Conservation Service

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February 2013

Cover Crops Pay Big Dividends

Franklin Parish Success

**NRCS Accepting
Applications
for Special Initiatives**

A cooperative partnership with local
Soil and Water Conservation Districts and
Resource Conservation and Development Councils (RC&D)

HELPING PEOPLE HELP THE LAND

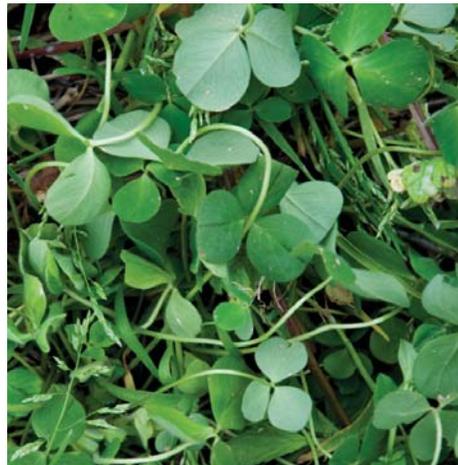
The Conservation Update is distributed monthly by mail and e-mail.

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On the Cover



Cover crops serve many benefits to farmers. Turn to pages 4 and 5 to learn how a cover crop helped one Franklin Parish farmer.



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USDA's Commitment to Equality

USDA believes every farmer and rancher should be treated equally and fairly, and we are committed to resolving all cases involving allegations of past discrimination by individuals.

Referral Guide for USDA Settlements and Claims Adjudication Process

Women and Hispanic Farmers and Ranchers Claims Adjudication Process

If you believe that USDA improperly denied farm loan benefits to you for certain time periods between 1981 and 2000 because you are a female or because you are Hispanic, you may be eligible to apply for compensation. To request a claims package by telephone, call 1-888-508-4429. To request a claims package online, please visit www.farmerclaims.gov

Native American Farmer and Rancher Class Action Settlement (Keepseagle v. Vilsack)

If you are a Native American who was denied a farm loan or loan servicing by the USDA between January 1, 1981, and November 24, 1999, you may be eligible for benefits from a Class Action Settlement. To request a claims package by telephone, call: 1-888-233-5506. To request a claims package online, or for more information, please visit: www.indianfarmclass.com

African American Farmer and Rancher Class Action Settlement (Pigford II)

If you are an African American farmer (a) who submitted a request to file a late claim on or between October 13, 1999, and June 18, 2008, under the 1999 USDA settlement in the earlier class action known as Pigford v. Glickman ("Pigford") and (b) who did not receive a merits determination on your discrimination claim, you may be eligible for benefits from a Class Action Settlement. To hear information by telephone, call 1-866-950-5547 or 1-866-472-7826. To find information online, please visit: www.blackfarmercase.com

Notes from the Acting State Conservationist

I am pleased to congratulate Louisiana farmer Earl Garber on his recent election as President of the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD).

Many of you know Earl, but for those of you who don't, Earl grew up on a dairy farm in southwestern Louisiana. Today, he is a licensed crop consultant and rice, soybean, and hay producer in Basile, Louisiana. He was a Louisiana Board Member for NACD, prior to being elected as NACD Second Vice President in 2009, First Vice President in 2011, and President-elect in 2012. He has served as Chairman of the NACD Legislative Foundation Committee for the past four years. He serves as a district board member on the Acadia Soil and Water Conservation District serving Acadia Parish, and his father served as the first chairman of the Lafayette Soil and Water Conservation District. You could say conservation runs in his blood!

Every day farmers and ranchers like Earl Garber invest in Louisiana's agricultural future by serving as Soil and Water Conservation District board members. Forty-four Soil and Water Conservation Districts work in partnership with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry to help Louisiana's farmers and ranchers conserve soil, water, air and other natural resources. This investment ensures our state and our nation have a healthy environment, and farmers and ranchers are able to produce abundant crops to feed and clothe our citizens.

Hats off to Earl Garber . . . and the men and women serving on Soil and Water Conservation Districts across our state and our nation.

Britt Paul
Acting State Conservationist
Louisiana



State Conservationist Kevin Norton is on detail assignment to Washington, DC, to work on Senator Debbie Stabenow's staff to help draft the language of our nation's next Farm Bill.

Quote of the Month

“An investment in knowledge always pays the best interest.”

Benjamin Franklin

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Twitter Follow us on Twitter: http://twitter.com/NRCS_Louisiana



. reduce soil erosion . reduce runoff . support
 . improve soil quality . reduce soil
 . increase water infiltration . conserve

Third generation farmer Kirby McLemore has a lot of experience on a tractor.

“I have been at this a while,” said Kirby McLemore. “I started helping on the farm when I was about six years old and driving a tractor when I was nine.”

He started his own farm in 1989 with 95 acres. McLemore now farms around 2,000 acres. He farmed cotton for 20 years, but switched to corn, wheat, and soybeans five years ago.

McLemore understands what it takes to be a good steward of the land, and he is no stranger to the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Through the years, he has installed conservation practices through the Turkey Creek 319 Water Quality Program, Environmental Quality Incentives Program, and Conservation Stewardship Program. Each practice installed has helped keep his soil intact and on his farm.

When he began to notice problems with soil health and potential issues with the quality of the water leaving his farm, he paid NRCS a visit.

Jason Hardie, NRCS District Conservationist in the Winnsboro Field Office, recommended adding cover crops to McLemore’s conservation activities. McLemore elected to plant a mixture of Australian winter pea and

Cover Crops

“Winter cover crops with excellent potential for use in rotations in Louisiana include vetches, winter peas and some clovers. Biomass of these crops can exceed 2 tons per acre and contain 120 pounds or more of fixed and scavenged nitrogen per acre.”

Boquet, Donald, “Winter Cover Crops.” Louisiana Conservation Tillage (3/12); LSU AgCenter Pub. 3216, Page 10. Print.

Contact:
 holly.martien@la.usda.gov
 for a copy of this publication.



suppress weeds . increase organic matter .
reduce soil compaction . supply nitrogen .
conserve soil moisture . increase yields .

McLemore uses crimson clover as a cover crop on 80 acres of his farm.

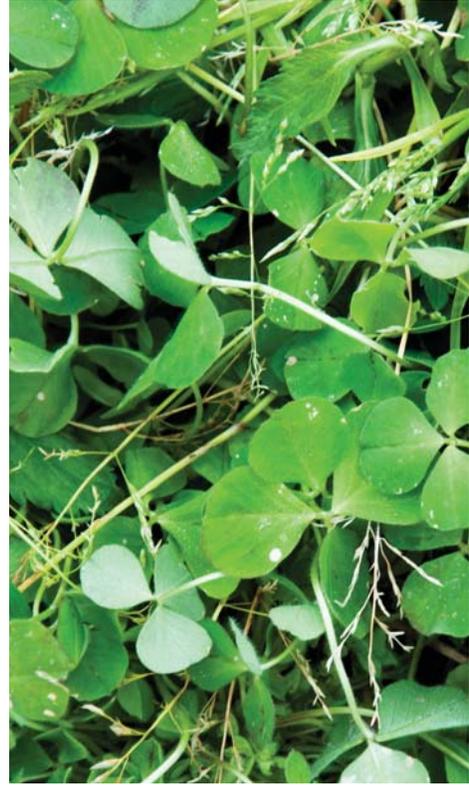
Cover crops serve many benefits to farmers including reducing soil erosion, reducing nitrogen/nutrient runoff from fields, suppressing weeds, and increasing organic matter. Cover crops improve soil quality, reduce soil compaction, supply nitrogen, increase water infiltration, decrease run-off, conserve soil moisture, and increase yields of crops that follow.

McLemore reports that his cover crop has helped keep his soil intact and not eroding into drainage ditches that run into Turkey Creek Lake—a popular recreation lake in

Franklin Parish. His cover crop has helped increase his farm profits as well by increasing the available nitrogen in the soil, which reduces the amount of nitrogen purchased for spring crops.

Planting cover crops pays big dividends. You keep your soil. You add value to your soil. You protect the quality of the water. You increase your profits.

To find out more about cover crops and how they can add value to your farm or ranch, call or visit your local NRCS office. A complete listing of offices with contact information is included on the last page of this publication.



Pay Big Dividends



Kirby McLemore
Conservationist



NRCS Accepting Applications from Ag and Forestry Producers for EQIP Funding Through Special Initiatives

Current Ranking Period Ends April 19

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary conservation program that helps agricultural producers improve water and air quality, build healthier soil, improve grazing and forest lands, conserve energy, enhance organic operations, and achieve other environmental benefits.

Applications for EQIP funding are accepted from agricultural and forestry producers at local USDA Service Centers throughout the year in a continuous sign-up process; however, NRCS periodically announces cutoff dates when applications are ranked for funding.

The current EQIP application ranking period for the special initiative funding ends **April 19, 2013**.

Special initiatives offered through EQIP include:

- On-Farm Energy Initiative to help producers conserve energy on their operations;
- Seasonal High Tunnel Initiative to help producers install high tunnels designed to extend the growing season into the cold months, increase productivity, keep plants at a steady temperature and conserve water and energy;
- Organic Initiative to help producers install conservation practices on certified organic operations or those working toward organic certification;
- Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative to help producers in targeted watersheds improve water quality in the Mississippi River Basin;
- Gulf of Mexico Initiative to help producers in targeted watersheds improve water quality in the Gulf of Mexico;
- Longleaf Pine Initiative to help forest land producers improve the sustainability and profitability of longleaf pine ecosystems;
- Master Farmer Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative to help participants of the Louisiana Master Farmer Program implement practices within their existing Resource Management System Conservation Plan and address identified resource concerns;
- Statewide Wildlife EQIP Initiative to focus funding for wildlife conservation; and
- Beginning Farmer/Rancher and Socially Disadvantaged Farmer/Rancher Initiative to focus EQIP funding for historically underserved farmers and ranchers.

For more information about EQIP or other technical or financial assistance programs offered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, please contact your nearest USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. A complete listing of offices with contact information is included on the last page of this publication.



Check it out!

- Soil Health Fact Sheets
- Healthy, Productive Soils Checklist
- Profiles in Soil Health

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/soils/health/>

Around the State

Jan 9-11

Louisiana Association of Conservation Districts - The Louisiana Association of Conservation Districts hosted their 67th annual convention in Baton Rouge, Louisiana on January 9 – 11, 2013. There were 182 people in attendance from across Louisiana. This year's general session focused on the use, management, quality, and quantity of Louisiana water. In addition to the meeting sessions, a special luncheon was held on Thursday, January 12, 2013, recognizing the 33 farmers that were certified as Master Farmers in 2012.

Jan 18-19

Ag Expo 2013 - The 31st Annual Ag Expo was held January 18 and 19, 2013, in West Monroe, Louisiana. NRCS exhibited at the expo and provided Farmer Ryan coloring books, soils planners, "When to Plant Conservation Species" posters, and conservation planning brochures to exhibit visitors.

Feb 12

Irrigation Efficiency Workshop - The Natural Resources Conservation Service and Caddo Soil and Water Conservation District hosted a one-day irrigation efficiency workshop on February 12, 2013, at the Caddo Extension Service Office in Shreveport, Louisiana. During the workshop, farmers learned how to monitor the efficiency of their current irrigation system, plan a more efficient irrigation system, conserve energy, and recover tailwater/surface runoff. A briefing was provided on the Red Bayou Irrigation Project.



Feb 25

Washington Parish Producers Visited by Deputy Secretary of Agriculture

New FSA Loan Program and NRCS Conservation Activities Spotlights

Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Kathleen Merrigan visited Kippy and Kari King in Washington Parish, Louisiana, on February 25, 2013, to spotlight a new Farm Service Agency loan opportunity —the Microloan Program. During her visit, Deputy Secretary Merrigan also commended the Kings on their conservation efforts through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program. This event was covered by local media as well as the Louisiana Farm Bureau Network.

Kippy and Kari King, along with their sons Cody and Kasey, have been in the livestock business for about three years. The Kings started out small with about 15 Brangus type cows on

their 30-acre ranch in Washington Parish, Louisiana. Today, their cow/calf livestock operation has grown to an 80-cow herd on about 300 acres of pasture land; of which 240 acres are leased.

Since taking on the leased land, the Kings have worked with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to implement several conservation practices to make their operation more sustainable and profitable. These practices include pasture renovation, fencing, a livestock watering system, and planting of clover for better forage quality and improved forage utilization by the livestock.

The Kings worked with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) to obtain a microloan for improvements to the farm. They plan to use the microloan funds to purchase several pieces of equipment that will assist in improving the health and fertility of the soil and forages, improve handling facilities for safer working conditions, and increase herd size to utilize all available land resources. Their ultimate goal is to increase the forage availability on the farm which will reduce operating costs and increase income.



Contact Our Offices

Parish	Field Office	Soil and Water Conservation District	Address	Telephone
Acadia	Crowley	Acadia SWCD	157 Cherokee Drive, Suite C, Crowley, LA 70526	(337) 783-5823, ext. 3
Allen	Oberlin	Allen SWCD	309 North 1st Street, Suite 1, Oberlin, LA 70655	(337) 639-4850, ext. 3
Ascension	Donaldsonville	Lower Delta SWCD and New River SWCD	2274 Highway 70, Suite C, Donaldsonville, LA 70346	(225) 473-7638, ext. 3
Assumption	Donaldsonville	Lower Delta SWCD	2274 Highway 70, Suite C, Donaldsonville, LA 70346	(225) 473-7638, ext. 3
Avoyelles	Marksville	Avoyelles SWCD	629 Tunica Drive West, Marksville, LA 71351	(318) 253-9445, ext. 3
Beauregard	DeRidder	Calcasieu SWCD	597 Mahlon Street, Suite B, DeRidder, LA 70634	(337) 463-8555, ext. 3
Bienville	Minden	Saline SWCD	216B Broadway, Minden, LA 71055	(318) 377-3950, ext. 3
Bossier	Benton	Bodcau SWCD	200 Burt Boulevard, Suite 101, Benton, LA 71006-4901	(318) 965-2185, ext. 3
Caddo	Shreveport	Caddo SWCD	1402 Hawn Avenue, Shreveport, LA 71107	(318) 676-3461, ext. 3
Calcasieu	Lake Charles	Gulf Coast SWCD	1400 Highway 14, Suite B, Lake Charles, LA 70601	(337) 436-5020, ext. 3
Caldwell	Columbia	Boeuf and Dugdeмона SWCD	7128 Highway 165 South, Suite 2, Columbia, LA 71418	(318) 649-2651, ext. 3
Cameron	Lake Charles	Gulf Coast SWCD	1400 Highway 14, Suite B, Lake Charles, LA 70601	(337) 436-5020, ext. 3
Catahoula	Jonesville	Catahoula SWCD	3545 4th Street, Jonesville, LA 71343	(318) 339-4239, ext. 3
Claiborne	Minden	D'Arbonne SWCD	216B Broadway, Minden, LA 71055	(318) 377-3950, ext. 3
Concordia	Ferriday	Tensas-Concordia SWCD	8331 Highway 84, Ferriday, LA 71334	(318) 757-2455, ext. 3
DeSoto	Mansfield	DeSoto SWCD	211 Washington Avenue, Mansfield, LA 71052	(318) 872-4949, ext. 3
East Baton Rouge	Denham Springs	Capital SWCD	2191 Tower Drive, Denham Springs, LA 70726	(225) 664-1430, ext. 3
East Carroll	Lake Providence	East Carroll SWCD	406 Lake Street, Suite C, Lake Providence, LA 71254	(318) 559-2604, ext. 3
East Feliciana	Clinton	Feliciana SWCD	9752 Plank Road South, Clinton, LA 70722	(225) 683-5496, ext. 3
Evangeline	Ville Platte	Evangeline SWCD	205 Court Street, Ville Platte, LA 70586	(337) 363-6602, ext. 3
Franklin	Winnsboro	Northeast SWCD	616 Riser Road, Winnsboro, LA 71295	(318) 435-6743, ext. 3
Grant	Colfax	Grant SWCD	510 Main Street, Colfax, LA 71417	(318) 627-9903, ext. 3
Iberia	New Iberia	Iberia SWCD	2617 Northside Road, Suite 600, New Iberia, LA 70563	(337) 369-6623, ext. 3
Iberville	Addis	Lower Delta SWCD	7747 Highway 1 South, Addis, LA 70710	(225) 687-2184, ext. 3
Jackson	Ruston	Dugdeмона SWCD	1412 Celebrity Drive, Ruston, LA 71270	(318) 255-3136, ext. 3
Jefferson	Boutte	Crescent SWCD	14246 US Highway 90, Boutte, LA 70039	(985) 758-2162, ext. 3
Jefferson Davis	Jennings	Jefferson Davis SWCD	2003 Port Drive, Jennings, LA 70546	(337) 824-0975, ext. 3
Lafayette	Lafayette	Lafayette SWCD	905 Jefferson Street, Suite 310, Lafayette, LA 70501-7913	(337) 262-6601, ext. 3
Lafourche	Thibodaux	Lafourche-Terrebonne SWCD	143 Laura Drive, Thibodaux, LA 70301	(985) 447-3871, ext. 3
LaSalle	Jonesville	LaSalle SWCD	3545 4th Street, Jonesville, LA 71343	(318) 339-4239, ext. 3
Lincoln	Ruston	D'Arbonne SWCD	1412 Celebrity Drive, Ruston, LA 71270	(318) 255-3136, ext. 3
Livingston	Denham Springs	Capital SWCD	2191 Tower Drive, Denham Springs, LA 70726	(225) 664-1430, ext. 3
Madison	Tallulah	Madison SWCD	1900 Crothers Drive, Tallulah, LA 71282	(318) 574-4158, ext. 3
Morehouse	Bastrop	Morehouse SWCD	9604 Marlatt Street, Bastrop, LA 71220	(318) 283-7626, ext. 3
Natchitoches	Natchitoches	Natchitoches SWCD	6949 Louisiana Highway 1 Bypass, Natchitoches, LA 71457	(318) 357-8366, ext. 3
Orleans	Boutte	Crescent SWCD	14246 US Highway 90, Boutte, LA 70039	(985) 758-2162, ext. 3
Ouachita	Monroe	D'Arbonne/Boeuf River SWCD	2410 Old Sterlington Road, Suite B, Monroe, LA 71203-2668	(318) 343-4467, ext. 3
Plaquemines	Boutte	Plaquemines SWCD	14246 US Highway 90, Boutte, LA 70039	(985) 758-2162, ext. 3
Pointe Coupee	New Roads	Upper Delta SWCD	180 East Main Street, New Roads, LA 70760	(225) 638-7746, ext. 3
Rapides	Alexandria	Rapides SWCD	3734 Government Street, Building C, Alexandria, LA 71303	(318) 473-7856, ext. 3
Red River	Coushatta	Red River SWCD	1311 Ringgold Avenue, Coushatta, LA 71019	(318) 932-4352, ext. 3
Richland	Rayville	Boeuf River SWCD	141 Industrial Loop, Rayville, LA 71269	(318) 728-4451, ext. 3
Sabine	Many	Sabine SWCD	570 Highway 171 By Pass, Many, LA 71449	(318) 256-3491
St. Bernard	Boutte	Crescent SWCD	14246 US Highway 90, Boutte, LA 70039	(985) 758-2162, ext. 3
St. Charles	Boutte	Crescent SWCD	14246 US Highway 90, Boutte, LA 70039	(985) 758-2162, ext. 3
St. Helena	Amite	Tangipahoa-St. Helena SWCD	805 West Oak Street, Suite 1, Amite, LA 70422-2820	(985) 748-8751, ext. 3
St. James	Donaldsonville	Lower Delta SWCD and New River SWCD	2274 Highway 70, Suite C, Donaldsonville, LA 70346	(225) 473-7638, ext. 3
St. John	Boutte	Crescent SWCD	14246 US Highway 90, Boutte, LA 70039	(985) 758-2162, ext. 3
St. Landry	Opelousas	St. Landry SWCD	5832 I-49 North Service Road, Opelousas, LA 70570	(337) 942-2530, ext. 3
St. Martin	Lafayette	St. Martin SWCD	905 Jefferson Street, Suite 310, Lafayette, LA 70501-7913	(337) 262-6601, ext. 3
St. Mary	Franklin	St. Mary SWCD	500 Main Street, Franklin, LA 70538	(337) 828-1461, ext. 3
St. Tammany	Franklinton	Bogue Chitto-Pearl River SWCD	1111 Washington Street, Franklinton, LA 70438	(985) 839-5688, ext. 3
Tangipahoa	Amite	Tangipahoa-St. Helena SWCD	805 West Oak Street, Suite 1, Amite, LA 70422-2820	(985) 748-8751, ext. 3
Tensas	St. Joseph	Tensas-Concordia SWCD	1223 Plank Road, St. Joseph, LA 71366	(318) 766-3502, ext. 3
Terrebonne	Thibodaux	Lafourche-Terrebonne SWCD	143 Laura Drive, Thibodaux, LA 70301	(985) 447-3871, ext. 3
Union	Farmerville	D'Arbonne SWCD	604 East Water Street, Farmerville, LA 71241	(318) 368-8021
Vermilion	Abbeville	Vermilion SWCD	3221 Veterans Memorial Drive, Suite H, Abbeville, LA 70510	(337) 893-5664, ext. 3
Vernon	Leesville	Calcasieu SWCD	205 North 5th Street, Leesville, LA 71446	(337) 239-2193
Washington	Franklinton	Bogue Chitto-Pearl River SWCD	1111 Washington Street, Franklinton, LA 70438	(985) 839-5688, ext. 3
Webster	Minden	Dorcheat SWCD	216B Broadway, Minden, LA 71055	(318) 377-3950, ext. 3
West Baton Rouge	Addis	Upper Delta SWCD	7747 Highway 1, South, Addis, LA 70710	(225) 687-2184, ext. 3
West Carroll	Oak Grove	West Carroll SWCD	208 South Constitution Street, Oak Grove, LA 71263	(318) 428-9303, ext. 3
West Feliciana	Clinton	Feliciana SWCD	9752 Plank Road South, Clinton, LA 70722	(225) 683-5496, ext. 3
Winn	Natchitoches	Dugdeмона SWCD	6949 Louisiana Highway 1 Bypass, Natchitoches, LA 71457	(318) 357-8366, ext. 3



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