



United States Department of Agriculture

Louisiana's Conservation Update

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Helping People Help the Land

www.la.nrcs.usda.gov

December 2014

Growing Grass for Healthy Cattle

Story from the field
From Trials Come Triumph



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

Projects · Successes · Partnerships



Table of Contents

Notes from the State Conservationist3

Ag Facts.....3

Growing Grass for Healthy Cattle.....4
Sustaining a Legacy

Around the State6
Conservation Activities from Around the State

Story from the Field.....6
From Trials Come Triumph

Upcoming Events7
Mark your calendar

Conservation Announcement..7
EQIP & CSP

Contact Information8
Call us with your questions

On the Cover



Raising cattle from a young child, Sherman Cravins was always a steward of the land. To learn about his efforts, 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:

Holly Martien
State Public Affairs Specialist
USDA Natural Resources
Conservation Service
3737 Government Street
Alexandria, Louisiana 71302
or
holly.martien@la.usda.gov

USDA
Natural Resources
Conservation Service
3737 Government Street
Alexandria, Louisiana 71302
(318) 473-7751



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

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

Notes from the State Conservationist

While NRCS is committed to assisting all those with conservation needs, at the heart of our agency, you will find family. Family is at the root of everything we do. Even our employees have formed a family of their own, as we have come together to provide conservation benefits across the state of Louisiana. We treat existing and new customers as though they are also a part of our extended family, and we help them to better the land for the future generations of their family.



In this month's issue of the Conservation Update, you will read about a cattle farmer who is working hard to preserve his family's legacy and create a new legacy for himself and his children and grandchildren. He strives to not only do exceptional conservation work on his own land, but also spread the message to many others.

This year NRCS joins other agencies in celebrating the International Year of the Soil. Soil is the foundation of agriculture, which supports the growing population and in turn, the growing families. Soil plays a crucial role in food security, hunger eradication, climate change adaptation, poverty reduction and sustainable development. At NRCS, we are excited that 2015 will highlight our nation's greatest resource.

If you are interested in improving the quality of your soil, water or many other resources on your land please contact your local NRCS Field Office. We are committed to helping you with your conservation needs. We will develop a conservation plan for your farm that will help you create your own legacy.

Kevin D. Norton
State Conservationist
Louisiana



2015
International
Year of Soils

In 2013

- **There were 10,910 cattle producers**
- **There were 622,040 head of cattle**
- **The gross value for Louisiana cattle was \$589,576,255**

in Louisiana

Ag Facts

From: LSU AgCenter, Louisiana Summary, Agriculture and Natural Resources,
<http://www.lsuagcenter.com/agsummary/archive/2013/-State-Totals/2013StateTotals.pdf>



Growing

Sherman Cravins's family has farmed in St. Landry Parish for four generations. He can remember waking up and helping with the cattle from the age of five. As a young man, Cravins left the family farm to pursue a new career opportunity. When he eventually returned to his family farm, he made it prosper.

Returning home to begin his own cattle operation was a challenge at first, but Cravins soon realized there was no other job that was quite as special.

Cravins understood that growing good cattle was more about growing great grass. When he returned to his family farm, there wasn't much grass because the former landowner planted crops. Not only did this present a problem for Cravins, but the necessary water for his cattle was also sparse.

"I consider myself a steward of the land," said Cravins. "I work very hard to leave the land better than I found it because the land is the joy of my heart."

He knew that something had to be done to transform the land back to pasture, back to a place for his cattle to thrive.

He contacted his local USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and discussed his options for the land.

Cravins worked with NRCS to install a water pump for different troughs and a rotational grazing system for his cattle. The pump alleviated Cravins's

concerns about the cattle getting enough quality water. The new rotational grazing system not only allowed for the replanted grass to thrive, it also gave him the time and space to plant other forages.

"The cattle business is a continual learning process," said Cravins. "Last year, I completed the Master Cattleman's Program and while the course was a great refresher for me, I also learned some new techniques."

Cravins not only practices conservation, but he also spreads the message of how important it is to be a steward of the land.

Cravins grazes bermudagrass, bahiagrass, ryegrass, and clover west of Opelousas on the Gulf Coast Prairie. His current operation focuses on providing good forage for his Hereford brood cows. He breeds them to Brahman bulls to produce F1 heifers that are in high demand.

Sherman Cravins Conservationist



Grass for Healthy Cattle



He hosts pasture walks at his farm and tells many other farmers about the benefits of conservation.

Cravins also won the award for Louisiana Master Forage Producer given by the Louisiana Forage and Grassland Council.

Cravins worked with the Environmental Quality Incentives Program offered through NRCS. If you would like more information on programs available to you, or for conservation technical assistance, please contact your local USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.



“When I see clear water running off of my pastures, and wildlife benefiting from conservation, I know that I am doing the right thing.”



Around the State

Oct 16

Fall Ag Day at the Fast Food Farm:

Fall Ag Day was held on October 16, 2014, at the Fast Food Farm in St. James Parish. The Fall Ag Day is coordinated by the Fast Food Farm, New River Soil and Water Conservation District, St. James Parish, 4-H, St. James FFA and East St. James Parish Ag in the Classroom.

Over 1,000 local students in kindergarten through 2nd grade were invited to Fall Ag Day. Students visiting the Fast Food Farm are able to see the connection between agriculture and the fast foods they eat in restaurants. They learn about the importance of agriculture by participating in various demonstrations and hands-on activities. This year's demonstrations

included making sugar from sugar cane, how to plant an herb garden, the layers and different types of soils, and milking a mechanical cow.

The next Ag Day will be held in the spring 2015 for 3rd and 4th grade students.

Oct 27

Plaquemines SWCD Collect Cypress Seeds:

On October 27, 2014, members of the Plaquemines Soil and Water Conservation District worked with volunteers to collect cypress seeds in Plaquemines Parish. The seeds collected were sent to the Golden Meadow Plant Materials Center for propagation and establishment and will be used to support future restoration efforts in the lower Barataria-Terrebonne Estuary.

Dec 8

Crescent SWCD Collects Yaupon Seeds:

Members of the Crescent Soil and Water Conservation Districts worked with volunteers to collect cypress and yaupon seeds in St. Bernard Parish. The seeds collected were sent to the Golden Meadow Plant Materials Centers for propagation and establishment and will be used to support future restoration efforts in the lower Barataria-Terrebonne Estuary.



Stories from the Field

Beryl Trawick returned home to Ponchatoula, Louisiana, in the 1990s to grow pine trees. At that time, the pink bark beetle was a serious issue for pine tree growers in Louisiana. She began trying to suppress the outbreak by cutting plots of loblolly pine from her stand of trees and then replanting longleaf in their place. Her mission worked, and her stand was saved. Today, Trawick is a longleaf pine activist and enthusiast.

The trees she planted during her return to her home state survived until Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast in 2005. However, Trawick is not one to back down to a challenge.

Trawick became very eager to return her family land to the thriving stand that it was prior to the storm. She knew she would need some help and

contacted her local USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. NRCS helped Trawick prepare the site for replanting, replant her beloved longleaf pine, and complete a competition spray the summer following the planting.

"I am so pleased that NRCS has programs to aid with the cost and maintenance of longleaf pine," said Trawick. "Without them, my stand may have been gone for good."

Trawick and NRCS already have plans to conduct prescribed burns on her land to increase bio-diversity in her ground cover.



Upcoming Events

Jan 11-13

LACD Annual Convention: The Louisiana Association of Conservation Districts will host their annual convention on January 11–13, 2015, at the Crowne Plaza in Baton Rouge. To register, please contact Amy Ballard at 225-665-4253 ext. 3.

Jan 12

Master Farmer University: Phase I training for the Louisiana Master Farmer will be conducted on January 12, 2015, at the Ike Hamilton Expo Center in West Monroe. Participants will be able to complete the first phase of the program while at this event. Registration is \$30 which includes lunch and admission to the 2015 Ag Expo. Online registration is available at <https://www.regonline.com/>

Imfuwm2015. For more information, please contact Donna Morgan at 318-473-6521.

Jan 16-17

Ag Expo: Look for the NRCS exhibit at Ag Expo on January 16–17, 2015 at the Ike Hamilton Expo Center in West Monroe, Louisiana.

Jan 21

Cover Crop and Soil Health Field Day: The LSU AgCenter will host a cover crop and soil health field day on January 21, 2015, from 9:00 am–1:00 pm at the Northeast Region Office in Winnsboro, Louisiana. For more information, please contact Dr. Beatrix Haggard at 318-498-2967.

Feb 12

8th Annual Meeting of the Louisiana Prescribed Fire Council: The 8th Annual Meeting of the Louisiana Prescribed Fire Council will take place on Thursday, February 12, 2015, at the LSU AgCenter's Dean Lee Research Station in Alexandria, Louisiana. Landowners, foresters, wildlife biologists, contractors, farmers, resource professionals, or others who are interested in prescribed fire are encouraged to attend. For more information or to pre-register for the event, please contact Cody Cedotal, LPFC Chair at (225) 765-2354 or by e-mail at ccedotal@wlf.la.gov.

Are you interested in volunteering for conservation? Contact your local NRCS office and ask about the Earth Team Volunteer Program.

Conservation Announcements

Public Comment Period on New EQIP Program Rule

Rule : USDA has published a rule that outlines how it will improve the Environmental Quality Incentives Program. USDA has established a 60-day comment period on the rule. The rule was published on December 12, 2014, in the Federal Register at <https://federalregister.gov/a/2014-28941> and <http://www.regulations.gov> at <http://www.regulations.gov/#!documentDetail;D=NRCS-2014-0007-0001>. Public comments can be submitted online through [regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) or by mail according to the instructions in the Federal Register notice. Comments are due by February 10, 2015.

The changes are intended to simplify the EQIP regulations regarding conservation practice scheduling,

payment limitations and other administrative actions. USDA has enhanced EQIP by streamlining the delivery of technical and financial assistance to agricultural producers and forest landowners nationwide.

Public Comment Extended on CSP Interim Rule

Interim Rule : USDA published the CSP Interim Final Rule in the Federal Register on November 5, 2014, which contains statutory changes to CSP. To view the interim rule visit <https://federalregister.gov/a/2014-26295> or at <http://www.regulations.gov/#!documentDetail;D=NRCS-2014-0008-0001>. Public comments can be submitted online through [regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) or by mail according to the instructions in the Federal Register notice. The public comment period on this interim rule has been extended until January 20, 2015.

Congress changed CSP in the 2014 Farm Bill, and NRCS has incorporated those changes into the interim rule. The changes are designed to improve the competitive nature of the program, including raising the bar for the quality of projects enrolled and increasing the number of priority resource concerns to be addressed during the term of the CSP contract. The rule also expands the reach of the program to include special funding pools for farmers and ranchers who are veterans of the U.S. Armed Services. It updates requirements for contract renewal, uses science-based stewardship thresholds to determine program eligibility and success, and expands program enrollment to include lands protected under the new Agricultural Conservation Easements program and that are in the last year of the Conservation Reserve Program. Furthermore, it also establishes CSP as one of the programs to help the Regional Conservation Partnership Program accomplish its purposes.



United States Department of Agriculture

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	2259 Business Park Boulevard, Donaldsonville, LA 70346	(225) 473-7638, ext. 3
Assumption	Donaldsonville	Lower Delta SWCD	2259 Business Park Boulevard, 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) 665-4253, 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) 665-4253, 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 Sterlington 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	2259 Business Park Boulevard, 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

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination against its customers. If you believe you experienced discrimination when obtaining services from USDA, participating in a USDA program, or participating in a program that receives financial assistance from USDA, you may file a complaint with USDA. Information about how to file a discrimination complaint is available from the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights. USDA prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex (including gender identity and expression), marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs, genetic information, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) To file a complaint of discrimination, complete, sign, and mail a program discrimination complaint form, available at any USDA office location or online at www.ascr.usda.gov, or write to: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410. Or call toll free at (866) 632-9992 (voice) to obtain additional information, the appropriate office or to request documents. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay service at (800) 877-8339 or (800) 845-6136 (in Spanish). USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.