

## Practices and demonstrations implemented from 1996 to 2001

### Small farm demonstration:

- pasture planting and management
- no-till planting of cool season legumes
- wildlife upland habitat development
- rotational grazing
- nutrient management
- pond management
- fencing
- irrigation system
- catfish production
- forages for goats

### Additional features:

- small farm expo
- field days/tours
- training sessions
- calibration of equipment
- commercial fertilizer vs. chicken litter
- lime and fertilizer requirements
- introduction of native grasses
- animal health and nutrition
- alternative water sources
- remote sensing applications
- goat production

### On the cover:

Eastern Gamagrass *Tripsacum dactyloides* L.

## Partners

USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center,  
Americus, Georgia  
Brooksville Plant Materials Center,  
Brooksville, Florida

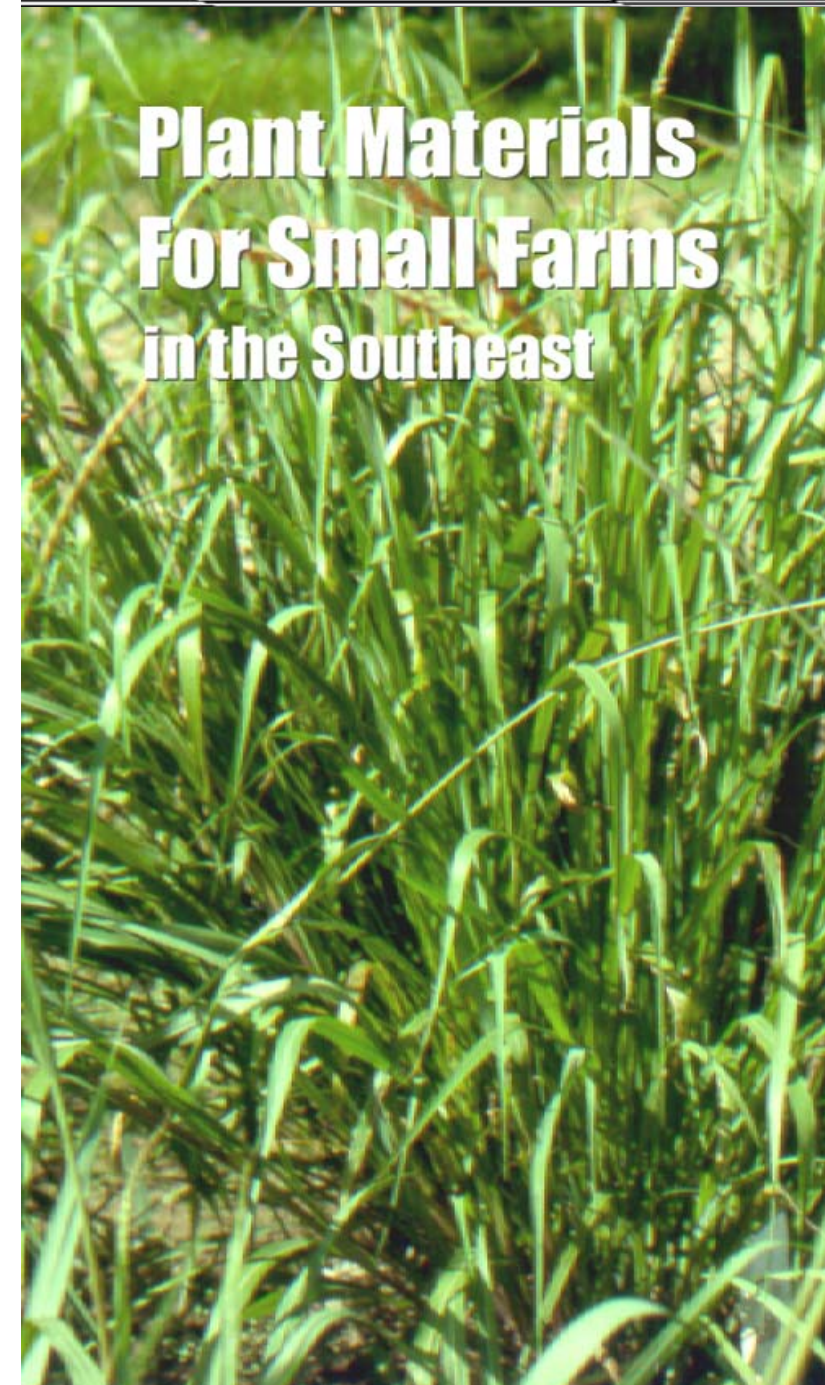
Fort Valley University Cooperative Extension Program  
Pennington Seed Company, Madison, Georgia  
Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission  
Ogeechee Soil and Water Conservation District  
Tattnall County Small Farmers  
Federation of Southern Cooperatives  
University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Program  
Central Savannah River RC&D Council  
Seven Rivers RC&D Council  
Coastal Georgia RC&D Council  
Pine Country RC&D Council  
Alabama A & M University  
Georgia Cattleman's Association  
Georgia Farm Bureau  
L.A. Brett & Son John Deere, Swainboro, Georgia  
Cascade Seed Company  
Colley Ford Tractor, Metter, Georgia  
Metter Banking Company, Metter, Georgia

For more information on plants for your farm, contact your local USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service or Soil Conservation District Office.

**October 2001**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



## Small Farms in the Southeast

Small farms have unique ecosystems. The ecosystems are very rare because they are often unchanged for over 50 years. They contain small fields and hedgerows with native and natural vegetation that protect lakes and streams and provide habitat for wildlife. Small farmers usually apply less fertilizers and pesticides on their crops, resulting in improved water quality and healthier ecosystems, both on and off site. Small farms are a unique and steadily diminishing resource in most agricultural watersheds<sup>1</sup>.



*On the Kennedy Farm, cool season grasses and legumes, Georgia 5 Fescue and Cherokee clover, are interseeded into a warm season grass mixture of*

Over 100,000 small farms with less than \$20,000 gross income make up about 59 percent of all farms in the United States. This accounts for only 16 percent of U.S. agricultural land.



*Charles and Handy Kennedy with Melvin DeShazor, NRCS District Conservationist.*

## Plant Materials Program Assists Small Farms

*Farm demonstrations exist to meet customer needs for cost effective solutions that address natural resource problems. Plant material field demonstrations can positively impact the small farmer/limited resource program by providing new plant technology. Improved plant varieties will ultimately improve production, control soil erosion, and improve the quality of life.*

*These demonstrations have given small farmers the opportunity to see first-hand the value of plant technology and how it can improve their farming system. The Kennedy Farm, located in Cobbtown, Georgia, has been a demonstration site since 1996. The 1,300-acre farm enterprise includes approximately 130 brood cows, catfish production, goats, fishponds, and horses. They grow sugar cane, sweet potatoes vegetables, small acreage of soybeans, and corn. They also harvest pecans, and sell pine trees for pulp and saw timber.*

*The Natural Resources Conservation Service, Plant Materials Program, has worked with the Kennedy's to use plant technology to more efficiently manage their farm. The demonstration practices include rotational grazing, pasture and nutrient management, and an irrigation system. Approximately, 60 acre are established with 'Cherokee' clover, 'Georgia 5' fescue, and arrowleaf clover for cool season grazing. Another 20 acres are planted in eastern gamagrass and two acres planted with perennial peanuts. A solar-powered watering system will be used as an alternative water supply for the cattle. To demonstrate rotational grazing on their pastures, electric fencing was installed to create smaller fields, or paddocks, within larger pastures.*

*The Fort Valley State University assisted in these efforts providing training on by demonstrating good animal health and nutrition to small farmers by inoculating to*

*prevent diseases, worming, using implants, and recommending supplemental feed requirements based on the (GLA) grazing land nutritional balancer.*



*Eastern gamagrass, a warm season grass, can support a large herd of cattle when used with and efficient rotational grazing system.*

<sup>1</sup> Statistics from Alabama A&M small farm study.

## Impacts and Opportunity

Livestock production is the most important value-added industry in the United States. To sustain this industry, forages are produced on more than half the land area of the country. Current livestock production in the southeast relies heavily on forages and grains whose intense production has had adverse effects on the ecosystem.

The demonstration farms are expected to show the potential of warm-season native grasses as an alternative source of forage in the southeast. They also show how the use of cool-season legumes interseeded into warm-season grasses will increase total forage biomass production, and be efficient, inexpensive, and a nonpolluting source of nitrogen for succeeding grasses.

The demonstrations will provide the small farmer with site specific information on the management of native grasses for production of good quality pasture and hay in a sustainable, low-input system.

