

Projects . Successes . Partnerships

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

United States Department of Agriculture . Natural Resources Conservation Service . Louisiana

November 2012

Living the Dream
Union Parish Farmer
Shares Secret to His Success

**A Lot of Great Things
are Happening!
Around the State**

**Snapshot:
Golden Meadow Plant
Materials Center**

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

HELPING PEOPLE HELP THE LAND

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Since he was a small child, Benny Archie always wanted to raise cows. "Owning a cattle farm is something I always dreamed of," said Archie. "I just never dreamed I would be 55 when it happened!" To learn more about Benny Archie and his farm, see pages 4 and 5.



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

If you would like to receive monthly issues of the Conservation Update, please send your mailing address or e-mail address to:

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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



In late November, Louisiana's State Conservationist Kevin Norton returned to Washington, DC, to complete a temporary assignment to Senator Debbie Stabenow's staff to assist with development of the final language of the conservation title of the new Farm Bill.

The Census of Agriculture is conducted only once every five years across our nation's farmland and agricultural communities. USDA, those involved in agriculture, and many others use the results of the Census to make important policy and business decisions that impact people across our nation. It is important that all of our nation's farmers and farmland are accurately accounted for.

In mid-December the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service will mail the 2012 Census of Agriculture form with a return deadline of February 4, 2013. If you receive a Census of Agriculture form, please take a moment to complete the form and respond. If you need assistance completing the form or you would like to receive a form to complete, contact the National Agricultural Statistics Service at (888) 424-7828.

The Census of Agriculture is vital. To the general public, the Census provides a snapshot of farming in America. To farmers and ranchers, it is a critical tool that gives them a voice to influence decisions that will shape the future of their communities, industry, and operation.

Let your voice be heard—complete your Census of Agriculture forms.

Federal law requires every farmer and rancher, regardless of the size or type of operation, to participate in the Census.

For Census purposes, a farm is any place from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would have been sold during the Census year.

Britt Paul
Acting State Conservationist
Louisiana

**For more information about the
Census of Agriculture, visit:
www.agcensus.usda.gov**

Quote of the Month

"... soil conservation is not just an incidental bit of the mechanics of farming; **it becomes part and parcel of the whole business of making a living from the land**, and is the only way by which we may have permanently productive land for a permanent agriculture to support a permanent nation."

Hugh Hammond Bennett, First Chief of the Soil Conservation Service. From: "Adjust of Agriculture to Its Environment" Annals of the Association of American Geographers, December 1943.



Since he was a small child, Benny Archie always wanted to raise cows.

"Owning a cattle farm is something I always dreamed of," said Archie. "I just never dreamed I would be 55 when it happened!"

"I fell in love with it," said Archie. "Most people tell me I'm crazy, but I'm so glad to be living my dream."

Archie's career as a farmer and cattle rancher started with five acres of land, nine cows, and discovery of a large area of gully erosion in the center of his new farm.

Living the Dream



The Natural Resources Conservation Service helped Benny Archie install and implement conservation practices through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program.

"That gully almost took me and my brand new tractor the first time I bush hogged," said Archie. "I knew I needed help to fix the problem, and NRCS came to my rescue."

Benny Archie, like a lot of other farmers, learned about the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) from another farmer.

"My cousin is a farmer, and he works with NRCS," said Archie. "He said they could help me."

Archie visited his local NRCS office in Farmerville, Louisiana, and shared his concerns about his land with NRCS District Conservationist Jody Frederick. Working with NRCS and the D'Arbonne Soil and Water Conservation District, Archie learned of several different possibilities for correcting the problems on his land.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service works with farmers and ranchers to solve natural resource problems and concerns in ways that meet individual

producer goals and objectives for their farm or ranch.

"We want to solve resource problems," said Frederick, "but most importantly, we want to solve problems in ways that satisfy the producer."

In Benny Archie's case, a pond fit the bill. A design was developed to correct the erosion problem, incorporating a pond to provide water for his cattle. The construction of the pond is now complete, and Benny Archie and his NRCS/SWCD team are patiently waiting for rainwater to fill the pond naturally.

In addition, Archie has installed cross-fencing to implement rotational grazing and heavy use protection pads at gate openings to protect the soil from erosion issues. He installed a pipe drop to control gully erosion and accomplished critical area planting to establish vegetation to rehabilitate and stabilize degraded areas—all with assistance from NRCS.

Benny Archie tells people that NRCS rescued him from the gully erosion on his land.

NRCS tells people that conservationists like Benny Archie are rescuing the land and its natural resources for future generations of farmers and ranchers.



For more information on how the Natural Resources Conservation Service and Soil and Water Conservation Districts can assist you on your farm or ranch, contact your local NRCS field office. Contact information is included on the last page of this document.

"... most people tell me I'm crazy, but I'm so glad to be living my dream."



Benny Archie
Conservationist

Around the State

Oct 12-14

Voice of the Wetlands Festival - The NRCS Golden Meadow Plant Materials Center exhibited at the 9th Annual Voice of the Wetlands Festival held at Southdown Plantation in Houma, Louisiana, on October 12-14, 2012. Exhibitors have the opportunity to educate the public on coastal land loss as well as plans for sustainability. Approximately 1,300 people visited the Plant Materials Center booth. Visitors to the booth learned how NRCS, through the Plant Materials Center, is working to conserve Louisiana's coastal wetlands. Visitors had the opportunity to see plants that are used in coastal restoration, and they were provided brochures on the plants released by the Plant Materials Center, the plant materials program at NRCS, and the Earth Team volunteer program.



Oct 13-14

Wooden Boat Festival - The Bogue Chitto-Pearl River SWCD participated in the Wooden Boat Festival in Madisonville, Louisiana, on October 13-14, 2012. This festival, sponsored by the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Maritime Museum, is a tribute to the wooden boats that made Louisiana's maritime history and culture unique. This year the Bogue Chitto-Pearl River SWCD had a booth in the children's village at the festival. The District Secretary and NRCS Earth Team Coordinator, Erin Hayden, along with six volunteers, talked to approximately 1,200 children on the importance of natural resources conservation. Children were given Farmer Ryan coloring books, an alligator fact sheet, and conservation tattoos.



Oct 15-17

Tour of Surface Water Projects - The LSU AgCenter sponsored a joint partnership tour of surface water projects in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Arkansas on October 15-17, 2012. The tour was led by Dr. Bill Branch, Professor, Biological and Agricultural Engineering Department, at LSU AgCenter. Attendees included Caddo and Vermilion Soil and Water Conservation District board members, NRCS employees, Farm Bureau employees, as well as an irrigation company employee. The tour began in Caddo Parish at the Red Bayou Watershed Project currently under construction. The group then travelled to Arkansas to tour two more projects, then on to tour the Jamie Whitten Delta States Research Center in Stoneville, Mississippi, where they were able to see tailwater recovery systems.

Oct 25-26

LACD Coastal Resources Committee Meeting - The Iberia Soil and Water Conservation District hosted the 28th Annual Louisiana Association of Conservation Districts Coastal Resources Committee Meeting on October 25-26, 2012. District Supervisors from across the coast participated in the meeting along with several NRCS employees. Attendees learned about the Restore Act from Cynthia Duet, Louisiana Coastal Initiatives Team, National Audubon Society; the Deep Horizon Oil Spill and Its Connection to the State Master Plan from Drue Banta, Louisiana Governor's Office; and Gulf Coast Restoration Activities from P.J. Marshall, Executive Director of Development from Restore the Earth Foundation, Inc. In addition, several NRCS employees spoke to the group on various coastal topics of interest. The meeting concluded with a field tour of the NRCS sponsored Oaks/Avery Canal CWPPRA project and district vegetative plantings.

Oct 30

Ocean Commotion - Capital Soil and Water Conservation District, the NRCS Denham Springs Field Office, Denham Springs Soil Survey Office, and the Golden Meadow Plant Materials Center participated in Louisiana Sea Grant's 15th Annual Ocean Commotion at LSU's Pete Maravich Assembly Center on October 30, 2012. The primary purpose of Ocean Commotion is to provide students with an opportunity to learn about and touch the products of the sea and coast. Over 2,000 K-8th



grade students and teachers from schools throughout Louisiana attended in this one-day educational fair. Visitors to the NRCS exhibit learned about the conservation plants that are developed at the Golden Meadow Plant Materials Center that are used to reestablish valuable ecosystems and environmental functions. Students were also provided with both Sammy Soil and Farmer Ryan activity booklets. Teachers were given plant species brochures and activity books for their classes.

Nov 7

Section 319 Public Meeting - The Catahoula Soil and Water Conservation District and NRCS hosted a Lake Louis 319 Watershed Restoration Project Public Meeting at the Sicily Island Library on November 7, 2012. Presentations were provided by Clyde Irvin and Steve Nipper from NRCS and Joey Breaux and Michael Schooler from the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry Office of Soil and Water Conservation. Sixteen people attended the meeting.

Nov 10

La Fete d'Ecologie - The Annual La Fete d'Ecologie was held at Lake End Park in Morgan City, Louisiana, on November 10, 2012. This festival is hosted by the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program and the Barataria-Terrebonne Estuary Foundation. Exhibitors at this festival educate festival goers about the history, culture and bounty of the environment and efforts to restore Louisiana's coastal wetlands. NRCS staffed two exhibits this year, one for the Golden Meadow Plant Materials Center and one for the Franklin and Thibodaux Field Offices and the Lafourche-Terrebonne and St. Mary Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Approximately 300 people visited the Plant Materials Center booth where they learned about the NRCS Plant Materials Program and the role of the Plant Materials Center in coastal restoration. Visitors were able to view some of the plant releases that are used for coastal restoration. They were also provided with informational brochures on various Plant Materials Center plant releases, and children received the Farmer Ryan coloring book. At the booth sponsored by the local field offices and Soil and Water Conservation Districts, visitors were given various NRCS and District handouts and the children were able to make an animal tracks identification booklet.



Nov 18-21

United Houma Nation Youth Council - The United Houma Nation Youth Council conducted a retreat at the Golden Meadow Plant Materials Center on November 18-21, 2012. The youth council consists of teen boys and girls from St. Mary, Terrebonne, Lafourche, Jefferson, Plaquemines, and St. Bernard Parishes who are all citizens and future leaders of the United Houma Nation. Council members used the retreat to work on developing leadership skills, exploring tribal history and heritage, and learning about environmental challenges in coastal Louisiana. Garret Thomassie, Plant Materials Center Manager, presented information to the group on Louisiana's coastal wetlands, the NRCS Plant Materials Program, and the Plant Materials Center's role in coastal protection and restoration. Council members signed up as Earth Team volunteers and assisted the Plant Materials Center staff with plant propagation in the greenhouses.



Nov 30

Acadiana Small Farm Conference - The Acadiana RC&D Council hosted the Acadiana Small Farm Conference at the Center for Ecology and Environmental Technology in Lafayette, Louisiana, on November 30, 2012. Over 70 attendees packed the meeting room at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette Center for Ecology and Environmental Technology in Lafayette, Louisiana. They learned about conservation opportunities and financial assistance. Speakers from Ducks Unlimited, U.S. Geological Survey, Cooperative Extension Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency, Rural Development and National Agricultural Statistics Service shared valuable information for farmers and ranchers, and a panel of local farmers discussed issues important to small farms. Partners for this conference included Acadiana RC&D, Audubon, Ducks Unlimited, USDA agencies in Louisiana, Louisiana Native Plant Initiative, McNeese State University, and the USDA Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Program.



Upcoming Event

Jan 9-11

LACD Annual Convention - The Louisiana Association of Conservation Districts will host their annual convention in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, on January 9-11, 2013. To register to attend, contact: Mitzi Dohrman, Vermilion Soil and Water Conservation District, (337) 893-5664, extension 3, mitzi.dohrman@la.nacdn.net.



SNAPSHOT Visit



Golden Meadow Plant Materials Center



The Natural Resources Conservation Service Plant Materials Program finds plant solutions to solve conservation problems.

The Golden Meadow Plant Materials Center (PMC) near Galliano, Louisiana, is recognized as a leader in coastal wetland ecosystem restoration. They develop plants and procedures to reverse the loss of coastal wetlands in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas.

The Center has developed nine releases of plants which aid in coastal restoration: 'Vermilion' smooth cordgrass, Pelican Germplasm black mangrove, Fourchon Germplasm bitter panicum, Brazoria Germplasm seashore paspalum, Caminada Germplasm seaoats, 'Gulf Coast' marshhay cordgrass, Timbalier Germplasm seacoast bluestem, Bayou Lafourche Germplasm California bulrush, and Cajun Sunrise Germplasm ashly sunflower.

Plant Materials Centers across the nation have developed over 600 conservation plant releases of grasses, legumes, forbs, shrubs, and trees. The plants are providing protection for millions of acres across our nation. **For more information on the Plant Materials Program, visit:**

<http://www.la.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/PM/index.html>

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 Dugdemona 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	Dugdemona 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	Dugdemona SWCD	6949 Louisiana Highway 1 Bypass, Natchitoches, LA 71457	(318) 357-8366, ext. 3



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