



# CONSERVING NATURAL RESOURCES IN GEORGIA

## Georgia Quick Facts:

Number of NRCS Employees = 209

Number of NRCS Field Offices = 124

Acres of Cropland = 4 million or 10.9% of the state

Acres of Forestland = 24 million or 63.2% of the state

### The Natural Resources

Conservation Service (NRCS) helps people help the land through scientifically based, locally led voluntary conservation efforts. Created during the Dust Bowl days of the 1930s as the Soil Conservation Service, NRCS has expanded beyond preventing soil erosion to conserving and improving all natural resources on private lands.

More than 70% of the land in the continental United States is privately owned—that's more than 1.4 billion acres.



Soil Health in Georgia can also be seen in pasture lands.

**A farmer moves his cattle from one paddock to a new paddock each day to give the grass time to regrow.**

**Purpose:** Managing for soil health is one of the most effective ways for farmers to increase crop productivity and profitability while improving the environment. Positive results are often realized within the first year, and last well into the future. Soil Health is made up of air, water, decayed plant residue, organic matter from living and dead organisms, and minerals, such as sand, silt and clay. Increasing soil organic matter typically improves soil health since organic matter affects several critical soil functions. Healthy soils are also porous, which allows air and water to move freely through them. The benefits of healthy soils are; it may require fewer passes over fields as only minimally tilled and they aren't over-reliant upon excessive nutrient inputs to grow crops; increase farmers' profit margins by reducing labor and fuel expenses while optimizing inputs; hold more available water; reduces runoff that can cause flooding, and increases the availability of water to plants during droughts. Good infiltration and less need for fertilizers and pesticides keep nutrients and sediment from loading into lakes, rivers, and streams; groundwater is protected because there is less leaching from healthy soils; fewer trips across fields with farm machinery mean fewer emissions and better air quality.

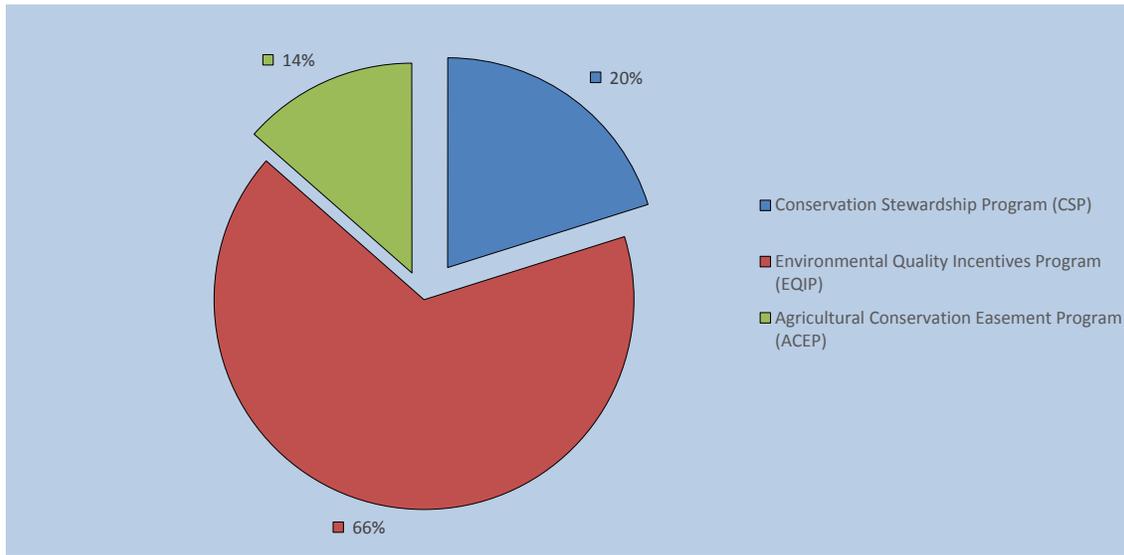
**Highlights:** The Soil Health Initiative was established in 2012 to offer an avenue for NRCS to support America's farmers who want to improve the soil health of their land. Since that time, NRCS's obligations in Georgia total almost \$7.4 million dollars to assist 1,207 landowners in managing 105,737 acres of land. In the last fiscal year, we funded 308 contracts covering 31,232 acres for roughly \$1.9 million dollars. Farmers used practices such as conservation cover, conservation crop rotation, residue and tillage management, no-till, cover crop, residue and tillage management, reduced till, forage and biomass planting and prescribed grazing.



**Multi-species forage planting- cereal rye, annual ryegrass, hairy vetch, chicory, and red clover.**

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**NRCS FY 2014 Percentage of Financial Assistance to Georgia Participants by Program**



**FY 2013 and FY 2014 Contracts and Financial Assistance to Georgia Participants by Program**

Program	Number of Contracts/Agreements		Financial Assistance to Producers	
	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2013	FY 2014
ACEP	0	10	0	\$4,668,802
*AWEP	171	0	\$1,275,441	0
CSP	270	343	\$3,537,363	\$6,959,858
EQIP	1,940	1,721	\$28,555,111	\$22,929,280
*FRPP	1	0	\$2,000	0
HFRP	0	0	0	0
*WRP	9	0	\$8,638,978	0
*WHIP	203	0	\$4,295,286	0
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2,594</b>	<b>2,074</b>	<b>\$46,304,180</b>	<b>\$34,557,940</b>

\* These program were de-authorized with the 2014 Farm Bill

Discretionary funds through the Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) for Georgia in FY 2014 is \$8.6 million.

Sources: FMMI, ProTracts 9/30/2014 and NEST 10/10/2014

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.

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Helping People Help the Land