

CONSERVING NATURAL RESOURCES IN GEORGIA

February 2013

NRCS National Funding FY 2012 * (in Millions)

Discretionary funding:

Conservation Technical Assistance	\$762
All Other Conservation Operations Programs	<u>\$137</u>
Total, Conservation Operations	\$899

Mandatory funding:

Total, Farm Bill Programs	<u>\$3,648</u>
Total, NRCS Programs	\$4,547

*rounded to the nearest million

Seventy percent of the land in the United States is privately owned. Farmers, ranchers, forest landowners, tribes and others who own rural lands make daily decisions about natural resource use and management, impacting soil, water, and air quality and wildlife habitat. NRCS provides technical assistance and offers financial assistance to producers who install conservation practices through Farm Bill programs.

NRCS technical assistance is supported with discretionary and mandatory funds. Discretionary funding, provided annually through the Conservation Technical Assistance Program (CTA), is pivotal to NRCS' success. CTA supports everyday operations, scientific research, technology transfer, and is key to the development of individual conservation plans. The land user, in consultation with NRCS specialists, develops a conservation plan that is suited to his or her individual operation. Once a producer has a conservation plan, he or she can implement it with or without further assistance from NRCS.

Financial assistance is available to eligible applicants to implement their conservation plans. Mandatory funds provided through Farm Bill programs are used to cover the costs of detailed planning needed to implement conservation practices and provide financial assistance to help defray some of the costs of conservation practices installation.

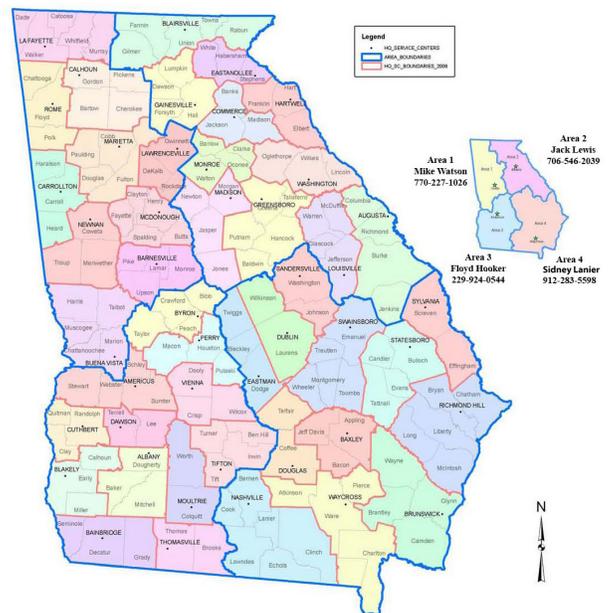
The table above describes NRCS' national discretionary and mandatory funding in fiscal year 2012. Farm Bill Program funding details specific to Wisconsin are on page 4.



Photo: Melissa Golden, NRCS

In Lee County Georgia, the retrofitted irrigation system with the new rotator or wobbler style spray nozzles on drop hoses is monitored by the new remote soil moisture monitor system.

Georgia NRCS Service Centers



Georgia Quick Facts:

Number of NRCS Employees = 228

Number of NRCS Field Offices = 124

Acres of Cropland = 4 million or 10.6% of the state

Acres of Forestland = 22 million or 58.2% of the state



Photo: Jackie Busby, NRCS Soil Conservationist, Hawkinsville

One of Christopher Martin's fields where rolled rye is help to subdue the pigweed.

Pilot Project: Suppressing Invasive Pigweed

As with many farmers in Georgia, Christopher Martin has a problem with pigweed control. He was approved for an Environmental Quality Incentive Program Pigweed Pilot Project to help combat the invasive pigweed which is known as Palmer Amaranth, an herbicide resistant plant.

This high seed producing plant is rapidly increasing its territory despite herbicide applications. Previous weed wars made it obvious to Martin that new or additional weapons would be needed to take on this pigweed.

Research conducted by Stanley Culpepper, extension agronomist, specializing in weed science, proved that rolling down rye into a thick mat to block out sunlight is highly effective in the reduction of pigweed seed germination in crop fields. There are four steps in this war on pigweed.

- Establishing a thick, tall, rye cover crop on Martin's farm was step one. High seeding rates, early planting date, and/or fertilization can be used to obtain the desired high volume of rye cover.

- The second step was to roll the rye cover down with a heavy steel pipe roller 21 foot long in the same direction as the following crop will be planted.

- After rolling the rye, an herbicide was applied to kill the rye.

- Finally, Martin planted cotton seed into six inch strips. The goal was to disturb no more soil than necessary to get good soil seed contact. In addition, leaving the rolled rye undisturbed shades all areas except directly above the crop.

The rye cover deteriorated slowly and helped maintain exclusion of sunlight until the cotton was able to shade the soil surface and impede germination of pigweed seeds. Time was just what Martin needed, time to allow the planting of the cotton into a weed free environment, time for the cotton seed to germinate, and time for the seedling to grow into a crop big enough to shade the ground for itself.

Other partners in this pigweed project include the Georgia Cooperative Extension Service, the University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences and the Georgia Cotton Commission



Photo: Vontice Jackson, NRC's District Conservationist, Swainboro

Brenda Webb had 500 trees planted per acre, seven foot apart on rows 12 foot wide.

Landscape Initiatives Target Natural Resource Concerns in Georgia

Over 70 years ago Clyde Stephens bought over 75 acres of land outside of Swainsboro and started farming. His farm consisted of pines trees and vegetable crops. The pine trees were tipped for the tar sap and the vegetable crops were used to help sustain the family and the tree farm. In 2005, Mr. Stephens passed away and left his land to his son and two daughters.

Over the years Brenda Webb purchased her siblings share of the land and five years ago clear-cut the forest, hoping to replant the pines with money from the cut. "I wanted to replant the pines with the money from the clear-cut, but by the time I got everything paid off I didn't have the money to replant," said Webb. "It had never been clear-cut, it was always thinned and the trees had reached maturity, so I clear-cut it to start over. Didn't realize how much it was going to cost to start over."

In March of 2011, Webb signed a contract under the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program - Loblolly Pine Initiative (LLPI) to replant 55 acres of her land to help improve the wildlife habitat and increase the diversity of the tree species on her land.

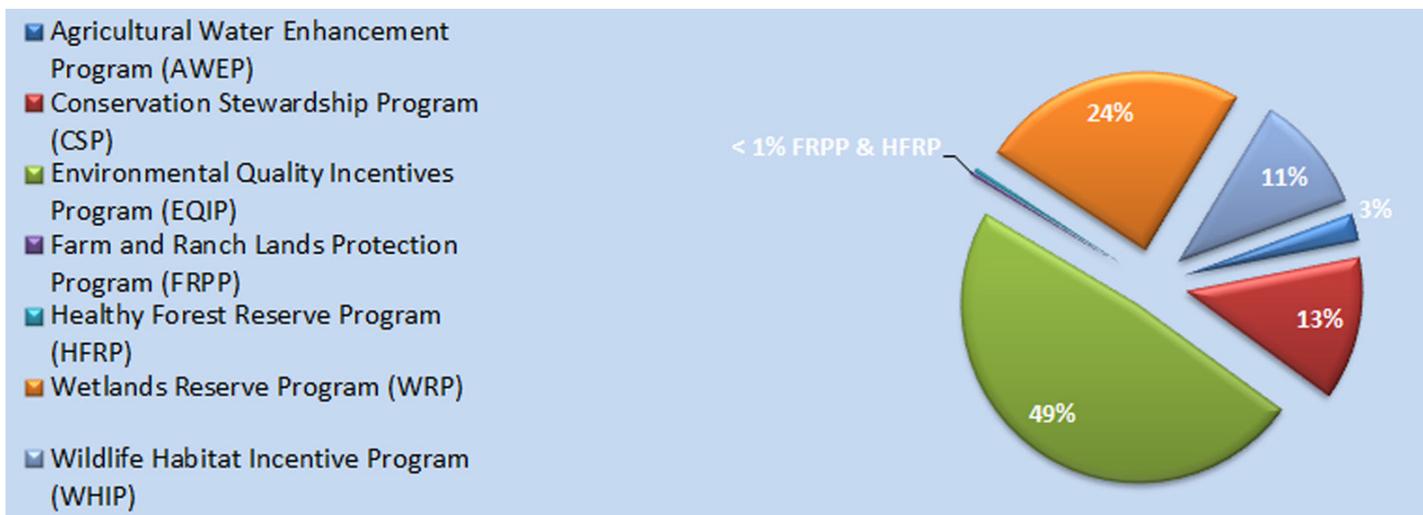
Because of the clear cut, she had the land cleared with machinery. The debris was pushed up in a pile then burned.

With the drought, Webb had to wait to plant until the trees could get plenty of moisture so they would not die. In December 2012, Webb had 500 trees planted per acre, seven foot apart on rows 12 foot wide.

Webb's philosophy is that we have been put here to be stewards of the land and conservation helps to replenish the land. "Conservation replenishes the earth and keeps everything going. I think that plants and trees are the first things God put here – he put us here to be stewards of it. Without conservation, I don't think we would have anything in the end. If the natural system is destroyed you might as well destroy the world," said Webb.

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NRCS FY 2012 Percentage of Financial Assistance to Georgia Participants by Program



FY 2011 and FY 2012 Contracts and Financial Assistance to Georgia Participants by Program

Program	Number of Contracts/Agreements		Financial Assistance to Producers	
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2011	FY 2012
AWEP	151	199	\$1,319,000	\$1,332,000
CSP	413	475	\$10,091,000	\$6,944,000
EQIP	1,054	1,890	\$14,379,000	\$25,846,000
FRPP	3	0	\$791,000	\$150,000
GRP	4	0	\$516,000	
HFRP	6	0	\$2,230,000	\$227,000
WRP	20	20	\$9,320,000	\$13,011,000
WHIP	412	215	\$6,426,000	\$5,753,000
Grand Total	2,063	2,799	\$45,072,000	\$53,263,000

Discretionary funds through the Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) for Georgia in FY 2012 is \$11.3

Sources: FMMI, ProTracts 10/2/2012 and NEST 10/4/2012

NRCS strives to provide current and correct information in a timely manner. Please contact your state conservationist or an NRCS legislative specialist if you need assistance. You can reach NRCS Legislative Affairs Division at (202) 720-2771.