



Georgia Grazing Lands Conservation Coalition Newsletter

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...Providing a unified voice to support grazing land management

Georgia Grazing Lands Conservation Coalition 2005 Cost-share - Practice Demonstration Project

The Georgia Grazing Lands Conservation Coalition (GGLCC) has announced its fourth sign-up for the GGLCC cost-share project, which emphasizes conservation, and production & economic efficiency. As the most comprehensive cost-share project targeting livestock producers to date, this producer created project will cost-share on a variety of livestock, forage, and conservation management practices. Selected producers receive assistance with activities such as animal identification and record keeping, cross fencing, establishing improved forage varieties, nutrient management, planning heavy use area protection, hay testing and storage, pregnancy checking, bull pastures, and a variety of other practices associated with forage and livestock production.

Applications for the cost-share project are now available and easily downloaded by visiting the GGLCC website at www.gglcc.com/demonstration.htm. Producers can also contact their local Natural Resources Conservation or Cooperative Extension Service office to obtain an application form and additional information regarding this opportunity to improve the management of their livestock production farm.

Producers are limited to a \$10,000 GGLCC grant, which is payable on a 50:50 cost-share match.

Applications to participate must be submitted by June 1, 2005. Selections will be made by August 1, 2005.

The GGLCC offers forage and livestock producers an opportunity to compete for practice demonstration cost-share assistance in odd-numbered years. To date, \$900,000 of the Georgia Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative earmark has been allocated to this project, with 65 completed demonstration projects. The selected operations are used for field days, tours, and other educational opportunities.

Funded participants work with their local NRCS Conservationist and Cooperative Extension Service (CES) County Agent to develop a practice implementation plan that addresses the specific goals and needs described in the producer's cost-share application. Flat rate costs, based on the best locally available information, to install or implement each practice are agreed on and included in the practice implementation plan. When a practice is considered 'complete' by the local NRCS and/or CES office, funded participants are reimbursed 50% of the flat rate cost for applying the practice, not to exceed a completed project total reimbursement of \$10,000.

*Project Update***Tom Aiken — Circle A Farm, Lamar County**

Tom Aiken is owner-operator of Circle A Farms in Barnesville, Georgia. He first learned about the GGLCC cost-share project at a field day at Benny Bostick's farm in Monroe County in May 2002. Aiken was impressed by the amount of detailed thought and planning that went into the construction of Bostick's livestock working facility, and decided to apply for funding for his own operation. Bostick received a GGLCC grant in 1999.

Aiken's original livestock handling facility was built out of wood in 1982, and had been repaired many times. He was injured by a steer in October 2001, primarily due to the poor design and disrepair of his livestock handling facility, and he realized that he either needed to completely rebuild or get out of the cattle business entirely.

From Aiken's 2003 GGLCC application: "While I certainly try and want to make a profit from my cattle and Christmas tree operation, it is also very important to me to conserve the resources on my farm and to keep it aesthetically pleasing. Immediately after I bought the farm in 1980, I contacted District Conservationist Brian Whitehurst (now retired) and we developed a conservation plan, which I have made every effort to not only follow, but to continue to improve on." As technology advances have been made and as NRCS has had more involvement in grazing land management, Aiken has continued to work with NRCS through District Conservationist Carmen Westerfield.

Through the GGLCC application process, Aiken learned that his operation was not very efficient and that it needed improvement. In addition to addressing the soil and the environment, the process of developing the application caused him to focus on his cattle operation from the standpoint of what he needed to do to make it more efficient.

Approval of funding for Aiken enabled him to install catch pens, head gates and a loading chute, and to continue his livestock operation in a more productive manner. It also enabled him to use a more efficient rotational stocking system, increasing forage and livestock production, forage utilization, and improving soil and water quality.

Visit www.gglcc.com for more information on the Georgia Grazing Lands Conservation Coalition

Carmen Westerfield visited with Tom Aiken in March 2005 to talk about his cow/calf operation and how he felt about the improvements made as a result of his involvement in the GGLCC program. Aiken provided the following comments.

“My project consisted of:

1. Fencing to keep cattle out of streams, to provide rotational grazing, and to improve overall efficiency.
2. Cattle Handling Facility - corral system including head gate, tub, gates and holding area with water trough.
3. Heavy Use Protection around barn, feeding areas, and in catch pens.

This project has proven to be one of the best and most useful projects I have undertaken since buying the farm in 1980.

The fencing keeps the cattle completely out of the stream where they used to loiter and drink. There is now a buffer between the pasture and the stream. The fencing has also enabled me to be more efficient in the rotational grazing program and handling and moving cattle.

The heavy use protection areas have made it much more pleasant and efficient to use the corrals and feeding area, especially during wet weather.

During the farm demonstration at the Futral Farm in Spalding County in 2004, I saw the Cattle Freedom Water Fountain and later bought one of the two hole models and installed it in the corral, replacing a 600 gallon open tank. I highly recommend this type waterer over the open tanks as it is cleaner, the water is colder, and it doesn't freeze in cold weather. There is no algae build up in the water since no sun can reach it.

Without the handling facility, I could not have continued in the cattle business. It enables me to work the cattle much more efficiently and safely. The cattle do not become stressed when treated in this facility. I have not had to make any changes in it. It was well planned out. Carmen Westerfield, Keith Lassiter (Cooperative Extension Service), and folks from Powder River did an excellent job in advising me during the planning and construction phase. I am most appreciative of the pleasure and added management efficiency that the Grazing Coalition Project has afforded me.

I would like to make one other comment: The Grazing Coalition kept the paper work for the project to a minimum. The payments were made expeditiously and timely without all the bureaucratic red tape that most projects of this nature require.”

Winter Feeder Fact-Finding Tour

The Georgia Grazing Lands Conservation Coalition, in partnership with the Oconee River RC&D, hosted a Winter Feeder Fact-Finding Tour on March 8, 2005.

The tour was organized to visit two winter feeders that were installed as demonstrations on working livestock operations in the Oconee River RC&D area. The first stop of the tour was Danny Duvall's Greene County farm where a wooden winter feeder structure was cost-

shared through the Lower Lake Oconee 319 water quality project administered by Oconee River RC&D. The second tour stop was George Lohr's Morgan County farm where a steel structure was cost-shared through the Sugar Creek 319 water quality project administered by the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission. Local offices of the Natural Resources Conservation Service provided technical assistance to install both structures.



Danny Duvall farm, Greene County

The objective of the tour was to provide an overview of how neighboring states, such as North Carolina, are implementing the winter feeder practice. Success stories, planning and ranking documents, and quick facts concerning the demonstration structures were provided to the participants to educate and help make recommendations on how Georgia should proceed with promoting the practice through cost-share programs available in the state.

Our appreciation is extended to all of those involved in the tour, from the conservationists and engineers in neighboring states that shared information with us, to the conservationists and engineers in Georgia that provided planning and design

information for our demonstration winter feeders, to the participants of the tour that provided their thoughts on the practice. It was generally agreed that the winter feeder practice promotes environmental quality, while sustaining production and economic efficiency.

The information and discussions that resulted from this tour will pave the way for implementing the Winter Feeder practice in Georgia.

Georgia Grazing Lands Conservation Coalition

www.gglcc.com

American Forage and Grassland Council
Georgia Cattlemen's Association
Georgia Farm Bureau Federation
Georgia Milk Producers
Georgia Poultry Federation
Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Districts
Soil and Water Conservation Society - Georgia Chapter
The Nature Conservancy of Georgia

The Georgia Grazing Lands Conservation Coalition (GGLCC) was organized in 1996 in response to national activities emphasizing grazing land management.

Following in the footsteps of the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI) National Steering Committee, the GGLCC is a steering committee of livestock and forage producers that represent some of the strongest and most active conservation and producer groups in Georgia.

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