

# Another Conservation Success Story...

## Telfair County, Georgia

November 2006

### EQIP Improves Grazing on the Family Farm

Adam Graham and his wife, Erlene, own and operate a family cattle operation in the China Hill community. They are natives of Telfair County and have two sons and a daughter.

The Grahams started their farm in 1985 when his mother gave him three cows. The herd has now grown to approximately 100.

They raise Brangus Beefmaster with no horns. They have a Texas Longhorn that they call their mascot.

Several other breeds are included in the herd such as Angus, Limousine and White Face. The pastures have been overseeded for years with small grain.

After attending a public meeting in McRae, they decided to apply for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to help improve their grazing operation. The Grahams currently manage two hundred acres under the EQIP program.

Recently, fifteen acres of pastureland was planted in Tift 85 Bermuda. Other practices planned on this farm include cross fencing, exclusion fencing to fence out wetlands, well installation, watering facilities, and heavy use areas around the watering facilities.

The cows were previously watering out of the pond; therefore, the troughs will provide an alternative water source to improve water quality.

A prescribed grazing plan will also be included that will be maintained for the life of the contract.

Keith Granger, Soil Conservation Technician, Bo Bannister, District Conservationist, and Jaime Walsh, County Employee, have assisted in developing the EQIP contract and providing technical assistance as needed.

Congratulations to the group for their joint effort in applying conservation to the land and protecting a beautiful area of our state.



L-R: Erlene Graham, Adam Graham, and Keith Granger, Soil Conservation Technician with NRCS.

#### What is the Environmental Quality Incentives Program?

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) was reauthorized in the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Farm Bill) to provide a voluntary conservation program for farmers and ranchers that promotes agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible national goals. EQIP offers financial and technical help to assist eligible participants install or implement structural and management practices on eligible agricultural land.

EQIP offers contracts with a minimum term that ends one year after the implementation of the last scheduled practices and a maximum term of ten years. These contracts provide incentive payments and cost-shares to implement conservation practices. Persons who are engaged in livestock or agricultural production on eligible land may participate in the EQIP program.

EQIP activities are carried out according to an environmental quality incentives program plan of operations developed in conjunction with the producer that identifies the appropriate conservation practice or practices to address the resource concerns. The practices are subject to NRCS technical standards adapted for local conditions. The local conservation district approves the plan.

EQIP may cost-share up to 75 percent of the costs of certain conservation practices. Incentive payments may be provided for up to three years to encourage producers to carry out management practices they may not otherwise use without the incentive. However, limited resource producers and beginning farmers and ranchers may be eligible for cost-shares up to 90 percent.

Farmers and ranchers may elect to use a certified third-party provider for technical assistance. An individual or entity may not receive, directly or indirectly, cost-share or incentive payments that, in the aggregate, exceed \$450,000 for all EQIP contracts entered during the term of the Farm Bill.

For more information, contact your local NRCS Office.



Erlene and Adam Graham (left) manage two hundred acres under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program.

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