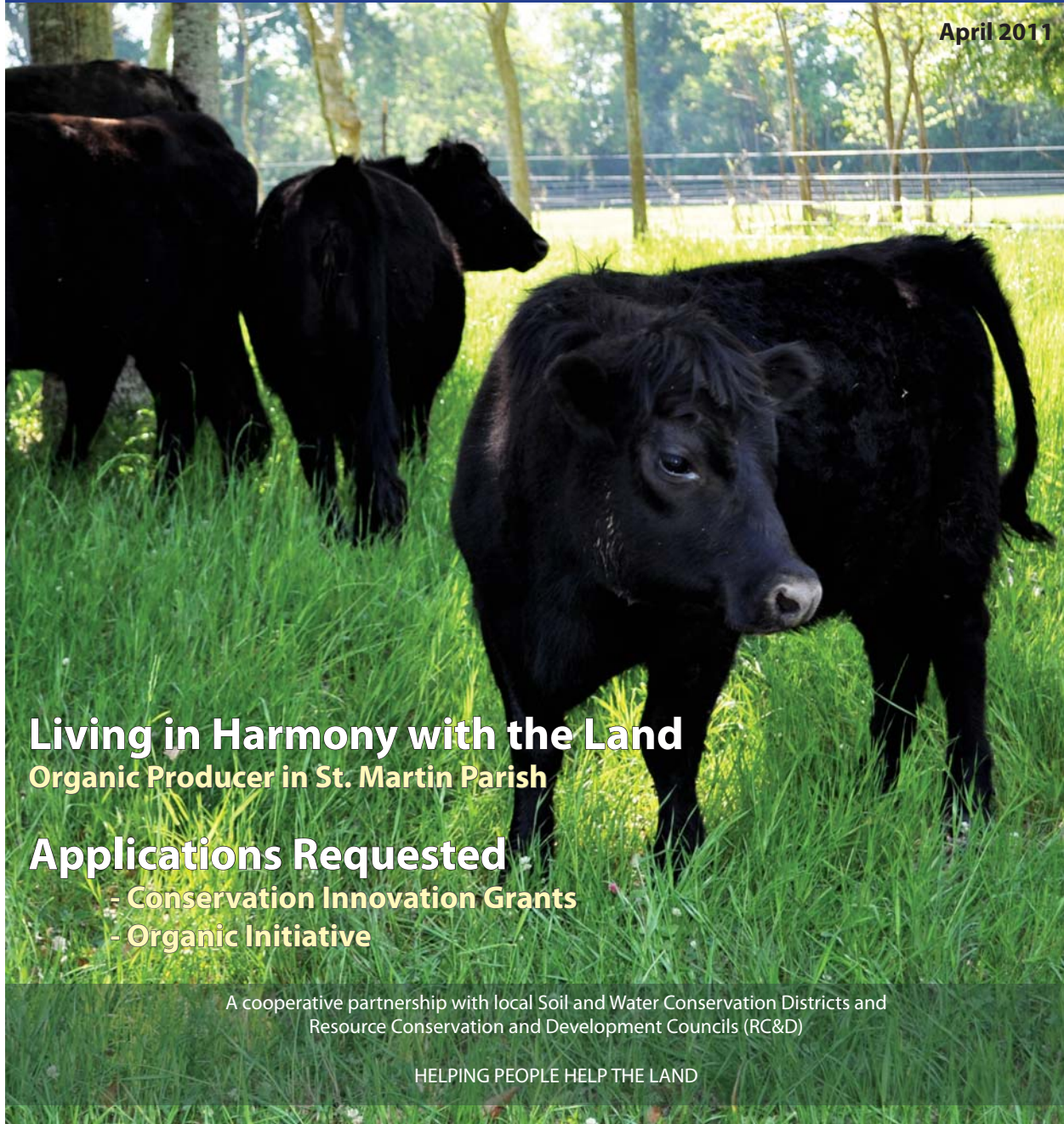


Projects . Successes . Partnerships

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

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

April 2011



Living in Harmony with the Land
Organic Producer in St. Martin Parish

Applications Requested
- Conservation Innovation Grants
- Organic Initiative

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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The Pines Ranch is a 48-acre organic farm in St. Martin Parish. On the farm, you will find bee hives, Angus cattle, Katahdin sheep, chickens, a horse, a donkey, citrus trees, and a blood hound named Olivia—all living in harmony with the land. See story on pages 4 and 5.



USDA
Natural Resources
Conservation Service
3737 Government Street
Alexandria, Louisiana 71302
(318) 473-7751



Visit our YouTube channel:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/LouisianaNRCS>

Notes from the State Conservationist

In 1947, in the aftermath of World War II, the world was facing a food shortage. Rationing was common. President Truman urged Americans to have meatless and eggless days and to conserve grain for the hungry in Europe. The world population in 1947 was approaching 2.5 billion—144 million in the United States. In 1947, **Outdoor Life** magazine published the “Conservation Pledge” encouraging all Americans to pledge to conserve the natural resources of our nation.

This year, as our world approaches a worldwide population of 7 billion, a whole generation of Americans has no memory of food rationing. Food and fiber has been abundant in America because of the concentrated efforts of American farmers and ranchers to conserve, protect, and enhance our nation’s natural resources.

Spurred by the establishment of the Soil Conservation Service in 1935 and Soil and Water Conservation Districts shortly thereafter, our nation’s farmers have worked diligently to stop soil erosion, improve the quality of our water, and produce abundant crops to feed and clothe our nation and the world.

Worldwide population growth is predicted to reach 8 billion in 2024, then 9 billion in 2045. Today, more than ever, America’s farmers are responsible for protecting and conserving our nation’s natural resources. The same land that fed and clothed 2.5 billion in 1947 will feed and clothe 9 billion in 2045. Programs like the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and Conservation Stewardship Program are helping to ensure America’s farmers and ranchers have the technical and financial assistance they need to implement farming practices that will protect, conserve, and enhance America’s natural resources.

Expanding on the popular bumper sticker “If you ate today, thank a farmer” -- as we approach 7 billion people in the world, “If you have clean water, healthy soil, clean air, food to eat, clothes to wear, and use wood products, thank a farmer, a rancher, and a tree farmer.”

Kevin D. Norton
State Conservationist
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
Louisiana



Quote of the Month

“ I give my pledge as an American to save and faithfully to defend from waste the natural resources of my country—its soil and minerals, its forests, waters, and wildlife.”

Conservation Pledge -- January 1947 “Outdoor Life” magazine.

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

Living in Harmony With the Land

Through the **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)**, Dr. Jeff Crosier received financial and technical assistance to establish fencing, pipelines, heavy use area protection pads, and watering facilities; accomplish pasture and hay land planting (interseeding legumes and pollinator species), and nutrient management; and construct a seasonal high tunnel and heavy use area winter feeding pad.



NRCS District Conservationist Bart Devillier with Organic Farmer Dr. Jess Crosier.

"There is a companionship. They all know where to go... it is like a well regulated highway."

Because Dr. Crosier wanted to take his operation a step further and improve existing conservation practices, he applied and was approved to receive additional financial assistance through the **Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)**.

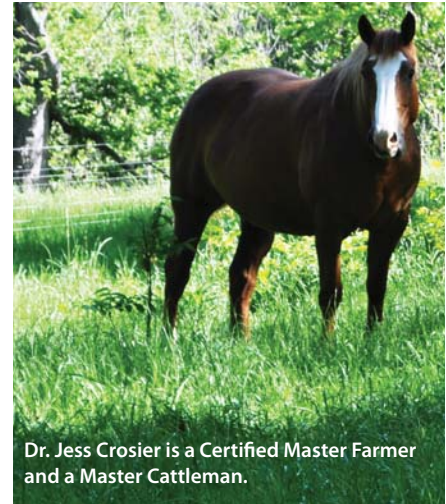
Dr. Jess Crosier, like most other livestock producers in the deep south, operates a small farm. His path to farming success has been a long journey filled with experiences on his farm, visits to other similar operations in the area, attendance at many grazing workshops, tours, field days, and multiple consultations with those that supply technical support.



For more information on the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, the Conservation Stewardship Program, or the Organic Initiative, contact your local NRCS office. Contact information is included on the back page of this publication.

Organic Producer The Pines Ranch

The Pines Ranch Organic Farming in St. Martin Parish



Dr. Jess Crosier is a Certified Master Farmer and a Master Cattleman.

The Pines Ranch is a 48-acre organic farm in St. Martin Parish. On the farm, you will find bee hives, Low-line black Angus cattle, Katahdin hair sheep, chickens, a horse, a donkey, citrus trees, vegetable plants, and a blood hound named Olivia—all living in harmony with the land.

Owners Jess and M'Liss Crosier are pathologists in the local medical community by occupation, but organic farmers/ranchers by avocation. Raising their 4-year old twin boys Jess Jr. and Ben to respect the land comes naturally to the Crosiers. You will find the twins running behind their mother and father helping when they can, but always learning valuable scientific and life lessons.

"It has taken generations of southern Louisiana families to build the farms we have," said Dr. Crosier. "Most of the young people in southern Louisiana don't understand the value of the farms, but my children will."

As an organic producer, Dr. Crosier uses clover and grasses for grazing, bees for pollinating, and chickens to help eliminate parasites and provide fertilizer. He has established a practical rotational system that combines his cattle, sheep, donkey, and horse for grazing. He calls them his "mob." Multi-species grazing and browsing has worked effectively at the Pines Ranch.

"Nature never grows plants or animals in a monoculture, why should farmers? There is a companionship. They all know where to go . . . it is like a well regulated highway," said Dr. Crosier. "The animals have formed a symbiotic relationship. The donkey, horse, and cows provide protection and security for the sheep. The sheep consume plants that are undesirable to the other livestock. Somehow they've got it all worked out."

Dr. Crosier rotates his animals about every other day using a concentrated grazing approach. After he moves his cattle, he tries to mow the grass and clover down to two to

four inches, which helps to reduce parasites. He usually does this after every, or every other, grazing cycle. The mowing triggers the forage to grow back lush, uniformly, and more vigorous than before, while placing the green litter back on the soil surface to feed the all important natural nutrient cycle that keeps the organic production system going. A rest period of 18 to 30 days is allowed between grazing periods. When the undesirable plants have to compete under similar harvest as do the desirable forages, they cannot sustain themselves. The management is implemented to give the desirable species the advantage.

Dr. Crosier inherited his conservationist's respect for the land from his Native American heritage. As a conservationist, he works with the local USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to implement conservation practices to protect, conserve and enhance his farm's natural resources.



NRCS developed a conservation plan that is specific to Dr. Crosier's farm. NRCS also provided technical assistance, management and implementation support, and information on conservation practices. Dr. Crosier has implemented many best management practices to improve his farming operation, and as a result, water leaving his farm is cleaner, there is minimal soil erosion, and his soils and farm animals are extremely healthy.

Recently, through a special NRCS Organic Initiative, Dr. Crosier installed a seasonal high tunnel on his farm to raise heirloom tomatoes and peppers—adding to the crop diversity of the Pines Ranch.

Jess Crosier Conservationist

**NRCS Requests
Applications for
Conservation
Innovation Grants**

NRCS Louisiana requests applications for Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) to stimulate the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies. For fiscal year 2011, up to \$150,000 may be available for the Louisiana State CIG competition. NRCS will reserve the right to offer more or less funding at the discretion of the State Conservationist. Grants under the Louisiana state component will not exceed \$75,000 from NRCS and must be implemented within the state of Louisiana. Funds will be awarded through a competitive grant process.

The Louisiana CIG category available in FY 2011 is the "Natural Resource Concerns Category." Applications are requested from eligible government or non-government organizations or individuals for competitive consideration of grant awards for projects in Louisiana between 1 to 3 years in duration.

Applications must be received in the NRCS Louisiana State Office by 4:00 p.m., Central Time (CT) on June 3, 2011. Applications that are hand-delivered or sent via express mail, overnight courier, US Postal Service, or any other form of mail delivery must be addressed to:

**Attn: Scott Edwards
USDA – Natural Resources
Conservation Service
3737 Government Street
Alexandria, Louisiana 71302**

Applications submitted by fax or e-mail will NOT be accepted.

**For further information,
contact:**
Scott Edwards, State Resource Conservationist, NRCS, 3737 Government Street, Alexandria, Louisiana 71302, telephone: (318) 473-7774, or e-mail: scott.edwards@la.usda.gov.

Around the State

Mar 29 - Apr 1

Soil Health Workshops - One hundred and five people attended four Soil Health/Ultra High Stock Density Grazing workshops hosted across Louisiana from March 29 through April 1, 2011. Ray Archuleta, Conservation Agronomist at the Natural Resources Conservation Service East National Technology Center in Greensboro, North Carolina, and Doug Peterson, Missouri State Grazing Land Specialist, conducted the workshops. Farmers and ranchers are keenly aware that increasing energy costs have a profound effect on farm economics. Cover crops on cropland and managing for a diverse plant community on grazing lands will improve soil health. Healthy soil over the long term will cut fertilizer costs, reduce the needs for herbicides and pesticides, improve yields, prevent soil erosion, conserve soil moisture, and protect water quality.



Apr 1

Ride for Conservation - On April 1, 2011, conservationists and friends of conservation gathered at the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service State Office for a motorcycle "Ride for Conservation." Conservation riders traveled through Forest Hill, McNary, Glenmora, Oakdale, Elizabeth, Grant, Wye, DeRidder, Rosepine, Leesville, Gardner, then returned to Alexandria by Twin Bridges Road—a picturesque ride through the Kisatchie National Forest. They crossed scenic streams including Six Mile Creek, Ten Mile Creek, and Ouiska Chitto Creek. The views were spectacular, and the dogwood trees were in full bloom. Conservation riders traveled about 200 miles. Dates for next year's "Ride for Conservation" will be announced in early 2012. Ride organizers shared . . . "It's not about the destination . . . it's the journey that matters!" Conservation riders pictured above from left to right: Pam Kennedy; Andrew and Jennifer Moulder; Linda and Mike Nichols; Rose Sharbeno; Kirk Garber; and Leslie Michael.



Apr 16

Party for the Planet - Alexandria Zoo Earth Day - On April 16, 2011, NRCS employees, Rural Development employees, Earth Team Volunteers, family, and friends participated in the Party for the Planet at the Alexandria Zoo. Over 2,500 visitors participated in this Earth Day celebration, and exhibitors provided hands-on activities for children. NRCS offered the Wildlife Track Identification activity for children.



Apr 17

Baton Rouge Earth Day Celebration - On April 17, 2011, NRCS employees, Rural Development employees, Earth Team Volunteers, family, and friends participated in the Baton Rouge Earth Day celebration. Visitors were challenged to identify the tracks of seven animals found in Louisiana.



Upcoming Event

Forest Management Field Day
May 24, 2011
5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Swiftwater Road
Farmerville, Louisiana

For more information, call:
(318) 368-8021

Organic Initiative

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Conservationist Kevin Norton invites Louisiana's certified organic producers and those transitioning to organic production to take advantage of an extended application period for NRCS' Organic Initiative.

"While applications for the Organic Initiative are accepted by NRCS on a continuous basis, the cutoff date for this application period is set for May 20, 2011," said Norton. "Organic producers who would like to implement conservation practices should visit an NRCS office by May 20 to be considered for this funding cycle."

Fiscal year 2011 marks the third year of USDA's Organic Initiative. Up to \$50 million is available this year to help producers to plan and implement conservation practices that address natural resource concerns in ways that are consistent with organic production. For example, conservation practices might include planting cover crops, establishing integrated pest management plans, constructing seasonal high tunnels, or implementing nutrient management systems consistent with organic certification standards.

Eligible producers include those certified through USDA's National Organic Program, those transitioning to certified organic production, and those who meet organic standards but are exempt from certification because their gross annual organic sales are less than \$5,000.

Organic Initiative funding is provided through NRCS' Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Under EQIP Organic Initiative contracts, NRCS provides financial payments and technical assistance to help producers implement conservation measures in keeping with organic production. Beginning, limited resource, and socially disadvantaged producers may obtain additional assistance. The 2008 Farm Bill limits EQIP payments for organic operations to \$20,000 per year per person or legal entity, with a maximum total of \$80,000 over six years.

Producers interested in applying for EQIP Organic Initiative funding must submit applications through their local NRCS Service Center. Contact information is included on the back page of this publication.

"Organic producers who would like to implement conservation practices should visit an NRCS office by May 20 to be considered for this funding cycle."

Kevin Norton
NRCS State Conservationist

Federal Agencies Pledge to Work Together to Conserve the Natural Resources of the Mississippi Valley Region

Memorandum of Understanding Signed in New Orleans

On April 15, 2011, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Regional Conservationists Thomas W. Christensen and Leonard Jordan joined U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Major General Michael J. Walsh in New Orleans to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to collaborate to conserve and protect natural resources throughout the Mississippi Valley.

"Our agencies have historically worked together to conserve and protect our nation's natural resources," said Major General Walsh. "This agreement formalizes our working relationship on a regional level."



The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers executed a national partnership agreement in July 2005. The regional MOU signed on April 15th is between the Mississippi Valley Division of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (St. Paul, Rock Island, St. Louis, Memphis, Vicksburg, and New Orleans Districts) and the Central and East Regions of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

"Both NRCS and the Corps of Engineers are interested in facilitating effective and efficient natural resource conservation," said NRCS Regional Conservationist Tom Christensen.

"This agreement outlines our working relationship and provides a platform for exploring new and innovative conservation strategies."

For more information about the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, visit www.nrcs.usda.gov. For more information on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, visit www.mvn.usace.army.mil.

Pictured Above

Signing from left to right: Thomas W. Christensen, Regional Conservationist, Central Region, USDA NRCS; Major General Michael Walsh, Commander, USACE Mississippi Valley Division and

President of the Mississippi River Commission; Leonard Jordan, Regional Conservationist, East Region, USDA NRCS.

Back row, left to right: Capt. Pete Ciaramitaro; Kevin Norton, La. State Conservationist, USDA NRCS; Mike Sullivan, Ark. State Conservationist, USDA NRCS; Maj. Gen. John Peabody, Commander, Great Lakes and Ohio River Division and member of Mississippi River Commission; Hon. William Clifford Smith, member of Mississippi River Commission; Al Garner, Mississippi State Conservationist, USDA NRCS; and Brig. Gen. John McMahon, Commander, Northwestern Division and member of the Mississippi River Commission.

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	313 North Monroe Street, Suite 4, 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
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
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
Evangeline	Ville Platte	Evangeline SWCD	205 Court Street, Ville Platte, LA 70586	(337) 762-6602, 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	1803 Trade 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
Lafayette	Lafayette	Lafayette SWCD	905 Jefferson Street, Suite 310, Lafayette, LA 70501-7913	(337) 262-6601
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	1803 Trade 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	290 Pico Street, Many, LA 71449-3077	(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
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	111 North Main Street, Suite 2, 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
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
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	1100-C South Third 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
Winn	Natchitoches	Dugdemona SWCD	6949 Louisiana Highway 1 Bypass, Natchitoches, LA 71457	(318) 357-8366, ext. 3

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