

# Another Conservation Success Story...

## McIntosh County, Georgia

October 2009

### Summer Vacations Lead to Love of Farming

Unlike many farmers, Dan Hawthorne did not grow up on a farm, but it was his family that gave him the love of the land. "Every summer, we (he and his siblings) went to grandfather's place (near Ocala, Florida) and worked on the farm," he said.

**"We're the last protection before this marsh so it's important that we get it right—that we protect it."  
--Dan Hawthorne**

He is like most farmers, however, in that he has another job to pay the bills. "Farming is, I guess you'd say, a sideline," he added.

Hawthorne is a licensed real estate agent, and an erosion and sediment control consultant. In the 70s, he and his wife, Lottie, started Hawthorne Farms.

"This was my father's family's property and I bought it from my mom and dad in the 70s. I bought a Caterpillar and started clearing—it had been farmland at one time, but was overgrown." Today he owns 100 acres of highland and 200 acres of marsh—protected land.

"We're the last protection before this marsh so it's important that we get it right—that we protect it," he said.



Dan Hawthorne on his farm in McIntosh County.

"Adjacent to our upland property are tidal creeks and salt marshes, and then the salt water rivers, the sound, and the ocean.

People fish, swim, and recreate in the waters near us, and further out commercial production of shellfish, shrimp, and fish as well as recreational harvests take place.

It is important, therefore, that the quality of the water leaving our farm is as good as we can make it. Given that we are getting storm water runoff from a mile of County maintained dirt road, our property is the last chance for filtration before it reaches the salt marsh," he explained.

One of his conservation practices, a combination winter feeder and waste storage facility—is designed to do just that.

He runs 20 head of brood cattle. A winter feeder was constructed on the Hawthorne farm to address multiple resource concerns.

It prevents soil erosion and runoff in high traffic areas where cattle are fed during the winter months. It also provides a manure composting and storage area to prevent pollution from entering the nearby marsh. Once composted, the manure can be spread on pastures as fertilizer.

The Hawthornes also intend to use the composted manure in potting soil to support their beginning nursery operation "We have gotten into ornamental plants—primarily sago palms," he said.

Hawthorne is proud of the conservation work he has done on his land. "I think we've accomplished some pretty significant things," he said.



Hawthorne Farms runs 20 head of brood cattle.

Through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Partners for Fish and Wildlife, 4,777 feet of fencing was installed to exclude livestock from sensitive wetland areas and establish a rotational grazing system that will make more efficient use of grazing resources.

He also installed 4 watering facilities to provide cattle with a clean, reliable source of drinking water and facilitate rotational grazing by ensuring a source of drinking water in each paddock.

Each watering facility includes a heavy use area to protect the high traffic areas around troughs from soil damage.

Additional heavy use areas were designed to prevent soil erosion and runoff in high traffic areas near gates.



4,777 ft. of new fencing excludes the livestock from sensitive wetlands and allows for rotational grazing.



This storage facility will keep hay fresh and dry and later serve as manure storage until it can be used as fertilizer.

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