



United States Department of Agriculture

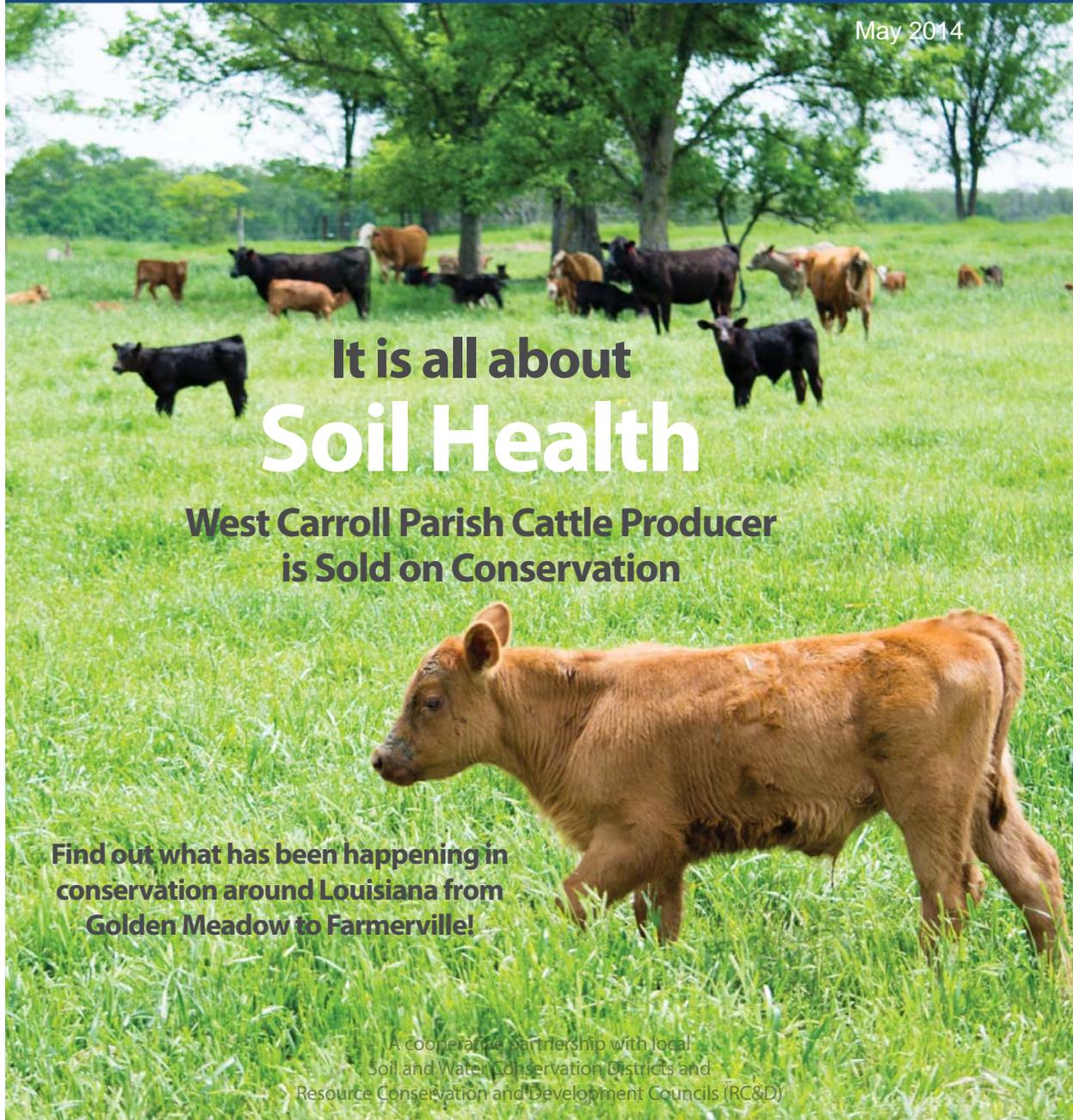
# Louisiana's Conservation Update

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Helping People Help the Land

[www.la.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.la.nrcs.usda.gov)

May 2014



## It is all about Soil Health

**West Carroll Parish Cattle Producer  
is Sold on Conservation**

**Find out what has been happening in  
conservation around Louisiana from  
Golden Meadow to Farmerville!**

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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## On the Cover



Cliff Vining has farmed near Pioneer, Louisiana, in West Carroll Parish since 1976. Through the years, he has farmed many crops . . . cotton, soybeans, rice, and today—cattle. Each crop brought challenges, and Vining soon recognized that taking care of the land’s natural resources would be vital to maintaining his farm. To learn more, 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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## tillage radish *Oilseed Radish Ag Facts*



**Cover Crop:** Oilseed radish is a cover crop planted in early fall or after harvest of the primary crop. Oilseed radish has a uniquely deep taproot, which can reach a depth of six feet. It develops an enlarged upper portion of the taproot, which can



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## Notes from the State Conservationist



Since our agency's inception as the Soil Conservation Service, the Natural Resources Conservation Service has been dedicated to improving soil health across our nation.

In the 1930s, our mission was to educate farmers about good farming practices and conservation measures that would help stop erosion and keep soil on the farm. Today, not only do we want to keep the soil on the farm, we want to improve soil health to ensure long-term, sustainable agricultural production.

In the next thirty-six years, it is predicted that world population will increase from 7 billion people (today) to more than 9 billion people (in 2050)—thirty-six short years. To sustain this population growth, food production will need to rise by 70 percent. Soil health is critical to meet the food and fiber demands of a burgeoning population.

Most farmers can improve their soil health by adopting conservation practices such as planting cover crops, increasing plant diversity, disturbing soil less, keeping plants growing throughout the year, and keeping the soil covered as much as possible.

If you are interested in improving soil health on your farm or ranch, contact your local NRCS office. We will help you develop a soil health management plan that will outline a system of practices to enhance crop production and soil function, and improve or sustain water quality, air quality, energy efficiency, and wildlife habitat.

Kevin Norton  
State Conservationist



To learn more about soil health, go to:

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/soils/health/>

A directory of our offices is included on the last page of this publication.

### Oilseed Radish

**Common Alternate Names:** forage radish, fodder radish, tillage radish®, radish ripper, daikon, Japanese radish

**Scientific Alternate Names:** *Raphanus sativus* var. *oleifer* Stokes, *Raphanus sativus* L. ssp. *Oleiferus*, *Raphanus sativus* L. var. *oleiformis* Pers.

From: Plant Guide: Oilseed Radish, USDA NRCS Booneville Plant Materials Center, Arkansas, May 2012

reach 12 to 20 inches in length and 2 inches in diameter. This deep-rooting growth habit is capable of treating multiple resource concerns on cropland such as:

**Soil Compaction:** The thick taproot penetrates compacted soil layers. The root decomposes in the spring and leaves large, deep holes in the soil. These holes enable water, air, and cash crop roots to penetrate the soil in the summer when the soil is dry and hard.

**Nitrate leaching:** The deep taproot can scavenge nitrogen in the soil left by the previous crop. The roots of oilseed radish absorb nitrogen at greater depths than other crops and keep it from leaching into the groundwater. When the plant decomposes in the spring, nitrogen is released back to the cash crop.

**Weed Management:** Oilseed radish seedlings can emerge as soon as 3 days after planting (if conditions are favorable) and can quickly grow and suppress weeds. Biomass decomposes quickly

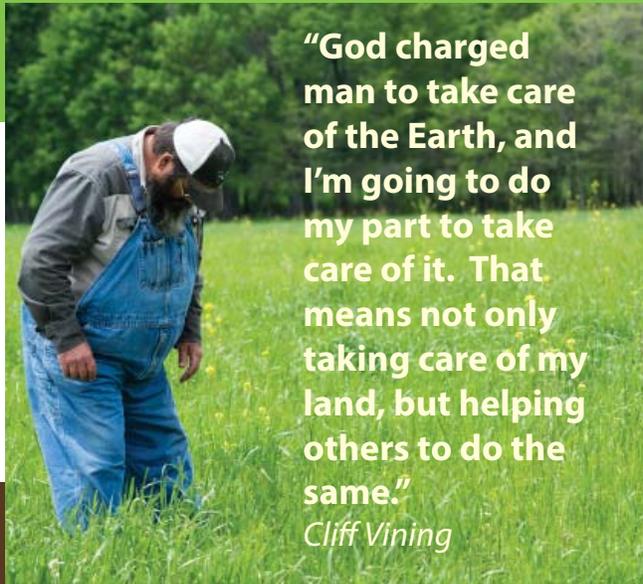
and may leave the seedbed ready for planting, without the need to till leftover residue.

**Pest Management:** Like other plants in the Brassicaceae (mustard) family, the roots of oilseed radish exude chemicals that help suppress soil pests like nematodes.

From: Plant Fact Sheet, USDA NRCS Booneville Plant Materials Center, Arkansas, May 2012. Go to: [http://plants.usda.gov/factsheet/pdf/fs\\_rasa2.pdf](http://plants.usda.gov/factsheet/pdf/fs_rasa2.pdf)



# It's All About



**“God charged man to take care of the Earth, and I’m going to do my part to take care of it. That means not only taking care of my land, but helping others to do the same.”**

*Cliff Vining*



Vining has worked with NRCS to install irrigation lines, water control structures, and cross fencing for rotational grazing. He currently rotates his cattle every 30 days between pastures. He has plans to install more cross fencing and begin an even-rotation program.

Vining is passionate about conservation and advocates for conservation practices. He sits on the Technical Advisory Committee for NRCS, and he is the Treasurer of the Louisiana Grazing Lands Conservation Coalition. He is active in the Louisiana Grassland Council, and he will host a field day at his farm soon to share his message of conservation.

## **Cliff Vining began working with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in 1995.**

“In the mid-1990s, NRCS made some pasture visits, and they told me they could help with some of my erosion problems,” said Vining. Vining and the local NRCS office developed a conservation plan to meet Vining’s goals for his farm and address resource concerns.

**“I realized that my farming methods were causing the erosion,” said Vining. “I had to stop clean tilling and begin a no till process.”**

No till management reduces the amount of sheet, rill and wind erosion. It also increases soil quality and organic matter content. Vining calls the protozoans and fungi living in the soil his “small herd.” These organisms feed on the organic matter in the soil and then, in turn, produce more organic matter, keeping the soil at optimal health.

“I’ve realized after all this time that feeding the small herd takes care of my much larger herd of cattle,” said Vining. “Just as in life, if you take care of the smaller issues the larger ones take care of themselves.”

The topsoil in northeast Louisiana is typically dry and shallow, lending itself to many erosion issues. Since Vining made the choice to stop disturbing the soil, his topsoil went from having two inches of depth to at least four inches of depth. However, Vining and NRCS had another trick up their sleeves to help out his topsoil: tillage radish.

## Cliff Vining Conservationist

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**Cliff Vining has farmed near Pioneer, Louisiana, in West Carroll Parish since 1976.**

Through the years, he has farmed many crops . . . cotton, soybeans, rice, and today—cattle. Each crop brought challenges, and Vining soon recognized that taking care of the land’s natural resources would be vital to maintaining his farm.

# Soil Health

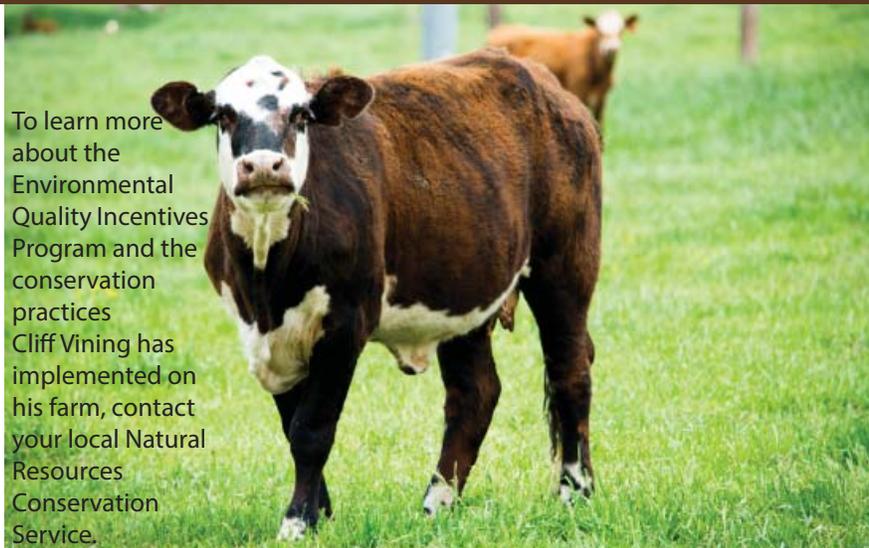
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Tillage radish is a cover crop which can be planted to alleviate soil compaction so that more water can be absorbed without mechanically tilling. Tillage radish can also scavenge nitrogen in the soil left by the previous crop, which keeps it from leaching into the groundwater. When the plant decomposes in the spring, nitrogen is released back to the cash crop and large holes are left in the soil. This enables water, air, and cash crop roots to penetrate the soil. The organic matter left behind by the tillage radish also helps to feed the small herd of organisms living in Vining’s soil.

“The tillage radish has greatly increased my soil health, and because of the holes left by the radish, the topsoil is holding more water,” said Vining.



To learn more about the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and the conservation practices Cliff Vining has implemented on his farm, contact your local Natural Resources Conservation Service.

# Around the State

## Apr 16

### Golden Meadow Plant Materials Center (PMC) Visits Galliano Elementary

**Elementary:** On April 16, 2014, staff from the Golden Meadow PMC visited the Galliano Elementary 2nd grade class to speak about the importance of both Earth Day and Arbor Day. They also discussed the importance of Louisiana's coastal wetlands and the role the PMC plays in coastal restoration.

## Apr 16

**Wetland Watchers Celebration:** The Crescent Soil and Water Conservation District and NRCS participated in the Wetland Watchers Celebration at the St. Charles Parish Wetland Watchers Park on April 16, 2014. Over 1,500 people attended, including 750 4th grade students. Students rotated through exhibits and activities that included over 20 interactive displays. Visitors to the NRCS/Crescent SWCD table learned about wetlands and the wildlife found in wetlands through the Farmer Ryan coloring book.

## Apr 25



**Marsh Burning Workshop:** The First Peoples Conservation Council, an organization of state recognized tribes in Louisiana, worked with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and LSU AgCenter to

host a Marsh Burning Workshop on April 25, 2014, at Jean Lafitte National Historical Park Wetlands Acadian Cultural Center in Thibodaux, Louisiana. Instructors provided training on using fire as a marsh management tool to sixteen individuals interested in becoming certified prescribed burners.

## Apr 27



**Louisiana Earth Day:** The Louisiana Earth Day celebration was held in Baton Rouge on April 27, 2014. Visitors to the NRCS booth learned about wildlife found in a wetland through the Farmer Ryan

coloring book. Alphonse the Alligator and Terry the Turtle were there along with the two newest members of the NRCS menagerie, Wallace and Juanita Wood Duck. All of the visitors enjoyed participating in the NRCS duck races.



## Apr 30

**CWPPRA Dedication Ceremony:** On April 30, 2014, the CWPPRA Task Force in partnership with the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, and Jefferson, Lafourche, Plaquemines, and Terrebonne Parishes hosted a projects dedication ceremony at Conoco Phillips in Houma, Louisiana. Eighteen projects were dedicated, including four NRCS-sponsored projects. A field trip followed the ceremony to the GIWW Bank Restoration of Critical Areas in Terrebonne project.



## May 2

**Bayou Farm Pasture Walk:** On May 2, 2014, the Natural Resources Conservation Service conducted a pasture walk at Bayou Farm in Evangeline Parish, Louisiana. Bayou Farm is owned and operated by Donald Keller and Sarah Bailly. Attendees learned about their farming/ranching operation and the marketing they do to sell their products.



After the overview, the group moved to the pastures where Donald and Sarah gave more details about their operation. Some of the items discussed were electric fencing, rotational grazing, forages, watering facility, and shade for the animals. Grass-fed sheep, grass-fed piney woods beef, and pastured pork are the main commodities on the farm.



## Helping People Help the Land

### May 2

#### **Southern Regional Woodlands**

**Clinic:** The 30th Annual Southern Regional Woodlands Clinic was hosted by the Louisiana Association of Conservation Districts (LACD) on May 2, 2014, at Lake D'Arbonne State Park in Farmerville, Louisiana. Twenty teams representing top winners from 4-H or FFA from Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas participated in the clinic. Supporting this event were area soil and water conservation districts, Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry's Office of Soil and Water Conservation, and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

During the woodland clinic, students were tested at four woodland stations in the areas of pine and hardwood tree identification, site index, rate of growth, wood products, volume, compass and pacing, timber stand improvement and thinning.



Top 4-H teams were: first place-Hermitage, Arkansas; second place-Hope, Texas; third place-Hunnington Team 13, Texas; and fourth place-Hunnington Team 14, Texas. Top FFA teams were: first place-Hermitage, Arkansas; second place-Central Heights, Texas; third place-Hampton, Arkansas; and fourth place-Bradley, Arkansas.

Next year's event will be hosted by the Texas Association of Conservation Districts.

### May 7

**St. James Parish Ag Day:** Over 1,000 students participated in the St. James Parish Ag Day held on May 7, 2014 at the Fast Food Farm in Gramercy, Louisiana. This event is coordinated by the Fast Food Farm, St. James Parish 4-H, St. James Parish FFA, New River Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), and East St. James Parish Ag in the Classroom. East and West St. James Parish and Mosaic were the co-sponsors of Ag Day. Students had the opportunity to take part in 26 activities/demonstrations to learn about nature and the basic needs of life, all relating to agriculture and the environment. New River SWCD presented the "Edible Watershed" for students to learn more about a watershed and the effects of runoff and pollution.

### May 12-13

#### **Vermilion Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Coastal**

**Re-vegetation Project:** On May 12-13, 2014, through the efforts of the Vermilion SWCD, Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Vermilion Corporation, University of Louisiana at Lafayette (ULL) AmeriCorps, and two volunteers, 5,350 plugs and 600 trade gallons of California bulrush totaling 18,750 linear feet were planted around and between Vermilion Corporation terraces.



### May 13

#### **New River Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Coastal**

**Re-vegetation Project:** On May 13, 2014, through the efforts of the New River SWCD, Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry's Office of Soil and Water Conservation, NRCS, and many other volunteers, 800 trade gallons of California bulrush were planted along the Blind River Canal near the St. James Parish Boat Club launch.



### May 14

#### **Bogue Chitto-Pearl River Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)**

**Coastal Re-vegetation Project:** On May 14, 2014, volunteers spent the day helping the Bogue Chitto-Pearl River SWCD with their coastal re-vegetation project. This year 600 pots of bitter panicum, 600 plugs of roseau, and 600 plugs of smooth cordgrass were planted along 9,000 linear feet of shoreline on the north shore of Lake Pontchartrain.





# Contact Our Offices

Visit our web site at:  
[www.la.nrcs.usda.gov](http://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	332 Lake Road, 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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