

Projects . Successes . Partnerships

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

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May 2011



**It's In The Details**  
Caddo Parish Farmers Share Secret to Success

**2011 Flooding**  
How NRCS Can Help

**Rapid Assessment of  
U.S. Soil Carbon**

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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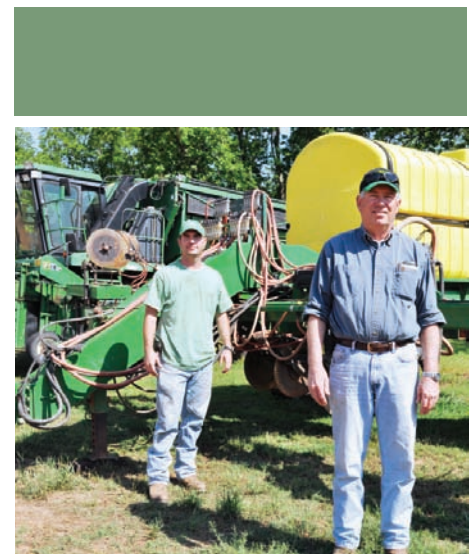
Call us with your questions.



## On the Cover

Sonny and Ryan Kirby farm 2,500 acres of cotton, corn, soybeans, and wheat along the Red River in Caddo Parish, Louisiana. Read their story on pages 4 and 5.

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## Notes from the State Conservationist

The Natural Resources Conservation Service works every day with land users and agricultural producers to help them conserve and protect our nation's natural resources.

While agricultural producers of the past sometimes farmed with a hope and a prayer for crop success, today's agricultural producers use many data sources (soils, crops, nutrients, pests, moisture, yield, etc.) to match crop needs to farming practices to ensure success.



Sometimes preparation and attention to details on the farm gets derailed by Mother Nature. Today, many of Louisiana's communities and farms are facing flood waters. The Natural Resources Conservation Service can assist with recovery efforts through our Emergency Watershed Protection Program and conservation technical assistance. See page 6 to find out how we can help.

One common bond that today's agricultural producer shares with yesterday's farmer is the love of the land and the strong desire to protect our natural resources. The Natural Resources Conservation Service offers many conservation opportunities for today's producers, and I encourage you to visit our offices to find out how we can serve you.

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

### Quote of the Month

**"The difference between something good and something great is attention to details."**

Charles R. Swindoll  
Author and Educator

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Sonny and Ryan Kirby - Belcher, Louisiana

# Secret to Success Attention to Details



*"I want to feed the world by utilizing the resources we have—"*

## Sonny and Ryan Kirby

farm 2,500 acres of cotton, corn, soybeans, and wheat along the Red River in Caddo Parish, Louisiana. This father and son team are 3rd and 4th generation farmers, and when you talk to them about farming, you don't hear as much about tractors and plows as you hear about precision agriculture, yield data maps, computer programs, soil electroconductivity, and technology testing.

In January 2010, Ryan Kirby was recognized as the **2011 Tomorrow's Top Producer Sustainability Award** winner by Bayer CropScience and Top Producer Magazine. This award recognizes young producers who excel in business and environmental sustainability. Ryan was recognized because he shows a passion for agriculture and for growing his crops in the most sustainable way through water-conserving irrigation systems, precision application of fertilizer and inputs, and diversified crop rotations to manage risk.

"I want to feed the world by utilizing the resources we have—and at the same time not undermine the earth," said Ryan. His goal is to provide a good farm income for his family while conserving the natural resources of his farm.

Sonny Kirby,  
NRCS District  
Conservationist  
Brian Baiamonte,  
and Ryan Kirby

Sonny Kirby says, **"Farming is a business.** We study soils maps, nutrient usage, and yield data to determine where to apply the fertilizer, how much seed to plant and where to plant it, and how much irrigation water is needed by each row of our crops." Always looking for a more productive way



to farm and build sustainability, the Kirbys are currently conducting a pilot test with Louisiana State University to determine the effectiveness of Agrotain in controlling nitrogen loss.

## Sonny Kirby Conservationists

## What is PHAUCET?

The Kirbys utilize the PHAUCET Irrigation Efficiency Program. This computer program was designed to calculate existing irrigation system performance and define alternatives for improving irrigation efficiency. PHAUCET helps farmers determine the sizes of the holes in the polypipe that best distribute the available water.

“Irrigation is the best form of crop insurance.”

Sonny Kirby

To find out more about PHAUCET, EQIP, or conservation planning, contact your nearest NRCS office or soil and water conservation district. Contact information is included on the back page of this [Conservation Update](#).



—*and at the same time not undermine the earth.*”

Ryan Kirby

### Ryan Kirby believes the secret to their farm's success is attention to details.

“There is a wealth of information available to farmers today to help them apply fertilizer at variable rates to match the needs of the soil, control the amount of water used to irrigate each row according to row length, and determine the seeding rate according to soil type,” said Ryan. “You can’t afford to ignore the data.”

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service works with the Kirbys through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to help implement cutting edge conservation technology on the farm.

“EQIP helped to pay for a lot of the new technology that we use on the farm today,” said Sonny Kirby. “We started working with EQIP in 2000, and through the years, it has provided incentive payments to help purchase equipment and install conservation practices that help with water and nutrient management.”

Paying attention to details means the Kirbys save money on fertilizer, fuel, and irrigation costs while increasing crop yields. It also means the Kirbys are conserving and enhancing the natural resources of their farm—ensuring future generations have an opportunity to farm along the Red River in Caddo Parish.

### What is precision agriculture?

Precision agriculture is a management system that is information and technology based. It is site specific and uses one or more of the following sources of data: soils, crops, nutrients, pests, moisture, or yield, for optimum profitability, sustainability, and protection of the environment.

**For more information on precision agriculture, visit:**  
[www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/energy/precision.html](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/energy/precision.html)



# Ryan Kirby Conservationists



# Responding to Disaster

## *Floods of 2011* **How NRCS Can Help**



**The Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program** provides funding for life and property-threatening watershed problems caused by a natural disaster needing immediate repair.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service works with project sponsors to implement EWP projects. These sponsors can be a legal subdivision of a state government (cities, counties, conservation districts, watershed districts) or Native American tribe/tribal organization. Sponsors should have legal interest in or responsibility for the threatened watershed impairment and lack sufficient funds to address the emergency.

If a project is approved through the EWP Program, the sponsor has to provide up to 25% cost share (cash or in-kind goods and services) to complete the project. The sponsor also has to acquire necessary land rights and permits as well as be capable of carrying out operation and maintenance responsibilities for the project.

Eligible EWP projects include:

- Cleaning channels, bridges, and culverts of debris and sediment
- Repairing non-federal levees to address sloughing
- Pump station repair

**Conservation Technical Assistance** - In response to disasters, such as the flooding of 2011, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service is available to provide technical assistance to land users removing farmland debris, grading and shaping land, and repairing conservation structures impacted by the flooding.

**Contact your local USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service office or soil and water conservation district to find out more about the Emergency Watershed Program and Conservation Technical Assistance.**

## Around the State

### Apr 14 Jackson Parish Cattlemen's Association Meeting

On April 14, 2011, Brian Wade, District Conservationist—Ruston, Louisiana, presented information on Natural Resources Conservation Service programs to the Jackson Parish Cattlemen's Association meeting.

### Apr 21 The Advantage of Being Disadvantaged Workshop

On April 21, 2011, Jerry Shows, District Conservationist—Oak Grove, presented information on USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service programs to 30 people at the Advantage of Being Disadvantaged workshop hosted by the Micro-Enterprise Institute in Epps, Louisiana.

### Apr 27 LACD Area V Annual Meeting

On April 27, 2011, Louisiana Association of Conservation

LACD Area V Secretaries



Districts (LACD) Area V hosted their annual meeting in Port Allen, Louisiana. Area V Vice President Steve Horvath opened the meeting, which featured a presentation by Commissioner of Agriculture Mike Strain and included presentations by Randolph Joseph of the Natural Resources Conservation Service; Randell Fletcher of the State Soil and Water Conservation Commission; Dr. Ernest Girouard of LACD; State Representative Major Thibaut, Jr.; and Jay Hardman of the Port of Greater Baton Rouge.

### May 6 Southern Regional Woodland Clinic

On May 6, 2011, the Natural Resources Conservation



Service and LSU AgCenter hosted the Southern Regional Woodland Clinic at Hill Farm Research Station near Homer, Louisiana. 87 students (and 15 alternates) on 18 high school teams competed in this year's contest. These students represented FFA and 4-H Clubs from Arkansas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Texas. The FFA contest was won by Central Heights High School in Texas. The 4-H contest was won by Hope 4-H Club from Texas. The highest individual scorer was Zack Todd from Central Heights High School in Texas.



## CONSERVATION *in Action*

Colfax Field Office  
Grant Soil and Water  
Conservation District



Constructed 8,923 feet of cross fencing in April 2011.

### EQIP

Environmental Quality Incentives Program



Completed 3,262 square feet of Heavy Use Area Protection (gate openings).

### EQIP

Environmental Quality Incentives Program



2 ponds qualified to be built.

### EQIP

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

### WHIP

Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program



Grant Soil and Water Conservation District Board Members (from left to right): Robert Meeker, Vice-Chairman; Robert Willett, Member; Lucille Thompson, Secretary/Treasurer; Charles Yearby, Member; and Randell Fletcher, Chairman.

For more information about EQIP or WHIP, contact your local USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service office or soil and water conservation district. Contact information can be found on the back page of this publication.

## Apr 18

### Locally Led Conservation Meeting

The Colfax Field Office and Grant Soil and Water Conservation District conducted a locally-led conservation meeting on April 18, 2011. Many concerns were voiced, including: lack of surface water, back-up well water, irrigation, drought, wild hogs, lack of fire fighters for forestry fires, and damaged timber due to weather.

## Rapid Assessment of U.S. Soil Carbon for Conservation Planning and Modeling

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Soil Survey Division is conducting a nationwide effort to inventory soil carbon stocks.

- Sampled soils are grouped by similar properties, land uses, agricultural management, and ecosystems.
- Carbon data will be used to determine the effects of conservation practices on soil carbon stocks, for global carbon accounting.
- The soil carbon inventory will encompass all lands and include all major ecosystems. Benchmark soils, other extensive soils, and soils that represent important ecosystems (e.g., wetlands and flood plains) will be sampled.
- The sites or locations for measurement have been chosen randomly using USDA-NRCS soil maps and land use data. They will be aggregated to regional scales based on the soil and land use present. No ownership information will be collected or stored. The location of each data point is confidential.

Using data collected from this inventory, NRCS will produce:

- Improved maps and knowledge about the distribution of U.S. soil carbon stocks.
- Scientifically and statistically defensible inventory of the effects of soil properties, agricultural management, land use, and ecosystem properties on soil carbon stocks.
- Soil Survey databases, selectable by land use and management, on soil carbon levels and related properties.
- Land use and management based data that will help conservation planning by estimating gains or losses of soil carbon from land use and management changes.
- Publicly accessible soil carbon database for model development and validation (again, the location of each data point is confidential and will not be publicly accessible).

For additional information on the rapid assessment of soil carbon, contact: Larry West, NSSC, 402-437-5138, larry.west@lin.usda.gov; or Chris Smith, Soil Survey Division, 202-205-0346, christopherw.smith@wdc.usda.gov.



**Locally led conservation** begins with the community itself, working through the local conservation district. It is based on the principle that community stakeholders are best suited to deal with local resource problems. Contact your local USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service office or soil and water conservation district to find out more about locally led conservation.

## 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) 369-6602, 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	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
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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