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 **NRCS** Louisiana
Conservation Update
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June 2012

It Takes
Everyone
Family Farm Success
in Jeanerette

USDA Field Tour in
Rapides Parish
Celebrates 150 Years for USDA

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



Today, three generations of Blanchards work on Blanchard Brothers Farm, and Hilda Blanchard says as far back as she can remember, everyone's father was a farmer. Read about their success on pages 4 and 5.



Television crew visits Blanchard Brothers Farm. Find out more on page 4.





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.

The family farm plays a vital role in rural America. In addition to providing food, fiber, and energy to sustain our nation, the family farm provides jobs for local people, income for local businesses, and increased emphasis on sustainable production and natural resource conservation.

This month, the Conservation Update features the Blanchard family farm near Jeanerette, Louisiana. The Blanchards are not unique in their approach to farming. Mom, dad, sons, daughters, and grandchildren all work together to produce the best crop possible while protecting the resources of the farm for the next generation.

Like many farming families, the Blanchard family has learned a lot about natural resource conservation and sustainability through trial and error. The Natural Resources Conservation Service and local soil and water conservation districts offer farmers and ranchers conservation technical assistance to provide solutions and alternatives to natural resource concerns and problems. NRCS also offers financial assistance to implement conservation practices.

If you are interested in learning more about ensuring the sustainability of your farm or ranch, contact your local NRCS office.

Sarah Haymaker
Acting State Conservationist
Louisiana

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and soil and water conservation district contact information is included on the back page of this publication.



Quote of the Month

**“They can
because they
think they can.”**

Virgil, Roman Poet, 19 BC

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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America's Heartland, a weekly public television series, visited Louisiana recently to tape an episode featuring Blanchard Brothers Farm in Jeanerette, Louisiana.

The episode, which will air in the fall, will spotlight the life and times of this hard-working south Louisiana farming family.

To find out more about **America's Heartland**, visit www.americasheartland.org

It Takes Everyone



"My wife says I bleed sugar,"

says Lane Blanchard. "But so does the rest of my family!"

Today, three generations of Blanchards work on Blanchard Brothers Farm, and Lane's mother Hilda says as far back as she can remember, everyone's father was a farmer.

"I think about what my father had to do to make a crop," says Lane's father, Harvey Blanchard Sr. "He worked with mules, and he had to grow corn and make hay to feed the mules—there was no fuel!"

The Blanchard family farms 3,400 acres of sugarcane located along a 30-mile stretch of Darnell Road near Jeanerette, Louisiana. Today, as in Harvey Sr.'s father's time, it takes everyone pitching in to do their share.

Blanchard Family Conservationists

"We do it all ourselves," says Lane. "From machinery fabrication, to planting, to harvesting, it is a family affair."

Harvey Blanchard, Sr., raised his three sons, Harvey Jr., Lane, and Brant to be the kind of farmers who put the land first, and they are raising their families to have the same respect for the land.

"I am just passing through," says Lane. "Everything we do on the farm today makes sure that the resources are here for our children and their children to farm this land."

The local USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office provides conservation technical assistance to the Blanchards, but even before the Blanchards met with representatives of NRCS, they had conservation in mind.

The Blanchards have independently implemented conservation practices such as crop rotation, cover crops, nutrient management, pest management, row arrangement, precision land forming, seasonal residue management, and grade stabilization structures on their farm in order to ensure good soil health.

The Blanchards are not afraid of branching out and going against the norm. "This year, we are not going to burn our residue," said Lane. "In the future, burning may be regulated, and I want to stop now, work out the kinks, and get a residue management regime in place."

In their first steps of residue management, the Blanchards fabricated a hay rake that rakes the residue off of the tops of the rows and incorporates it back into the soil. This improves the organic matter percentage and provides a cover to the soil which helps reduce erosion.

They are also experimenting with peanuts as a cover crop with great results.

The Blanchards are working with NRCS to implement a Resource Management System level conservation plan as part of the process to become a certified Louisiana Master Farmer.

"It is important to keep learning about new methods to improve resources and production," says Lane. "It is not just about the crop, it is about the soil. I want to be able to manage the soil like it is a part of me."



"As far back as I can remember, everyone's father was a farmer."
Hilda Blanchard





2012 marks the 150th anniversary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the 150th anniversary of the Morrill Act which established the Land Grant University system.

In recognition of this milestone in agricultural history, on May 31, 2012, USDA agencies in Louisiana coordinated an on-the-ground tour of experimental fields, a farm, a new town hall, and national forest to provide a snapshot of today's USDA. The tour was attended by staff members of Louisiana's congressional delegation and media.

Rapides Parish

Stop 1: Dean Lee Research and Extension Center



Stop 2: Tommy Caillier Farm



Stop 3: Woodworth Town Hall



Stop 4: Kisatchie National Forest



Hosted by Louisiana's USDA Food and Agriculture Council

- USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
- USDA Farm Service Agency
- USDA Food and Nutrition Service
- USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service
- USDA Forest Service
- LSU AgCenter Cooperative Extension Service
- LSU AgCenter Agricultural Experiment Station
- USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- USDA Rural Development
- USDA Risk Management Agency

Stop 5: Dean Lee Research and Extension Center



Louisiana's USDA Food and Agriculture Council hosted the field tour. Louisiana's Food and Agriculture Council is comprised of state administrators of USDA agencies in Louisiana.

Around the State

Apr 10-11

St. Mary Parish Tree Planting - On April 10-11, 2012, the St. Mary Soil and Water Conservation District and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service planted approximately 1,700 bald cypress, green ash, mulberry, and live oak on Belle Isle Lake. The day was a great success, with multiple agencies cooperating and volunteering together. Four 4H leaders volunteered for the event as part of Global Youth Service Day, and had a great time! Partners for this project included: St. Mary Soil and Water Conservation District; USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service; Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry; St. Mary Parish 4H Seniors; Belle Isle, LLC; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; and Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.



Apr 27

Caldwell Parish Farm Safety Program On April 27, 2012, Ben Williams, NRCS Soil Conservation Technician participated in the Caldwell Parish Farm Safety Program. An exhibit demonstrating farm machinery safety was available, and NRCS provided information on natural resource conservation. Approximately 300 fourth graders from Caldwell Parish Schools attended.



Jun 7

Franklin Parish Pasture Walk - The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and Southern University hosted a pasture walk on Kimberly Chapin's cattle farm in Franklin Parish. Kimberly is a certified Master Farmer and participates in the Conservation Stewardship Program and Environmental Quality Incentives Program. 50 people participated in this event.



Wetlands Reserve Program Sign-Up News

First application pool for FY 2013 closes July 25, 2012

The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) is a voluntary program offering landowners the opportunity to protect, restore, and enhance wetlands on their property. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides technical and financial support to help landowners with their wetland restoration efforts.

Landowners have several options for enrollment in the Wetlands Reserve Program. Options include restoration cost-share agreements, 30-year conservation easements, and permanent conservation easements—all designed to help landowners achieve personal land use goals.

First application pool for FY 2013 will close July 25, 2012. Interested landowners should contact their local USDA Service Center for additional information. Service Center contact information is included on the back page of this publication.

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.blackfarmcase.com

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
Quachita	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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