

# Another Conservation Success Story...

## Henry County, Georgia

June 2011

### Farmer Helps Improve Water Quality

Larry Allen, a native of Henry County, is proud of his southern heritage and the fact that he worked for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for over 28

years. "After graduating from college in 1967, I went to work for the Soil Conservation

Service in Walton County, which was a training county at that time. Julian Brown, district conservationist in Walton County, was an excellent supervisor," said Allen. During his career with NRCS, Allen trained many NRCS employees who are still working with the agency today. In 1994, Allen retired from NRCS and took on farming full time.

Allen, like his father, worked other jobs in order to keep the farm running. Allen's farm is not your ordinary farm. It is 500 acres of hay fields and cattle pastures scattered over eight tracks of land around the southern part of

He went on to say, "Back in the back I have some stream crossings that I put in myself and I moved the fence line back from Brown Creek to keep the cows out."

After the well was in, he decided to address other conservation concerns on his farm. He installed watering troughs, heavy use areas, seeded no-till legumes and used chemical spray pest management for weed control.

Allen also has a contract for no-till. "I have about 75 acres in no-till with the NRCS; the rest I do on my own (about

300 acres). I try to do the same thing for myself that I would do with ya'll, said Allen.

Some of the natural resource concerns that Allen's farm had were; soil erosion, water quantity and quality and forage quality and quantity. "Larry wanted longer forage seasons to reduce hay use. Cell grazing was also installed to reduce erosion and allow more recovery time for plants. He wanted more available water to the fields to increase cattle weight and better water quality," said Ford.

The one thing that Allen likes about EQIP is the help it provides farmers. "It helps offset some of our expenses and enables farmers to apply conservation to their property which they may not have otherwise been able to do. Shaun has been very dedicated about trying to help the farmers in this area," said Allen.

Allen has seen the no till legume planting help provide additional forage and grazing for his cows and provide an additional source of nitrogen. He has also seen a reduction in erosion. "The well and watering troughs provide

clean, fresh water near their grazing sites. The cattle do not have to travel so far to get water and burn less energy walking so they are less likely to have a reduction in weight. When I feed hay, I place the bales in different locations so the cows help to self fertilize the fields. Then, all I have to do is drag the fields to spread the manure around," said Allen.

Prior to asking for help from the NRCS, Allen found another way to save on fertilizer. "Putting sludge on the land is a great benefit because it has helped me cut down on my fertilizer. The city of McDonough is saving money. They are dumping their sludge, about 10 tons,



Larry Allen

on my land instead of going to the dump, where they would have to pay," said Allen.

Allen's farm is located adjacent to the Unity Grove Elementary School. From time to time, he notices the children looking through the fence watching what he is doing. Allen firmly believes in environmental and conservation education for our youth. He hopes the students will benefit from seeing his farming operation.

Allan's philosophy about future generations is in teaching the youth about the importance of agriculture. "Agriculture is most likely the number one business in the United States and is very important to our economy. Children need to understand that agricultural products grown in this country are what other countries need and want from the United States. Farmers play a very important role in our economy and our society. Children need to learn to protect our environment and be good stewards of our land. If we don't teach them, I am afraid that we will become a country of hungry people," said Allen.



Allen's well with insulated cover and power source.

Henry County. Around 110 acres of the farm is land that was acquired by his grandfather over 100 years ago and has been passed down through the generations. Allen's daughter, Alisha, now helps out with the family farm.

"Every summer since 1994, I have had difficulty providing an adequate water supply for my cattle due to a dwindling water supply," said Allen. I turned to NRCS for help so I would have a reliable source of water for my livestock."

"Under the Environmental Quality Improvement Program (EQIP), Allen had a 405-foot well drilled, a pump installed and water lines laid in order to get water to his cattle," said Shaun Ford, district conservationist in McDonough.



One of Larry Allen's eight tracks of pasture land.

Upper Ocmulgee River Resource Conservation Development  
770-339-6071

 **Natural Resources Conservation Service**  
Shaun Ford 770 957-5705

Henry County Soil And Water Conservation District