

THE DISTRICT QUARTERLY

Oconee County Soil and Water Conservation District
Winter 2013



2014 Affiliate Members

Ben Ables, Thomas Alexander, Jack and Virginia Arve, Blue Ridge Electric, Marie Chatlos, John Clark, Charles Cothran, Tim Donald, Donald Fowler, Robert Grobusky, Virginia Grobusky, Willa Handlin, Lee Kees, Floyd McPhail, Pete Miley, Cliff Outz, Wayne Orr, Jerry Powell, Pete Powell, Denver Powell, John Sandifer, Van Stuart, LJ Jones, Carol Klein, Michael Manley, Ernie Lombard, Jack Lombard, Tim Swain, J. Harold Thomas, Pat Williams,

A large thank you to those listed above. As you will see in the coming pages, your support is helping us make a difference in the education of natural resource protection. Please remember our affiliate member program, it is because of you

that we can continue to do the things we do here in Oconee.

If you are not listed above we are missing your 2014 membership. Please continue to help out the OSWCD mission of natural resource stewardship and education.

Oconee Soil and Water Conservation District
301 West South Broad Street
Walhalla SC 29691 864 638 2213
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All programs and services of the Oconee County Soil & Water Conservation District, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, and SC Department of Natural Resources Land, Water, and Conservation Division are offered on a non-discriminatory basis without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, marital status or handicap.

2013 CELEBRATION OF AGRICULTURE BANQUET

The 2013 Celebration Of Agriculture Banquet was held November 21, 2013 at the South Union Baptist Church Fellowship Hall. There were 150 attendees to this years event. The food was provided by Manna From Heaven and was excellent as always. Awards were given out for top producers and those who have exhibited a lifetime of focus on farming and natural resources. OSWCD wishes to thank our program sponsors, **Ag-South, Quality Inspections, NutriPlant Micronutrients, and Heavenly Hogs BBQ**. Our door prize donors help make the night special by contributing prizes that are always a highlight of the night. Much gratitude goes to Auto-Zone, Better Furniture Outlet, Puerto Nuevo Mexican Restaurant, Little Pigs BBQ, Joe's NY Pizza, Barrett Trading Outpost, Seneca NAPA, Wilson's Processing, Seneca Sears, The Booksmith, Emily's, HeartWarmers, Oakway Tractor, and Blue Ridge Electric.



2013 award winners: Joe Davis Cattleman of the Year, Billy Carson Jr Beekeeper, Bill Butts Sr Beekeeper, Pat Williams Horizon Farmer, Sam Anderson Heritage Farmer, Dorothy Lee - George Grobusky Conservation Service Award, Chris Wood Columbia Farms Poultry Grower, Robert King Fieldale Poultry Grower



Ms. Dorothy Lee receiving her Grobusky Conservation Service award from OSWCD Chair Rex Ramsay. Ms. Lee served continuously on the conservation board for 26 years. She stated that she had seen and learned many things in that time on the board and would always cherish her time there. Ms. Lee will retire at the end of December. We wish her well in her retirement and will miss her dedicated attitude to this board and Oconee's natural resources.



Conversations abound at the Celebration Of Agriculture, a night of recognition and relaxation for our hard working farm families.

The No Till Option

No-till farming (also called **zero tillage** or **direct planting** or **pasture cropping**) is a way of growing crops from year to year without disturbing the soil through tillage. No-till is an agricultural technique which increases the amount of water and organic matter (nutrients) in the soil and decreases erosion. It increases the amount and variety of life in and on the soil, including disease-causing organisms.

No-till improves soil quality (soil function), carbon, organic matter, aggregates, protecting the soil from erosion, evaporation of water, and structural breakdown. A reduction in tillage passes helps prevent the compaction of soil.

Recently, researchers at the Agricultural Research Service of the United States Department of Agriculture found that no-till farming makes soil much more stable than plowed soil. Their conclusions draw from over 19 years of collaborated tillage studies. No-till stores more carbon in the soil and carbon in the form of organic matter is a key factor in holding soil particles together. The first inch of no-till soil is two to seven times less vulnerable than that of plowed soil. The practice of no-till farming is especially beneficial to Great Plains farmers because of its resistance to erosion.

Crop residues left intact help both natural precipitation and irrigation water infiltrate the soil where it can be used. The crop residue left on the soil surface also limits evaporation, conserving water for plant growth. Soil compaction and no tillage-pan, soil absorbs more water and plants are able to grow their roots deeper into the soil and suck up more water.

Tilling a field reduces the amount of water, via evaporation, around 1/3 to 3/4 inches (0.85 to 1.9 cm) per pass. By no-tilling, this water stays in the soil, available to the plants

No-till dramatically reduces the amount of erosion in a field. While much less soil is displaced, any gullies that do form will get deeper each year instead of being smoothed out by regular plowing. This may necessitate either sod drainways, waterways, permanent drainways, cover crops, etc.^[33]

A problem that occurs in some fields is water saturation in soils. Switching to no-till will help the drainage issue because of the qualities of soil under continuous no-till include a higher water infiltration rate.^[34] So, you might want to see how a field with saturated soil behaves under no-till before deciding whether or not to purchase tiling for the area.

OSWCD has a no-till drill for rent if any of the above notation intrigues you as a farmer. The group of farmers we have who have used the drill have reported good results and continue to participate in this program. Rental fee is by the acre and goes at a rate of \$10 per acre for Oconee County Cattlemen's association members and Oconee Soil and Water Conservation District Affiliate Members, \$12 for Oconee County Residents, and \$15 for non residents.

The Drill can be reserved by calling Carl Myers at 380 Myers Lane by calling 710 7269



District Commissioners
Alexander P. "Rex" Ramsay Chairman
Lee Keese Vice Chairman
Dorothy Lee Secretary/Treasurer
Bob Winchester
L. J. Jones
District Manager
Eddie Martin
NRCS District Conservationist
Heather Ramey
Farm Service Agent
Ann Herron

Deadlines for the art and essay contests are February 15th. If your child or grandchild is interested in these programs and their school is not participating they can get information on the contest by contacting the district office at the address below or by calling 864 638 2213. All entrants will be invited to attend our awards banquet in the spring where winners of the contest will receive cash prizes for their work.



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2014 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Your support is very much needed and appreciated. Our education programs as well as our service and support depend on your generosity. Please fill out this form and return it with your tax deductible contribution. Thank you for your continued support.

Please Circle One

Land Conservationist.....\$25.00 Soil & Water Protector.....\$50.00

Steward of the Land.....\$100.00 Corporate Conservationist...\$250.00

Oconee Preservationist.....\$500.00+

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