

Projects . Successes . Partnerships

 **NRCS** Louisiana
Conservation Update
United States Department of Agriculture . Natural Resources Conservation Service

United States Department of Agriculture . Natural Resources Conservation Service . Louisiana

August 2013

Cattle Farming on Eight Acres

(in a subdivision)

Takes drive and ingenuity!
**West Baton Rouge Parish
Success**

**Stories from
the Field**
**Ma Maw's Garden
in Webster Parish**
**Conservation
Practices
in Ouachita Parish**
**Internship Success
at Golden Meadow
Plant Materials
Center**

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

HELPING PEOPLE HELP THE LAND

Table of Contents

Upcoming Events2
Mark your calendar for these upcoming events

Notes from the State Conservationist3
Sarah Haymaker shares her thoughts

Louisiana Ag Facts3
Number of Farms in Louisiana

Cattle Farming on Eight Acres Takes drive and ingenuity4
West Baton Rouge Parish cattle producer makes the most of eight acres

Around the State6

Stories from the Field.....6
Success stories submitted by NRCS field offices

- Ma Maw's Garden in Webster Parish
- Conservation Practices in Ouachita Parish
- Internship Success at Golden Meadow Plant Materials Center

Contact Information8
Call us with your questions

On the Cover



Harrison John-Louis is not your typical cattle farmer. His farm is located in the middle of a subdivision in Brusly, Louisiana. To learn more about how he raises cattle on eight acres of land in the middle of a subdivision, 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

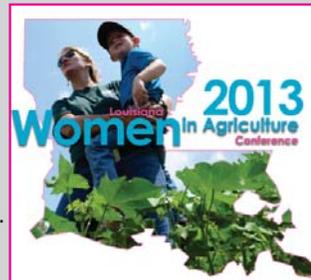
Upcoming Events

Aug 27-29

Louisiana Forestry Association Meeting: Visit the Louisiana NRCS exhibit at the Louisiana Forestry Association Annual Meeting August 27-29, 2013, at the Crowne Plaza in New Orleans.

Aug 30

Women in Agriculture Conference: Acadiana RC&D and NRCS will host a "Women in Agriculture" Conference at the LSU AgCenter located at 157 Cherokee Drive in Crowley, Louisiana, on August 30, 2013. For more information or to register, please contact Angie Fogleman at (337) 262-1766.



Sep 24

Forestry Best Management Practices (BMP) Workshop: Trailblazer RC&D, NRCS, and Entergy will host a Forestry BMP Workshop September 24, 2013, at Jimmie Davis State Park in Chatham, Louisiana. For more information, or to register contact Olivia at (318) 255-3554 or by e-mail at olivia@trailblazer.org.

Notes from the State Conservationist



Natural Resources Conservation Service helps farmers (with small and large farms) address these resource concerns with technical and financial assistance. If you have a small farm and you are interested in learning more about how the Natural Resources Conservation Service can help you on your farm, contact our local office. We will work with you to help you achieve your conservation goals.

Sarah Haymaker
State Conservationist
Louisiana

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

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

What is a small farm? 100 acres? 50 acres? How about 8 acres? The size of a farm—small versus large—can be judged by many measures, including the footprint of the farm, profits from crops sold, or if it is family operated.

In 2007, the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service reported there were 3,282 farms in Louisiana that were 1 to 9 acres in size—and 10,394 farms that were 10 to 49 acres in size. These 13,676 small farms cover over 285,000 acres of Louisiana's farmland.

Small farms, like large farms, experience problems with soil fertility, erosion, water quality, water quantity, energy availability/ costs, sustainability, and productivity. The



State Conservationist Kevin Norton is on detail assignment to Washington, DC, to work on Senator Debbie Stabenow's staff to help draft the language of our nation's next Farm Bill. Sarah Haymaker is serving as State Conservationist until Kevin Norton's return.

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

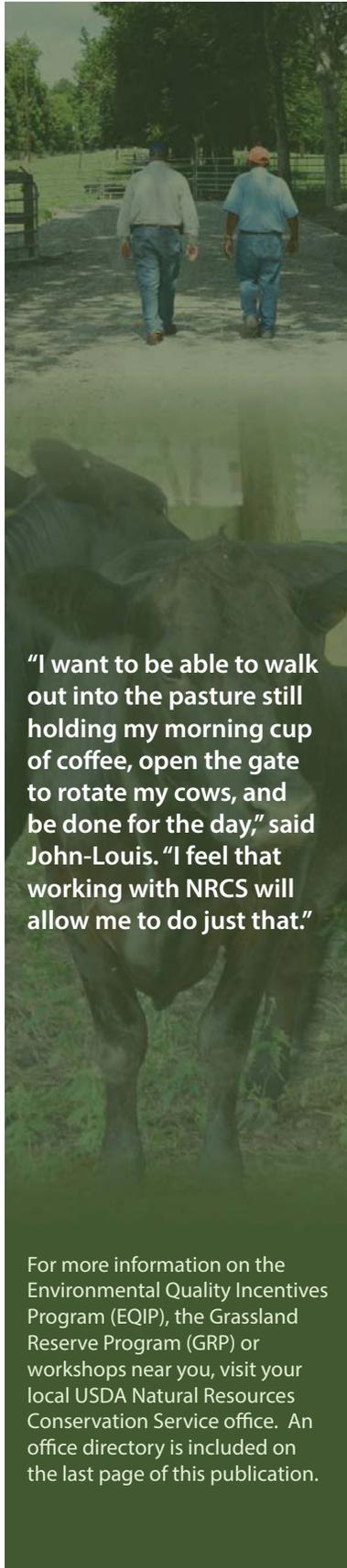


Other farmers have begun taking notice of Harrison John-Louis' success. From left to right: Chuck Tillis, Harrison John-Louis, Carlton Gay, Eddie Veal, and NRCS District Conservationist Jerry Hall.

Louisiana Ag Facts

- **Number of Farms in Louisiana**
29,000
- **Land in Farms in Louisiana**
7,950,000 Acres
- **Average Farm Size in Louisiana**
274 Acres

2011 State Agriculture Overview - Louisiana. USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service. Data as of 5/14/2012.



“I want to be able to walk out into the pasture still holding my morning cup of coffee, open the gate to rotate my cows, and be done for the day,” said John-Louis. “I feel that working with NRCS will allow me to do just that.”

For more information on the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), the Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) or workshops near you, visit your local USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service office. An office directory is included on the last page of this publication.



Cattle Farming on Eight Acres

Harrison John-Louis is not your typical cattle farmer.

His farm is located right in the middle of a subdivision in Brusly, Louisiana.

John-Louis’ suburban farm measures 150 feet wide and 1,850 feet long—or in other words, it about as wide as a football field and a little over six football fields long. His eight-acre farm forms a lane that spans the entire length of the neighborhood—with homes on each side.

His nine head of cattle rotate through nine paddocks rich in forage. Using rotational grazing, John-Louis ensures that his cows have good grass to eat all year long. He loves showing others that anyone can farm in any situation with the right amount of drive and ingenuity.

John-Louis began farming in 1985 in Breaux Bridge, Louisiana. He inherited a small 40-acre farm from his father, but at the time, he was unsure of what to do with it. He knew he wanted to put animals on the land because it was more



economical and was less time consuming than maintaining the land mechanically. However, after purchasing cattle, he realized the farm was going to be a lot more work to maintain than merely placing cattle on the land.

A neighboring farmer told him about a grass seminar that NRCS was hosting.

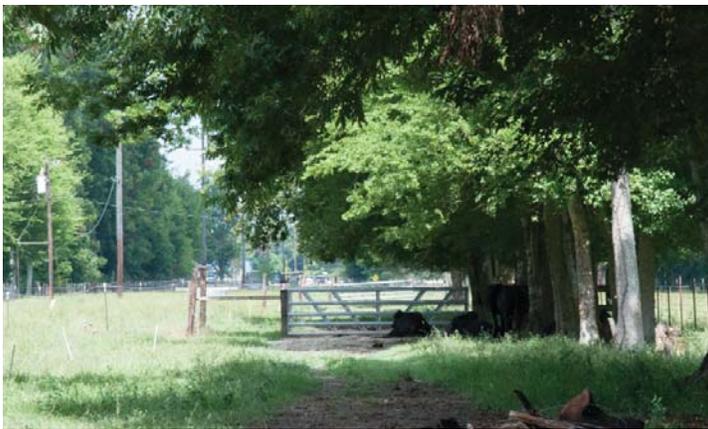
“I attended the first one and was so impressed, but I knew I couldn’t retain all of that knowledge in one session, so I attended two more,” John-Louis said.

You don't have to farm a large farm to work with NRCS.

Through working with NRCS, John-Louis has come to realize that as a cattle farmer he is actually farming grass. He works to ensure that the soil and grass are in the best condition for his cattle.



Takes **drive and ingenuity** and help from NRCS



He admits that he knew nothing about cattle farming before working with NRCS, and now he feels that he has a model cattle farm.

In 2008, when John-Louis began farming his eight-acre suburban farm in Brusly, he knew right away that in order to be successful, he would need to implement conservation practices. He contacted the local NRCS office and began working on a conservation plan for his farm. He worked through the Environmental Quality Incentives

Program to implement cross fencing for prescribed grazing, heavy use area protection pads to help with water quality and erosion issues where cows frequently walk, water lines, wells, and a gate heavy use area protection pad. He also worked through NRCS' Grassland Reserve Program to provide a habitat for nesting birds on his farm.

His farm is doing so well after implementing conservation practices that other farmers have started taking notice. Farmers are visiting his farm to

see what he has done and are taking note of what they can bring to their own farms. Chuck Tillis owns a large farm in McComb, Mississippi, and he recently visited John-Louis' farm to see how he was "getting his grass to grow so tall."

John-Louis regularly attends NRCS workshops and pasture walks because he wants to continue learning all he can so that he will have the best land possible for his cattle.

Harrison John-Louis Conservationist

Around the State

Jul 11



Bogue Chitto- Pearl River SWCD Board Member Farewell: After 17 years of dedicated service on the Bogue-Chitto Pearl River Soil and Water Conservation District Board, Leston McKenzie stepped down on June 30. On July 11th, the Bogue Chitto-Pearl River SWCD recognized Mr. McKenzie for his dedication, service, and leadership over the years as a board member.



Jul 29

Vermilion Parish Marsh Tour: On July 29, 2013 members of the Louisiana NRCS Water Resources Planning Staff and staff from NOAA met with Congressman Charles Boustany and his staff to brief them on coastal restoration being done through the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act. The group then toured various CWPPRA projects in Vermilion Parish federally sponsored by NOAA and NRCS.



Aug 4-6

South Central Regional NACD Meeting: The South Central Regional NACD Meeting was held August 4-6, 2013, in Lafayette, Louisiana. The group heard opening remarks by Commissioner of Agriculture, Mike Strain, DVM; NACD President, Earl Garber; and NRCS Acting Regional Conservationist-Central Region, Phyllis Philips. Topics of discussion included interstate and intrastate water management, herbicide-resistant weed control, feral hog control and management, and the RESTORE Act.



Aug 13

Lake Charles Office Move: On August 13, 2013, the Lake Charles USDA Service Center moved to 5417 Gerstner Memorial Drive in Lake Charles. The NRCS and Gulf Coastal Soil and Water Conservation District can be reached by phone at (337) 474-1583, extension 3.

Stories from the Field

Ma Maw's Garden

Ramona Easom has been a lifelong resident of Webster Parish. She helped her grandparents with their truck patch as a child; then, she helped her parents with the family garden when she was a girl and young adult. Now that she has grandchildren of her own, she wants to teach them about farming and growing crops.



Through technical assistance from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Ramona received information about soil fertility and using a soil analysis. NRCS provided information of the importance of organic matter, pH, and moisture; and NRCS staff helped Ramona with the proper procedure to obtain the soil sample. The information provided to Ramona has helped her produce a bumper crop of vegetables and give her granddaughters valuable lessons in

growing and taking care of things. Ramona and the girls share the vegetables with neighbors and friends throughout her community.

Submitted by: Cindy Beard, Soil Conservation Technician, Minden Field Office



Key Conservation Practices Implemented in Ouachita Parish

Butch Oaks has been raising poultry and beef cattle for 23 years in Ouachita Parish. His farm is located on the western side of the Ouachita River. He currently raises approximately 550,000 broilers annually for Foster Farms and runs predominantly Black Angus cattle on the pastures surrounding his six-house broiler operation. He utilizes poultry litter on his pastures as fertilizer and organic amendments to his soil.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service worked with Oaks to complete a resource inventory of his farm and together, they identified several key conservation practices that



would benefit his farm. Working through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Oaks has completed cross fencing to allow flash grazing and rock-lined waterways to treat gullies, and he is constructing an animal mortality facility.

Oaks says he is pleased with the conservation progress on his farm

and looks forward to completing additional practices.

Oaks serves as a state board member for the Louisiana Farm Bureau and as a committee member on Louisiana Commissioner of Agriculture Mike Strain's Poultry Task Force.

Submitted by: James Shivers, District Conservationist, Monroe Field Office

Stories from the Field

"... the PMC ain't for wimps"

Yvonne J. Welther, a student at Texas A&M at Kingsville, majoring in agricultural sciences spent ten weeks performing various duties at the Golden Meadow Plant Materials Center in Golden Meadow, Louisiana. Yvonne quickly learned that it takes a lot of bending, lifting, sweating and quick thinking to successfully operate a Plant Materials Center. Her quote at the end of each day as she was walking down the steps was ... "Whew, the PMC ain't for wimps."

While at the PMC, Yvonne's primary project consisted of evaluating



cultural techniques for propagating black mangrove for commercial production. The purpose of the study was to discover which method would yield better

results for commercial vegetative propagation of the Pelican Black Mangrove Germplasm (*Avicennia germinans*). Finding the most time efficient and economically feasible method benefits the commercial growers' efforts to propagate successfully and be able to raise black mangrove throughout the

year without depending on seed. Other duties included collecting PMC plant releases and preparing them for 2013 grower distribution, using tractors to rotor till in the fields, seed cleaning, vegetative transplanting, weed pulling, and watering of grasses and trees.

After work, Yvonne enjoyed cooking, teaching the sport of fencing, and learning the Cajun French language fluently spoken on the bayou. The Golden Meadow Plant Materials Center was delighted to have such a dedicated, hard-working individual assist over the summer.

Submitted by: Curt Riche, Soil Conservationist, Golden Meadow Plant Materials Center

Contact Our Offices

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	211 Washington Avenue, Mansfield, LA 71052	(318) 872-4949, ext. 3
East Baton Rouge	Denham Springs	Capital SWCD	907 Florida Boulevard, 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, 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
Ouachita	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	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



Visit our web site at: www.la.nrcs.usda.gov

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.