

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

April 2012

**You can
do a lot on
5 acres!**

**Longleaf
Pine
Workshop**

**Earth Day
2012**

**NRCS
Honors
Volunteers**

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

HELPING PEOPLE HELP THE LAND

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On the Cover



WesMar Farms supplies goat milk, soft goat cheeses, and goat’s milk soap to farmers’ markets, health food stores, grocery stores, restaurants, and loyal mothers across Louisiana. Learn how they manage to do this on less than ten acres of land on pages 4 and 5.



USDA
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Notes from the Acting State Conservationist

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.

In 2009, the U.S. Department of Agriculture launched the Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food initiative to bring focus to local and regional food systems. In March 2012, USDA moved the initiative forward by launching the Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food Compass, an online tool with stories, pictures, and videos about USDA's support for local and regional food systems and an interactive map of USDA-supported local and regional food activities in all 50 states. Visit the compass at: <http://www.usda.gov/maps/maps/kyfcompassmap.htm>

In addition to the compass, you can learn more about food that is locally grown in Louisiana, by visiting Louisiana's online MarketMaker tool—a searchable database of consumer and food industry data. Visit the MarketMaker at: <http://la.marketmaker.uiuc.edu>

WesMar Farms in Avoyelles Parish is featured on Louisiana's MarketMaker online tool. Through MarketMaker, you will learn that WesMar is a Louisiana licensed goat dairy offering a variety of goat milk products. WesMar worked with the Natural Resources Conservation Service to develop a sustainable grazing system for their goats, and you can read more about their operation on pages 4 and 5.

Whether you are a small farming operation of less than 10 acres, like WesMar Farms, or a large farm or ranch, the Natural Resources Conservation Service can assist you in developing a conservation plan for your farm. Give us a call to find out more.

Sarah Haymaker
Acting State Conservationist
Louisiana

“When the grass looks greener on the other side of the fence, it may be that they take better care of it there.” Cecil Selig



Quote of the Month



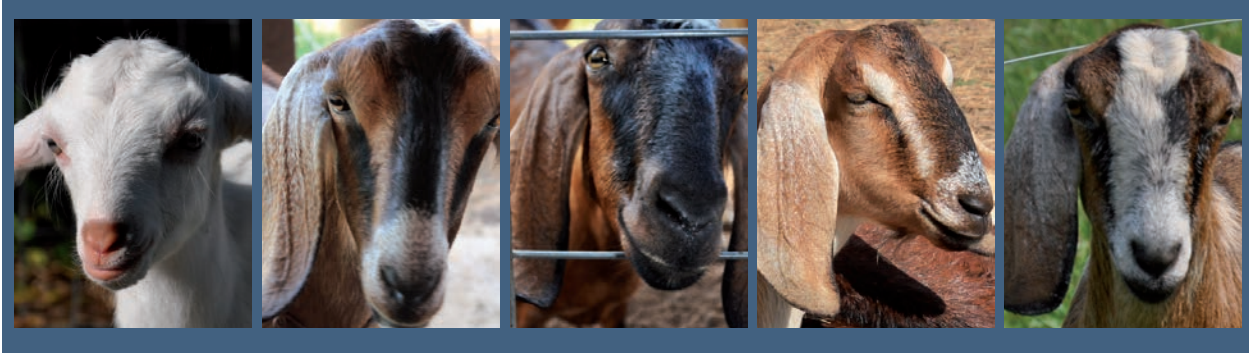
Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food Compass
<http://www.usda.gov/maps/maps/kyfcompassmap.htm>

Louisiana Market-Maker
<http://la.marketmaker.uiuc.edu>

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:

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USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
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Alexandria, Louisiana 71302
or
holly.martien@la.usda.gov



- Caboose
- Chloe
- Penelope
- Tina
- Gwen
- Lucy Belle
- Suzy
- Blondie
- Molly
- Graffitti
- Gimpi
- Surprize
- Gracie
- Daisy May
- Ellie May
- Brownie
- Spot
- Elisa
- Clementine
- Petunia
- Rummy
- Anna Belle
- Antoinette
- Samantha
- Martha
- Calliope
- Ruby
- Ginger

“It started as a birthday present . . . six goats.”

West Constantine
WesMar Farms

“Six goats that I did not want,” said West Constantine. “But Marguerite wanted to raise fresh, “real” food, and goats seemed to fit the bill.”

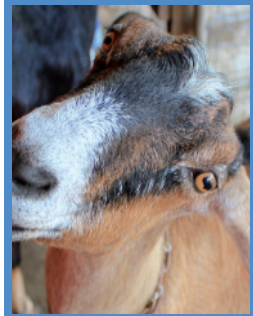
Traveling the world during their civilian and military careers gave West and Marguerite Constantine a taste and appreciation for locally grown food: corner butcher shops, fresh milk and cheese from local dairies, and farmers’ markets offering fresh vegetables. When they retired in 2005 and decided to stay in Avoyelles Parish, they missed the fresh produce and interaction with local farmers. That’s when Marguerite took matters into her own hands and presented West with a birthday gift of six goats.

The rest is history. Today, WesMar Farms supplies goat milk, soft goat cheeses, and goat’s milk soap to farmers’ markets, health food stores, grocery stores, restaurants, and loyal mothers across Louisiana. Sometimes the demand is greater than production, but WesMar Farms customers are understanding—and willing to wait. Their product is just that good.

WesMar Farms is located on a little over eight acres in Moreauville, Louisiana. Five of the acres are dedicated grazing pastures for the goats.

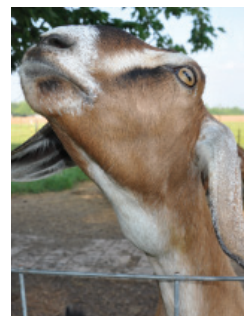
“You can do a lot on five acres,” said Marguerite. “Especially if you have NRCS helping you with advice on plant and soil conservation.”

Marguerite and West Constantine Conservationists



“You can do a lot on five acres.”

Marguerite Constantine
WesMar Farms



NRCS' Marksville Field Office is assisting the Constantines in applying prescribed grazing, nutrient management, pest management, cross fencing, watering facilities, heavy use area protection, pipeline, and water well conservation practices on their farm through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program.

of farmers, and WesMar Farms is a teaching farm for World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms (WWOOF). WWOOF links volunteers with organic farmers and helps people share more sustainable ways of living. At the time of this interview, Jeremy Polacek, a WWOOF volunteer from Chicago, was working on the farm.

An NRCS conservationist helped develop a grazing management strategy that utilizes 20 paddocks—including a sacrificial field in case of drought and grass is in short supply.

“I have learned a lot about day-to-day operations of a farm, how to make yogurt, how to mend fences, how to culture cheese, make soap, garden, and enjoy the satisfaction of a full day's work.”

“We are working towards sustainability in our farming practices,” said Marguerite. “You have to have healthy land to sustain production, and NRCS is helping us ensure our land is healthy.”

What's next for WesMar Farms? Marguerite says she would like to try mob grazing . . . and maybe a hoop house for the garden. . .

West and Marguerite also believe in sustaining future generations

Time to call the Natural Resources Conservation Service!



WesMar Farms

- Averages 2 quarts of milk a day from each goat
- Names all their goats—and calls each one by name
- Is breeding Nubian goats with Saanen goats to increase milk production
- Is inspected monthly by State Dairy Inspectors
- Is Federally licensed and inspected as a zoo to allow tours of the farm and dairy
- Hosts a Farmers' Market every Thursday from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.
- Products are “Certified Louisiana Products by the Louisiana Department of Agriculture

American Indian Artists: Poster Contest for 2012 American Indian Heritage Month

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is conducting a poster contest in preparation for the 2012 American Indian Heritage Month. The winner will receive \$2,000 as payment for the artwork.

All Tribal residents in Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas are invited to submit artwork. If you would like to participate in the poster contest, you must notify Dr. Carol Crouch at (405) 527-3241, ext.108, or by email at carol.crouch@ok.usda.gov of your intent to participate by May 25, 2012. Poster artwork must be submitted to Tom Lucas at USDA, NRCS State Office, Office of Public Affairs, 100 USDA, Suite 213, Stillwater, Oklahoma 74074, telephone: (405) 742-1244, by June 1, 2012.

The theme for submitted artwork must be: "Tell me, and I'll forget. Show me, and I may not remember. Involve me, and I'll understand." A story describing the artwork must accompany the poster. There is no age limit for participation. Applicants may submit one original 18" x 24" artwork, using acrylic or oil on canvas, and ready for reproduction.

NRCS celebrates American Indian Heritage Month every year. One way NRCS celebrates this historic month is to sponsor a contest for American Indian artists, with the winning artwork being produced into a poster and distributed nationwide.

A selection committee will judge the artwork and select a winner no later than June 15, 2012. NRCS will purchase the artwork from the winning artist for \$2,000 and have the right to reproduce and distribute copies of the artwork at its discretion.

NRCS Honors Volunteers During National Volunteer Week

National Volunteer Week was celebrated April 15-21, 2012. USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) celebrated National Volunteer Week by honoring its Earth Team volunteers for their service to conservation.

The Earth Team is the agency's volunteer workforce. Nationally, in Fiscal Year



2011, over 22,000 people donated 435,653 hours of service to NRCS—worth \$9.3 million. In Louisiana, 751 Earth Team volunteers donated 38,705 hours in Louisiana worth \$826,739 of benefit to NRCS customers and taxpayers.

Earth Team is a program which partners volunteers with NRCS employees. It was created in 1985 and offers many opportunities to individuals over the age of 14 who are interested in volunteering to improve the



nation's natural resources. Earth Team volunteers help NRCS conservationists provide private landowners and others a range of services from conservation technical assistance to teaching and generating awareness about conservation through the use of community projects. Since 1985, over a half-million Earth Team volunteers have donated \$336 million worth of time helping NRCS with its conservation mission.

Learn more about the Earth Team volunteer program online at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/people/volunteers> or by calling (toll-free) 888-526-3227. For more information on NRCS visit www.nrcs.usda.gov.

Alphonse the Alligator

Helps children understand the role of agriculture in wildlife habitat conservation and development



On March 31 and April 22, "Alphonse the Alligator" traveled to Alexandria and Baton Rouge Earth Day celebrations with a hands-on activity for children that spotlights the role of agriculture in wildlife habitat conservation and development. Alphonse is a 6-foot paper mache' alligator created with an opening in his stomach so children can see what an alligator eats. During Earth Day activities, Earth Team volunteers helped children assemble "charm bracelets" with charms representing parts

of wildlife habitat on farms and ranches in Louisiana: Alphonse the Alligator, Terry the Turtle, Daniel the Duck, Ryan the Landowner/Farmer, and switchgrass. The switchgrass charm was created using hand-made paper with switchgrass and Florida paspalum native grass seeds embedded in the paper. The children can plant the paper in their yard—or in a cup—and grow a little piece of Alphonse the Alligator's habitat.



Upcoming Event

for Private Landowners and Forestry/Wildlife Professionals

Restoring and Managing Longleaf Pine on Private Land Field Day and Workshop

REGISTER TODAY!

Thursday, May 24, 2012

Lee Memorial Forest—Sheridan, Louisiana

Join us on May 24, 2012, in Lee Memorial Forest near Franklinton, Louisiana, to learn how to restore Louisiana's native longleaf pine forest on your land. A four-stop walking tour will demonstrate forest conversion and establishment techniques that utilize prescribed burning, harvesting

practices, herbicide applications, site preparation methods, and seedling planting options. Information will also be provided on state and federal financial assistance programs to help restore longleaf pine on your property. The field day begins with registration from 8:00 a.m. to 8:45 a.m. The walking tour begins at 9:00 a.m. For more information on this workshop, contact Brian Chandler, Extension Forester, (225) 683-3101 or bchandler@agcenter.lsu.edu.

Longleaf Pine Workshop Partners

Texas-Louisiana Longleaf Taskforce
National Wild Turkey Federation
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
LSU AgCenter
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
The Nature Conservancy

Weyerhaeuser
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Louisiana Society of American Foresters
USDA Forest Service
Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry
USDA Farm Service Agency

USDA's Commitment to Equality

USDA believes every farmer and rancher should be treated equally and fairly, and we are committed to resolving all cases involving allegations of past discrimination by individuals.

Referral Guide for USDA Settlements and Claims Adjudication Process

Women and Hispanic Farmers and Ranchers Claims Adjudication Process

If you believe that USDA improperly denied farm loan benefits to you for certain time periods between 1981 and 2000 because you are a female or because you are Hispanic, you may be eligible to apply for compensation. To request a claims package by telephone, call 1-888-508-4429. To request a claims package online, please visit www.farmerclaims.gov

Native American Farmer and Rancher Class Action Settlement (Keepseagle v. Vilsack)

If you are a Native American who was denied a farm loan or loan servicing by the USDA between January 1, 1981, and November 24, 1999, you may be eligible for benefits from a Class Action Settlement. To request a claims package by telephone, call: 1-888-233-5506. To request a claims package online, or for more information, please visit: www.indianfarmclass.com

African American Farmer and Rancher Class Action Settlement (Pigford II)

If you are an African American farmer (a) who submitted a request to file a late claim on or between October 13, 1999, and June 18, 2008, under the 1999 USDA settlement in the earlier class action known as Pigford v. Glickman ("Pigford") and (b) who did not receive a merits determination on your discrimination claim, you may be eligible for benefits from a Class Action Settlement. To hear information by telephone, call 1-866-950-5547 or 1-866-472-7826. To find information online, please visit: www.blackfarmercase.com

Civil Rights Training

Louisiana NRCS hosted three sessions of "Civil Rights Compliance in Program Delivery" this year to educate NRCS employees about their responsibilities regarding civil rights while working for NRCS and administering NRCS programs. Subjects covered included Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975. 70 employees participated in the training sessions.

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	2274 Highway 70, Suite C, Donaldsonville, LA 70346	(225) 473-7638, ext. 3
Assumption	Donaldsonville	Lower Delta SWCD	2274 Highway 70, Suite C, 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	1400 Highway 14, Suite B, Lake Charles, LA 70601	(337) 436-5020, 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	1400 Highway 14, Suite B, Lake Charles, LA 70601	(337) 436-5020, 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) 757-8366, ext. 3
DeSoto	Mansfield	DeSoto SWCD	211 Washington Avenue, Mansfield, LA 71052	(318) 872-4949, ext. 3
East Baton Rouge	Denham Springs	Capital SWCD	2191 Tower Drive, 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) 363-6020, 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	Boutte	Crescent SWCD	14246 US Highway 90, Boutte, LA 70039	(985) 758-2162, ext. 3
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	2191 Tower Drive, 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	Boutte	Crescent SWCD	14246 US Highway 90, Boutte, LA 70039	(985) 758-2162, ext. 3
Ouachita	Monroe	D'Arbonne/Boeuf River SWCD	2410 Old Sterlington Road, Suite B, Monroe, LA 71203-2668	(318) 343-4467, ext. 3
Plaquemines	Boutte	Plaquemines SWCD	14246 US Highway 90, Boutte, LA 70039	(985) 758-2162, ext. 3
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	Boutte	Crescent SWCD	14246 US Highway 90, Boutte, LA 70039	(985) 758-2162, ext. 3
St. Charles	Boutte	Crescent SWCD	14246 US Highway 90, Boutte, LA 70039	(985) 758-2162, ext. 3
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	2274 Highway 70, Suite C, Donaldsonville, LA 70346	(225) 473-7638, ext. 3
St. John	Boutte	Crescent SWCD	14246 US Highway 90, Boutte, LA 70039	(985) 758-2162, ext. 3
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	604 East Water Street, 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

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