AWEP Implementation in Madison County

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by Hannah South, Civil Engineering Student, Madison County, AL

With financial assistance through the Natural Resources Conservation Services's (NRCS's) Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP), an irrigation pond is being constructed in Madison County on the property of Lee Sublett, a row crop farmer.

The pond will be around 10 acres in size and will be used to irrigate about 400 acres of cropland during the dry summer months. During the winter, water will be pumped from a nearby stream to the pond for storage; water from the pond will be pumped to center pivots located in the field during the growing season.

(l-r) Hannah South (Civil Engineering Student) receives training from Tim Williams (Resource Engineer) on the use of the total station to survey the 10 acres.

AWEP, a program under NRCS's Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), gives financial assistance to help farmers implement water activities that will improve water quality on farms while conserving ground and surface water.

(l-r) Hannah South receives training from Christopher Ford (Soil Scientist) on how to do a soil site investigation for material that will be used to build the core of the pond.

AWEP applications are competitively selected with higher priority given to applicants that are located in areas with a high percentage of agricultural land and producers. Priority is also given to producers who will show a significant increase in agricultural activity, along with several other factors.

Activities to ease the effect of drought are some of the enhancement activities that are implemented under the AWEP program.

Mr. Sublett's pond will help him see a definite ease from the effect sof drought. Land irrigated during dry months will produce a much higher yield than non-irrigated land. Also, the storage of water during winter months helps conserve water, another enhancement activity supported through AWEP.