

Another Conservation Success Story...

Forsyth County, Georgia

October 2006

Soil Historian Conserves Family Land

Joe Russell's land has been in his family since the Cherokee Indians helped his great-grandfather, John R. Westbrooks, build his log cabin about a century ago.

A gully, left over from the time the land was used to produce cotton, was eroding and contributing to poor water quality.

Russell needed good grazing land for his cattle and a way to provide water for them without polluting the stream.

With technical assistance from NRCS and partial funding through the Environmental Quality Incentives Programs, a conservation plan was developed and conservation measures were installed to reach all of these goals.

Fields were fenced.

Water troughs were installed.

Wildlife habitat was created.

The gully was plugged.

No-till was introduced.

Nutrient and pest management was incorporated into the plan as well.

According to Russell, "The level of soil erosion in Forsyth County is at the lowest level it has ever been."

What was once a cotton field is now pasture land for Russell's purebred cattle giving his business a chance to become more prosperous and protecting the

environment at the same time.

Russell and his family were named Upper Chattahoochee River Soil & Water Conservation District Family of the year as a reward for the efforts in conservation.

District Supervisor Leonard Ridings of the Upper Chattahoochee River SWCD said of Russell, "We need more farmers like Joe Russell. Not only does he want to preserve his farm as farmland not

land for development, but he also is very concerned about protecting all natural resources on his farm."



Joe and Helen Russell



A farm pond helps provide drinking water for cattle in different pastures to facilitate rotational grazing.



New fencing allows for rotation of livestock between pastures to prevent overgrazing.



Louise McPherson, Soil Conservationist, Gainesville Field Office, talks to one of Russell's horses while a co-worker closes the pasture gate.



The clean water from this drain pipe demonstrates how the pond helps clean the water and slow storm runoff to prevent erosion.

"Soil conservation is preserving the land, keeping soil erosion from occurring, and keeping streams clean." – Joe Russell

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 **NRCS** Natural Resources
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Upper Chattahoochee River Soil And
Water Conservation District