

Another StrikeForce Conservation Success Story...

Calhoun County, Georgia

April 2012

Edison Farmer Improves Grazing Land With EQIP Assistance.

Raul Moreno knew he'd found a diamond in the rough when he moved to Edison, Georgia and purchased 147 acres of neglected pasture land.

That was nine years ago. Even though the task before him was daunting, he was determined to run his farm one way; the right way.

"Do it right the first time, instead of doing a cheap job and then having to redo it multiple

"NRCS provided me with specifications and designs that assisted me in installing conservation practices that will last for many years to come."—Raul Moreno

times. It may cost a little more but it will save you in the future," Moreno explained.

Even though Moreno was determined to operate Banamac Farms the right way, it was tough. There were difficulties with inadequate pasture and grazing management due to the lack of cross fencing and an adequate water supply for the cattle.

At the time, nearly 200 cattle were continuously grazing in just a few pastures. In addition to this inefficient grazing system, the cattle had to travel long distances to get water.



Heavy-use areas serve as more convenient and cleaner water source for the cattle.

After a friend suggested that Moreno visit the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) sub-office in Morgan, he learned of conservation programs that could assist him in

addressing water quality and quantity, forage and grazing management concerns.

Soil Conservation Technician, Lynne Roney, visited the farm and provided conservation technical assistance and also suggested that Moreno apply for an Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) contract.

Moreno was approved for an EQIP agreement in 2010.

"I was making small improvements on my own, but it would have taken years to do what I have done in just two years with EQIP. NRCS provided me with specifications and designs that assisted me in installing conservation practices that will last for many years to come," Moreno said.

Through EQIP, Moreno has been able to install cross-fencing to improve pasture and grazing management. Cross-fencing now separates pastures and offers Moreno the option to rotate the cattle through different pastures on a grazing schedule.

This helps him maximize forage utilization and reduce overgrazing.

Heavy-use areas were constructed to help further facilitate the development of a grazing plan. A pipeline connects the heavy-use area to a nearby water source.

By adding the pipeline and watering facilities in the heavy-use area, the cattle don't have to travel as far to reach water. The heavy-use area is also surrounded by cement which protects the soil.

Moreno said getting all the practices installed has helped because, "I am better able to manage my herd. They now have accessible clean drinking water and because of the cross-fencing and watering facilities, I can better manage my grazing lands."



Raul Moreno (left) has been farming for the last nine years with his son. NRCS Soil Conservation Technician, Lynne Roney, has worked with the family to install conservation practices.

Roney said installing the conservation practices was made more manageable because Moreno put in more than enough effort to get everything finished by deadline.

"He just amazes me. He does everything," Roney explained.

As for Moreno's message to other landowners and farmers, he wants them to know that, "Proper management and conservation practices will help protect the natural resources for future generations."

Calhoun County is a designated StrikeForce county in Georgia. The USDA StrikeForce

Initiative is designed to help relieve persistent poverty in historically high-poverty counties.



Banamac Farms, Inc. runs a cattle operation that includes approximately 172 cow and calf pairs.



Cross-fencing helps Moreno manage pasture land and utilize the rotational grazing method.

Golden Triangle Resource Conservation and Development Council
229-723-3841

NRCS Natural Resources Conservation Service
229-849-2415

Flint River Soil And Water Conservation District
229-995-6001

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