



United States Department of Agriculture

Louisiana's Conservation Update

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Helping People Help the Land

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November 2013

How Sweet It Is! Sweet Potato Farming in Avoyelles Parish

Trailblazer
RC&D Helps
Battle Giant
Salvinia
in Lake
Bistineau

New to
NRCS But
Not New to
Conservation
in Grant
Parish

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

Projects · Successes · Partnerships



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Sweet potato production in Louisiana is concentrated in Franklin, Richland, West Carroll, Morehouse, Avoyelles, Rapides, St. Landry, Evangeline, and Acadia Parishes.

On the Cover



Nelson Bordelon farms one of Louisiana's sweetest crops—sweet potatoes. His farm, Green World Farms, sits in the heart of Avoyelles Parish near Marksville, Louisiana. To find out more about Bordelon's farm, see pages 4 and 5.



Notes from the State Conservationist



It is good to be back home in Louisiana!

For 18 of the past 26 months, I have been providing technical support to Senator Debbie Stabenow and the Senate Agriculture Committee on the conservation title of the new Farm Bill. It was an exciting opportunity, and I feel honored to have been a part of it. It is only because of the great work we do together with you, our partners, and the farmers, ranchers, and forest owners, that this opportunity ever occurred.

In Louisiana, we enjoy very effective conservation partnership of local, state, and federal organizations whose primary missions are to improve and protect the natural resources of our great state. These organizations work side-by-side with Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and conservation district employees on your farms, ranches, and communities to ensure you enjoy productive land and healthy natural resources.

Louisianans are identified and shaped by our land, natural resources and the abundance they provide. Whether you identify with the Delta, Bayou State, Sportsman's Paradise, America's Wetland, or the many other local names, we are tied to our lands and will continue to work and support private land stewards in voluntary, incentive based efforts to ensure our lands are healthy and productive for future generations.

I look forward to working with you and our conservation partners in the coming months as we move forward with a new Farm Bill. If you are interested in learning more about conservation opportunities on your farm or ranch, please visit our local office. A directory of our offices is included on the last page of this publication.

Kevin Norton
State Conservationist
Louisiana

 Follow us on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/user/LouisianaNRCS>

 Follow us on Twitter: http://twitter.com/NRCS_Louisiana

Master Farmer University Sign Up Today!

The Louisiana Master Farmer Program will offer a two-day workshop—called Master Farmer University—beginning January 16, 2014, at the West Monroe Convention Center and concluding with a farm tour on January 17, 2014, in which participants will be able to complete the first two of three phases of the program. This program is presented in conjunction with, and partially funded by Ag Expo 2014. Registration fee includes Ag Expo admission.

"The Master Farmer Program allows producers to implement best management practices for all phases of animal and crop production and become well-educated on environmental issues," said Rogers Leonard,

LSU AgCenter associate vice chancellor, adding that the program stresses adoption of voluntary conservation practices.

The two-day workshop will include the first phase, which is classroom instruction, and the second phase, which is a tour of a farm operation to see conservation practices firsthand.

Leonard said farmers will also be able to start on Phase III of the program as part of the workshop. This phase involves planning and implementing a farm's conservation plan.

"Louisiana agriculture has two options for the future: Additional regulations limiting crop production or voluntary action," Leonard said. "We urge farmers to take the opportunities of the Master Farmer University to move forward."

Dr. Mike Strain, commissioner of the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, said he encourages every producer in Louisiana, regardless of size or commodity, to consider attending Master Farmer University.

"You are the best stewards of Louisiana's soil and water resources, and this is your program," he said.

Registration online begins December 5, 2013, at <https://www.regonline.com/Imfu2013>. Registration cost is \$30 and includes admission to the 2014 Ag Expo. For more information, contact Ernest Girouard, LSU AgCenter, La. Master Farmer Program, Coordinator. Office: (337) 788-7547 or Mobile (337) 852-3986 or you may contact James Hendrix, LSU AgCenter, La. Master Farmer Program, Northeast Region. Office: 318-766-3320 or Mobile: 318-235-7198.

Louisiana

Ag
Facts

2012 Sweet
Potato Production
in Louisiana

49 producers

9,730 acres in
production

3,876,115
50-pound bushels
produced

\$45,438,203 gross
farm value

2012 Louisiana
Summary of Agriculture
and Natural Resources,
LSU AgCenter,
<http://www.lsuagcenter.com/agsummary/home>.



How Sweet It Is!



Sweet Potato Farming in Avoyelles Parish

Nelson Bordelon farms one of Louisiana’s sweetest crops—sweet potatoes. His farm, Green World Farms, sits in the heart of Avoyelles Parish near Marksville, Louisiana.

The son of a farmer, Bordelon has been farming since 1977. When he began farming his family’s farm, he struggled with erosion problems. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (then called the Soil Conservation Service) helped Bordelon install grassed waterways to help slow the flow of water over his land. These grassed areas helped to reduce the amount of erosion on

the farm, reduce sediment leaving his farm, and improve soil health.

In 1990, Bordelon purchased his own land to farm—and he realized from the beginning it would be beneficial to enlist assistance from the Natural Resources Conservation Service. The soils on his new farm were loamy and very susceptible to erosion.



For sweet potato facts, recipes, nutritional information, and information for teachers and students, visit the Louisiana Sweet Potato Commission online at: <http://www.sweetpotato.org>

“Not everyone can be a sweet potato farmer. We are a unique breed.”

Nelson Bordelon



“I noticed some major gullies were forming on our land and realized we needed to get NRCS’ help again,” said Bordelon.

Bordelon worked with the NRCS Marksville Field Office and the Avoyelles Soil and Water Conservation District to create a conservation plan to address his resource concerns. As part of his conservation plan, he installed pipe drops so the water would flow into a concentrated area leading off of the farm. These pipe drops worked so well, when he began experiencing erosion in other areas of

the farm, he enlisted the help of NRCS again to design additional pipe drops. This time, Bordelon and NRCS agreed that precision land leveling would also help stop his erosion problems.

“You have to have really good drainage for sweet potatoes or they will rot,” said Bordelon. “The land leveling really helped reduce the amount of standing water.”

Precision land leveling allows for water to flow over the land uniformly. This decreases the amount of soil erosion, improves water quality, and

prevents damage to soil and crops from waterlogging.

Bordelon strives to maintain the conservation practices on his farm—and look for new ways to improve the land.

“Soil health is absolutely important to me—without it, my potatoes wouldn’t flourish and my production would suffer,” said Bordelon. “I believe that doing everything I can for the soil is critical to my success as a farmer.”



Nelson Bordelon implements conservation practices on his farm through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program. He also participates in the Wetlands Reserve Program.



Nelson Bordelon Conservationist

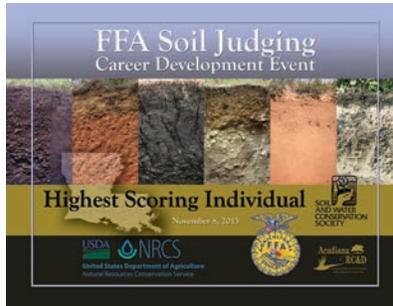
Around the State

Nov 8

52nd Annual State FFA Soils Career Development Event

The 52nd Annual State FFA Soils Career Development Event was hosted by the Acadiana RC&D at the ULL Center for Ecology & Environmental Technology in Lafayette, Louisiana. There were 51 teams from 32 FFA chapters that participated in the event. This year's winners were Kaplan High School Blue, 1st Place; South Lafourche High School Gold, 2nd Place; Kaplan High School Gold, 3rd

Place; Crowley High School Blue, 4th Place; and Epps High School Blue, 5th Place. Chasey Matherne from South Lafourche High School Gold was the High Individual winner.



Nov 15

LACD Coastal Resources Committee Meeting

The LACD Coastal Resources Committee recently held their annual meeting in Lafayette, Louisiana. Attendees learned about the land growth at both the Atchafalaya and Wax Lake Outlets and Floating Island Technology. Additionally, attendees were given an update on LACD activities and NRCS activities. The committee will meet again during the LACD Convention in January.

Partner Spotlight

Trailblazer RC&D:

Promoting an innovative solution to invasive species crisis on Lake Bistineau

Lake Bistineau is under attack by giant salvinia. Giant salvinia is an invasive aquatic weed with an explosive growth rate that enables it to out-compete native plants and form a floating mat on the surface of a water body. These mats cover thousands of acres. They can destroy habitat, degrade water quality, clog water intakes and irrigation ditches, and eliminate nearly all opportunities for hunting, fishing, or boating.

Control efforts led by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries on Lake Bistineau have centered on herbicide application, drawdowns, and mechanical harvesting. They have fought a good battle against giant salvinia, but in spite of their efforts, giant salvinia has continued to spread.



Giant Salvinia on Lake Bistineau

Lake Bistineau is located in northwestern Louisiana in Webster, Bossier, and Bienville Parishes.

Herbicides, drawdowns, and mechanical control are the same methods the Australians used when they first recognized giant salvinia as a problem in their water bodies in 1954. An aggressive herbicide program was initiated that lasted for 24 years. However, by 1978, giant salvinia had spread to vast areas of Australia, and it was clear control efforts had failed. The Australians turned to biological control—a weevil that feeds exclusively on salvinia. When 5,500 weevils were introduced to a 1,000-acre infestation at Lake Moondarra in Queensland, Australia, the size of the salvinia mat was reduced by 99 percent in 11 months.

In Louisiana, Louisiana State University AgCenter scientists

have used biocontrol (weevils) to help landowners in southern Louisiana who have a problem with salvinia. They have been able to clear approximately 10,000 acres of salvinia using weevils.

Trailblazer RC&D and its partners are encouraging development of a salvinia weevil production facility on Lake Bistineau. A committee of stakeholders has developed a plan of action to move this proposed facility forward. For more information on this project, call the Trailblazer RC&D office at (318) 255-3554 or email esimmons@trailblazer.org.

Submitted by Ellzey Simmons, Chief Executive Officer, Trailblazer RC&D

Helping People Help the Land

Stories from the Field

New to NRCS, But Not New to Conservation

Cephas Bowie, Jr., raises cattle, soybeans, wheat, and milo on 339 acres in Grant Parish, and Mr. Bowie has unknowingly been implementing conservation on his farm for years without USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) or conservation program assistance. In 2012, he visited the NRCS Colfax Field Office to request assistance with a pasture on his farm, and he found that the nutrient management, pest management, crop rotation, and field borders he had accomplished

on his farm were recognized conservation practices.

As a result of his first visit, NRCS developed a grazing plan for his pasture. This plan included implementing brush management and installing fencing, a pipeline, a watering facility, and heavy use area protection pads to promote prescribed grazing. With assistance from the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), these practices were installed within a year of signing his plan.

Building on past conservation success—both self-made and EQIP-assisted, Mr. Bowie was able to participate in the Conservation

Stewardship Program (CSP) to further promote conservation on his farm. Through CSP, he has implemented a controlled traffic system, rotation of supplement and feeding areas, and techniques to reduce pesticide drift.

Through CSP Mr. Bowie was rewarded for his conservation accomplishments in the past in his pasture and row crops, and he was able to utilize the recommended enhancements through CSP to further promote conservation on his entire farm.

Submitted by Dana Shuff, District Conservationist, Colfax Field Office



Upcoming Events

Jan 18 2014

Annie's Project

The Acadiana RC&D will host Annie's Project classes (six sessions) presented by Capital RC&D at the ULL Ecology Center in Lafayette, Louisiana, beginning January 18, 2014. Annie's project is an educational program dedicated to strengthening women's roles in the modern farm enterprise. Through six educational sessions,

Annie's Project fosters problem solving, record keeping and decision-making skills in farm women. NRCS is a sponsor of Annie's Project in Louisiana. For more information, please contact Deborah Cross-Young at 985-543-6570.

Annie's Project
Risk Management Education for
Farm Women

Jan 8-10

LACD Annual Convention

The Louisiana Association of Conservation Districts (LACD) will host their annual convention on January 8-10, 2014 at the Hotel Acadiana in Lafayette, Louisiana. For more information, contact Mitzi Dohrman at (337) 893-5664, ext. 3.

Jan 16-17

Master Farmer University

See page 3 for registration information.



Contact Our Offices

Visit our web site at:
www.la.nrcs.usda.gov

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	2438 Highway 1 South, Donaldsonville, LA 70346	(225) 473-7638, ext. 3
Assumption	Donaldsonville	Lower Delta SWCD	2438 Highway 1 South, 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	5417 Gerstner Memorial Drive, Lake Charles, LA 70601	(337) 474-1583, 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	5417 Gerstner Memorial Drive, Lake Charles, LA 70601	(337) 474-1583, 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	907 Florida Boulevard, SW, 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	New Orleans	Crescent SWCD	1041 Rue La Cannes, Luling, LA 70070	(985) 331-9084
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	907 Florida Boulevard, SW, 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	New Orleans	Crescent SWCD	1041 Rue La Cannes, Luling, LA 70070	(985) 331-9084
Quachita	Monroe	D'Arbonne/Boeuf River SWCD	2410 Old Sterling Road, Suite B, Monroe, LA 71203-2668	(318) 343-4467, ext. 3
Plaquemines	New Orleans	Plaquemines SWCD	1041 Rue La Cannes, Luling, LA 70070	(985) 331-9084
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	New Orleans	Crescent SWCD	1041 Rue La Cannes, Luling, LA 70070	(985) 331-9084
St. Charles	New Orleans	Crescent SWCD	1041 Rue La Cannes, Luling, LA 70070	(985) 331-9084
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	2438 Highway 1 South, Donaldsonville, LA 70346	(225) 473-7638, ext. 3
St. John	New Orleans	Crescent SWCD	1041 Rue La Cannes, Luling, LA 70070	(985) 331-9084
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	501 Glory Road, 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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