

# MARLBORO SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT NEWSLETTER



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Danny Driggers, Soil Conservation Tech.  
Dorothy Branyon, Administrator Assist.  
John Alford, SC DNR LRC Specialist



February 2000

210 Throop Street, Bennettsville, SC 29512

Volume 3 Issue 4

## CONSERVATION FARMER OF YEAR RECOGNIZED



Richard Rogers of Bennettsville was recognized recently by the Marlboro Soil and Water Conservation District as Conservation Farmer of the Year. Rogers was honored at the Marlboro District's Annual Awards Dinner held in Bennettsville.

In making the presentation, District Chairman Frank Hinson said, "Richard Rogers is a most worthy recipient of this award. He is a longtime cooperater of the Marlboro District who continues to set an example as a leading conservation farmer in Marlboro County. The Marlboro Conservation District is very pleased to honor Richard on his achievements in natural resource conservation."

Rogers' farming activities are centered on U.S. Highway 15-401 just west of Bennettsville. Principal crops grown include cotton, wheat and soybeans with an emphasis on cotton. He cooperated with the Marlboro District in 1999 by planting a no-till cotton demonstration plot in an effort to promote the concept of no-till cotton among Marlboro County farmers. This grant was awarded to the Marlboro Conservation District through the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) under a U.S.E.P.A.. 319 Grant.

Richard is married to the former Jane B. Rogers of Latta, South Carolina. They are the parents of three children-Luke (Age 10); Mac (Age 8); and Susan (Age 6).





### **Constructed Wetland Project Underway in Marlboro County**

Natural wetland areas are recognized for their ability to remove impurities from water as it passes through the vegetation almost always present in these areas .

Waste management specialists are taking what occurs naturally in our environment and adapting the concept to treat wastewater in agri-industry; for our nation's factories and businesses and even in a local, residential setting.

One of these applications is being tested here in Marlboro County-at the home of James and Carolyn Watson. The Watsons continually have experienced problems with a failed septic tank system because the soils around their home are poorly drained.

Through a grant sponsored by the Pee Dee Resource Conservation and Development Council, a subsurface flow constructed wetlands system has been installed at the Watson's residence. Effluent samples are being taken on a monthly basis to determine the effectiveness of constructed wetlands in reducing pollutants in household sewage water.

In a cooperative effort, the monthly samples are taken by personnel from the S.C. Department of Natural Resources with lab testing conducted by the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control. Seven similar sites are being monitored throughout South Carolina over an eighteen month period.

It is hoped that with positive test results, constructed wetlands can be adapted to be an environmentally safe alternative to failed septic systems.

The Marlboro SWCD has established an internet site. We can be visited at:

[http://members.tripod.com/~marlboro\\_swcd/index.html](http://members.tripod.com/~marlboro_swcd/index.html)

or through the SC Dept. of Natural Resources site at:

[www.dnr.state.sc.us/land/index.html](http://www.dnr.state.sc.us/land/index.html)

# Affiliate Membership 2000

The Marlboro Soil and Water Conservation District is committed to helping educate Marlboro County's children and landowners about our natural resources. It is our goal that landusers and students develop an understanding of the inter-relationships of man, soil, and wildlife. The more knowledge we have, the better caretakers of our natural resources we become.

The Marlboro District is a nonprofit organization that depends on financial support from affiliate members. Through your donation, the District is better able to promote conservation in all schools in the county as well as to sponsor the various programs available to promote conservation stewardship within Marlboro County.

Please mail: Marlboro Soil and Water Conservation District  
210 Throop Street  
Bennettsville, SC 29512

Regular Membership \$25.00  
Silver Membership \$50.00  
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Name \_\_\_\_\_

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COMMISSIONERS AND GUESTS ATTEND NO-TILL CONFERENCE

Several Marlboro Conservation District commissioners and their guests attended the Farm SMART Conference held February 1, 2000 in Columbia. Shown above (L-R) are Levin Lynch, Commissioner Billy Covington, Commissioner Frank Hinson, Commissioner Mack Helms, Rhett Covington and Jeffrey Newton.

The conference was co-sponsored by Monsanto Chemical Company and Southeast Farm Press.

The purpose of the conference was to show farmers how to increase their profits through conservation tillage. The educational sessions were designed to help them learn how to reduce production and labor costs, as well as lessen wear and tear on their equipment. Topics covered included- "Making the Change from Conventional Tillage to Strip-Till"; "Economics: Cost of No-Till vs Conventional Till"; "Why no-till for wheat"; and "No-Till on Coastal Plain Soils".

The benefits of conservation tillage for our environment are reduced soil erosion and improved water quality. These are also environmental benefits that are a high priority for the Marlboro Conservation District. Educational conferences such as Farm SMART are an excellent way for the District to promote natural resource protection.

Others attending as Marlboro District guests were Commissioner T. A. O'Neal, NRCS Technician Danny Driggers and J. P. Hodges. Those also attending locally were Doug Newton, John McInnis, John McColl, Cooper Lee and Rick Plummer.

The Marlboro Conservation District also reminds Marlboro county growers of the availability of a Powell Ro-Till four row bedder. This equipment is available to all growers at a small per acre fee.



**CONSERVATION  
RESERVE  
PROGRAM**

**Continuous Sign-up 21**

As of October 1, 1999 applications are being accepted for the continuous CRP sign-up. Priority practices include Waterways, Riparian Buffers, and Filter Strips. Establishment cost share is available at a 50% rate in addition to an annual CRP payment for as long as fifteen years. CRP payments are based on the local soil type where the practice is installed and range from \$26 to \$58 per acre in Marlboro County. For additional information contact The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) or The Farm Service Agency (FSA) at 210 Throop Street, Bennettsville. (843) 479-4552

**STATE COST SHARE SIGN-UP CONTINUES**

The Marlboro Conservation District continues to accept applications for the Natural Resources Enhancement Program. (NREP) Marlboro farmers are reminded this is a first of its kind cost share program funded by the South Carolina General Assembly through the S. C. Department of Natural Resources. Locally, the program is administered by the Marlboro Conservation District.

Two conservation practices have been approved for Marlboro farmers by the Marlboro District commissioners for FY '99-2000. They are no-till cotton planting and in-row furrow diking.

Interested growers are encouraged to apply immediately at the Marlboro Conservation District office, 210 Throop Street, Bennettsville, S.C. This sign-up closes on March 10, 2000.

**Commissioners and Staff Attend Conference**

The annual Joint Conference of the S.C. Association of Conservation Districts, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service and the S.C. Department of Natural Resources-Land, Water and Conservation Division was held January 5-8, 2000 in Charleston. Marlboro Conservation District Commissioners and wives attending were Mr. & Mrs. Frank Hinson and Mr. and Mrs. Michael O'Tuel. Teresa Babb attended representing the USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service as District Conservationist for Marlboro County.

Topics of interest discussed during the conference included the S.C. Natural Resources Enhancement Program- a state cost share program designed to promote natural resource conservation among South Carolina farmers. Training sessions also were held on the concept of land trusts as a conservation tool and the capabilities of Geographic Information Systems. State climatologist Mike Helfert gave a fascinating presentation on his "less than optimistic" weather forecast for the year 2000 in South Carolina.

District Conservationist Babb also attended a full day land use planning symposium on the day prior to the start of the actual conference. The symposium was sponsored by the S.C. Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society. Featured luncheon speaker was Senator Phil Leventis (Sumter County), Chairman, S.C. Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee.



**Reynolds Dirt Pan Now Available**

Marlboro County growers are reminded the Marlboro Conservation District now has a 5 cubic yard Reynolds dirt pan. This equipment was purchased by the Marlboro Conservation District to be used by any Marlboro County farmer.

Anyone interested should contact the Marlboro Conservation District office in Bennettsville at 479-4552.