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 **NRCS** Louisiana
Conservation Update
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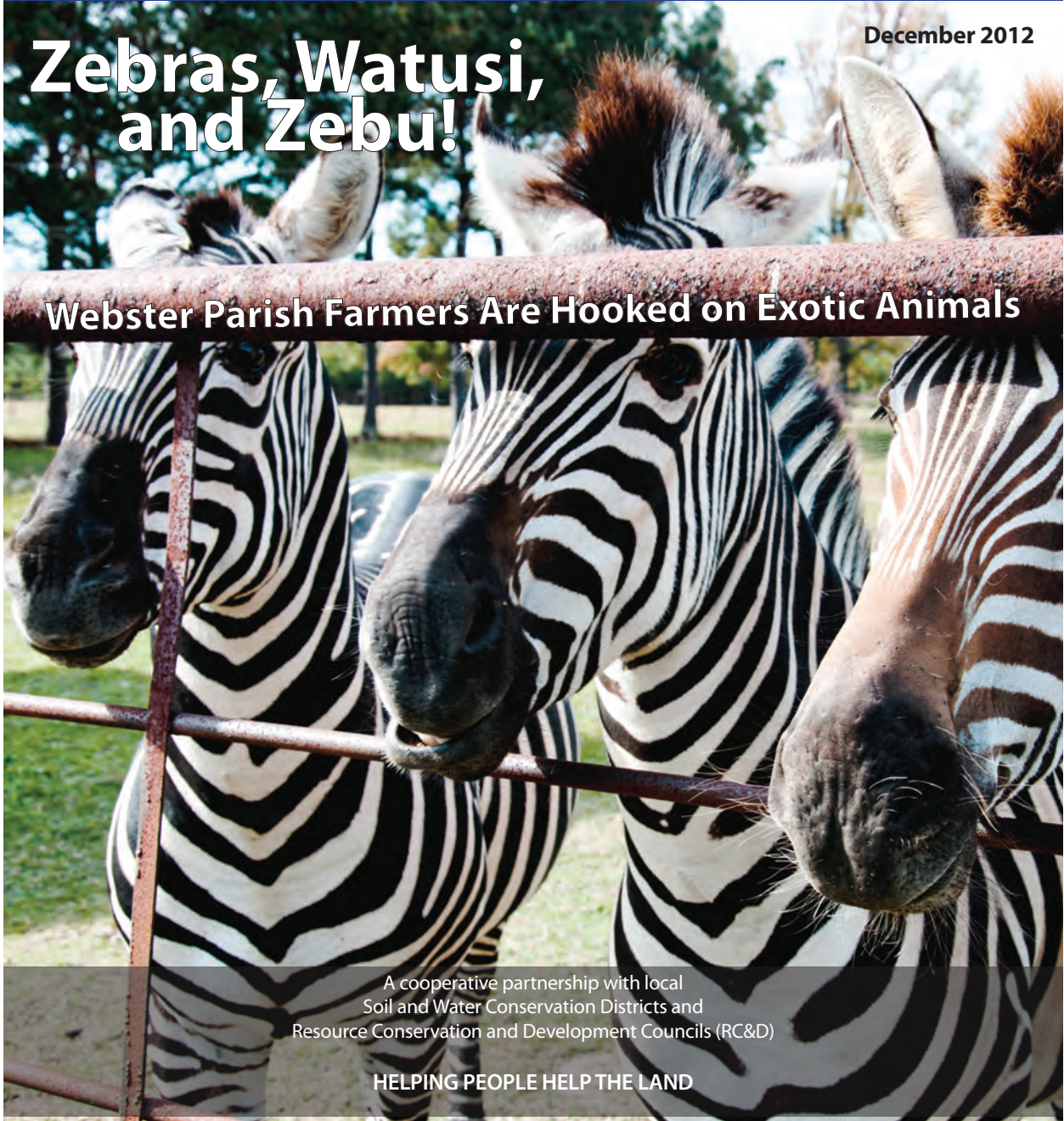
December 2012

Zebras, Watusi, and Zebu!

Webster Parish Farmers Are Hooked on Exotic Animals

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

HELPING PEOPLE HELP THE LAND



On the Cover



You never know what you might see while walking through the pastures of Rex and Trudy Cable's Cross Creek farm in Webster Parish. Horses, yes . . . cattle, yes . . . but wait . . . zebras?! To find out how zebras ended up in Webster Parish, see pages 4 and 5.

Below: Natural Resources Conservation Service Soil Conservation Technician Cindy Beard with Cross Creek zebra.



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The Conservation Update is distributed monthly by mail and e-mail.

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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

<p>Women and Hispanic Farmers and Ranchers Claims Adjudication Process</p> <p>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</p>	<p>Native American Farmer and Rancher Class Action Settlement (Keepseagle v. Vilsack)</p> <p>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</p>	<p>African American Farmer and Rancher Class Action Settlement (Pigford II)</p> <p>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</p>
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Notes from the State Conservationist

This month's issue of *Conservation Update* features a farm in Webster Parish that is home to horses, cattle, llamas, an emu, and zebras. This farm is not exactly the type of farm you are accustomed to reading about in our magazine, but then again, this farm shares a similar thread with other farms we have featured—conservation-minded producers.

While covering this story, we discovered an interesting fact about zebras . . . a zebra's stripes are like fingerprints. Every zebra has a slightly different arrangement.

Like a zebra's stripes, each farm and ranch in Louisiana is unique. Resources are different, crops are different, management styles are different, and goals are different. When the Natural Resources Conservation Service and soil and water conservation districts work with farmers and ranchers, we study these differences and make recommendations for conservation measures based on producer goals. We spend time with a producer collecting information on farm resources—land cover, land use, soil erosion, soil types, wetlands, habitat diversity, conservation practices, etc.; we analyze this information to develop alternatives that will work best for the producer; and once the producer decides on a course of action, we help them implement the conservation measures.

This conservation planning process makes it possible for our agency to effectively serve the individual conservation needs of cattle producers, row crop farmers, organic producers, and farmers with exotic animals. As a result, during 2012 the Natural Resources Conservation Service and Louisiana's soil and water conservation districts helped Louisiana's ag producers improve water quality, stop soil erosion, restore wetlands, enhance wildlife habitat, and improve farm sustainability and profitability.

As we move forward in 2013, I hope we will have an opportunity to work with you on your farm or ranch.

Kevin Norton
State Conservationist
Louisiana



Quote of the Month

**"Strength lies in differences,
not in similarities."**

Stephen R. Covey, 1932-2012, American educator, author, businessman, and keynote speaker.



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zebras, watusi, and zebu!

You never know

what you might see while walking through the pastures of Rex and Trudy Cable's Cross Creek farm. Horses, yes . . . cattle, yes . . . but wait . . . are those zebras?!

Zorro, Zahara, and Zydeco are zebras who live on Cross Creek in Webster Parish. These zebras are part of a family of exotic animals that includes llamas, an emu, and Watusi cattle.

"I got bitten by the exotic animal bug after seeing the movie "Racing Stripes," said Trudy Cable. "Then, we stumbled upon an injured zebra at a local vet, found out there is a local breeder, and the rest is history."



Both Rex and Trudy grew up around farms

and farming. Trudy's father had 80 acres of pine trees, and Rex's father was a tobacco and timber farmer. When it was time to retire, they both agreed. . . it was time to go back to the farm. They moved to rural Webster Parish and began to raise horses for recreation.

"I love horses," said Trudy. "But we found out really quickly that it costs a lot of money to raise horses; so, we started raising cattle to support our horse farm."

But the Cables did not elect to raise just any breed of cattle, they selected Watusi, Zebu, and Dutch Belted Gallaways. This began their journey towards a pasture full of exotic animals, and meeting the injured zebra at the local vet's office sealed their fate.

"When the zebras came to Cross Creek, we really got hooked on exotic animals," said

Trudy. "Now we have llamas, an emu named Esther, and a donkey named Gator!"

Rex and Trudy began working with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in 1996. They had some erosion problems on Cross Creek, and after visiting with their local conservationist they elected to install a pond to help solve these problems. In the years since, they have installed fencing and accomplished site preparation, forest stand improvement, and tree and shrub establishment conservation practices with the help of NRCS. Most

recently, the Cables have worked with NRCS on well decommissioning, installation of heavy use area protection, installation of a structure for water control, and installation of a pipeline and watering facility.

The Cables are true conservationists. They understand that in order for their animals to flourish, they must take care of their land, and they share this with others. Working with the Dorcheat Soil and Water Conservation District and NRCS, they have hosted two pasture walks for women on their land.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service and Soil and Water Conservation Districts provide technical assistance to farmers and ranchers like Rex and Trudy Cable to help them be better stewards of their land's natural resources.

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program promotes agricultural productivity and environmental quality. Technical and financial assistance are available to help eligible participants install or implement structural and management practices on eligible farmland.



Cross Creek - Webster Parish

In 2011, Rex and Trudy were presented with the "Conservation Farmer of the Year" award by the Dorcheat Soil and Water Conservation District.

"Being presented this award meant the world to us," said Trudy. "We had no idea how to run a successful farm with conservation in mind, but NRCS and the District took time through the years to explain everything clearly—and it has totally improved our farm."



Rex and Trudy Cable Conservationists

Around the State

Nov 8, Dec 11

St. Mary Parish 4-H Club Presentations - The St. Mary Parish LSU AgCenter invited Sophie Kilchrist, St. Mary SWCD Coordinator, to present a lesson on coastal restoration to area 4-H Club members. Sophie covered the topic with 88 students at Raintree Elementary School on the Chitimacha Reservation and at the Chitimacha Tribal School. Since St. Mary is a coastal parish, this is a valuable topic to cover since many older 4-H Club members become Earth Team volunteers and assist St. Mary SWCD with coastal vegetative plantings each year.

Dec 5

America's Heartland - Several months ago, the weekly television series, **America's Heartland** filmed a story on the Blanchard family sugarcane farm in St. Mary Parish. The episode aired on December 5th on the Rural Free Delivery (RFD-TV) channel. The



episode can be viewed online at http://www.americasheartland.org/episodes/episode_812/sugarcane_farming.htm. St. Mary Parish District Conservationist Patra Ghergich was interviewed for the episode. The Blanchard family farm was recently highlighted in the June 2012 issue of the Conservation Update.

Dec 7

Louisiana Forage and Grazing Council Meeting - The Louisiana Forage and Grazing Council held their annual meeting in Alexandria, Louisiana, on December 7, 2012. During the meeting, Calcasieu Parish livestock producer Jay Duhon received the Council's Master Forage Producer Award.

Dec 10

USA Rice Outlook Conference - Vermilion Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Chairman Ernest Girouard received the Distinguished Conservation Achievement Award at the USA Rice Outlook Conference held in Coronado, California, on December 10, 2012. In addition to his work with the SWCD and Louisiana Association of Conservation Districts (LACD), Dr. Girouard is also the Louisiana Master Farmer Program Coordinator at the LSU AgCenter.

Dec 12

Louisiana Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society Meeting - The Louisiana Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS) held its annual meeting on December 12, 2012, at the Dean Lee Research Station DeWitt Livestock Facility in Alexandria, Louisiana. Approximately 33 people attended the meeting from across the state. Topics covered at the meeting included Restoring Longleaf Pine in Louisiana, the Louisiana Black

Bear Conservation Coalition, Mississippi River Trust, and the Lower Mississippi River Valley Joint Venture. During the meeting, Calcasieu Parish producer James Walton was presented with the 2012 Good Land Use Award.



The Soil and Water Conservation Society is a nonprofit scientific and educational organization that serves as an advocate for conservation professionals and for science-based conservation practice, programs, and policy. There are 75 SWCS chapters across the U.S. and Canada. The mission of SWCS is to foster the science and art of natural resource conservation.

The Louisiana Chapter of SWCS sponsors activities at the local and state level where members meet and discuss conservation objectives. It offers training, technical assistance, and hands-on experience with demonstrations and projects to its members.

To become a member of SWCS, visit http://www.swcs.org/en/join_swcs. For more information on the Louisiana Chapter of SWCS visit <http://www.laswcs.org> or contact Jason Hardie, Chapter President, at (318) 435-6743 ext. 3 or by e-mail at jason.hardie@la.usda.gov.



Upcoming Events

Jan 9-11

LACD Annual Convention - The Louisiana Association of Conservation Districts will host their annual convention in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, on January 9-11, 2013. To register to attend, contact: Mitzi Dohrman, Vermillion Soil and Water Conservation District, (337) 893-5664, extension 3, mitzi.dohrman@la.nacdnet.net.

Jan 18-19

Ag Expo 2013 - Visit the NRCS Exhibit at AgExpo 2013. This event is sponsored by the North Louisiana Agri-Business Council and will be held at the Ike Hamilton Expo Center in West Monroe on January 18 & 19, 2013.

Jan 29

Louisiana Prescribed Fire Council Annual Meeting - The 6th Annual Meeting of the Louisiana Prescribed Fire Council will be on January 29, 2013, at the Tall Timbers Baptist Conference Center in Forest Hill, Louisiana. The deadline to pre-register is January 18, 2013. Registration for the meeting is \$10.00 payable to the Louisiana Forestry Association (LFA), P.O. Box 5067, Alexandria, LA 71307-5067. Please mark PPFC Mtg. in memo of checks. For more information, contact Cody Cedotal at the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries at (225) 765-2354.



Census of Agriculture Quick Facts

Number of Farms in Louisiana = 29,000

Land in Farms in Louisiana = 7,950,000 Acres

Average Farm Size in Louisiana = 274 Acres

From: USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service. Data as of 05/14/2012

Be Counted! A Lot Depends on the Census of Agriculture

The Census of Agriculture is conducted only once every five years across our nation's farmland and agricultural communities. USDA, those involved in agriculture, and many others use the results of the Census to make important policy and business decisions that impact people across our nation. It is important that all of our nation's farmers and farmland are accurately accounted for.

If you receive a Census of Agriculture form, please take a moment to complete the form and respond. If you need assistance completing the form or you would like to receive a form to complete, contact the National Agricultural Statistics Service at (888) 424-7828.

**For more information about the Census of Agriculture, visit:
www.agcensus.usda.gov**



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) 757-2455, 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) 363-6602, 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	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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