



The AgAware Newsletter

AgAmerica Empowerment Agency, Inc.

Volume 2 Issue 6

AgAmerica's Precision Ag Network: Network Infrastructure Going Up, Coverage Testing Underway

Thanks to a grant from the SW Georgia United Empowerment Zone, and collaboration with area farmers and agribusinesses, basic infrastructure for AgAmerica's Precision Ag Network is already installed in a large portion of Dooly & Crisp Counties. Signal coverage is being evaluated, and terrain issues are being addressed over approximately 3/4 of the projected Dooly / Crisp County coverage area.

Farmers interested in subscribing are urged to contact the agency office as soon as possible to insure that their farms are within the signal coverage area in adequate time for spring crop prepara-

tions.

Phase I of the network installation is projected for completion by Jan 15, 2005, and fine-tuning of the network will continue throughout the growing season. The

A network user training session will be held in early 2005, for farmers & their employees—be on the lookout for an announcement of date & location.

two-county coverage area is projected to be completed in Phase 2 by the end of 2005. This will enable farmers to utilize auto-steer technologies and other GPS applications accurately and conveniently from field to field

within the Crisp-Dooly county area.

Grant funding is used to purchase and install the network relay equipment. Cooperating farmers and agribusinesses from both counties sponsor tower sites for the relay equipment.

Farmers and agribusinesses purchase the necessary receiver equipment to be installed in their tractors to utilize the network signal for repeatable auto-steer field applications. They access the AgAmerica network through a subscription service. These subscription fees cover maintenance costs for the network, making the project self-sustaining once completed.

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Special points of interest:

- *Would you be interested in sponsoring a weather station site at your shop or business? Contact our office or the Extension Agents for more information.*
- *Information about our agency, programs, guidelines, and fees are now available on the internet at: www.ag-america.org*
- *AgAmerica Numbers:
Office—229-268-8928
Equipment Tech:
Mobile—877-311-1779
S. Linc—2*1437*

Subsoiler-Leveler, Fertilizer Spreader, & Dirt Pan: Popular "Library" Units available for Field Maintenance

Trying to repair some soil compaction problem areas? Got washes in your fields from those three hurricanes? Need to spread some lime or fertilizer, and your custom applicator booked up? We have several units in inventory to help you address these issues.

Contact our Equipment Technician, Brad Sangster today to schedule a use of our subsoilers, dirt pan, and fertilizer cart. (877-311-1779 Southern Linc 2*1437) Don't forget our grain drill and seeders are available to establish cover crops or erosion control strips. (see page 3)



**AEA Unit #27:
Fertilizer Spreader**

News from your Local Ag Agencies

FSA Offices in both Dooly & Crisp counties will be busy over the next few weeks handling crop LDPs, Loans, and 2005 DP & CCP program signups. Dates of interest to area farmers include the Jan 31st deadline for Peanut Loans. Jan 31 also marks the NAP Insurance sales closing date for annually planted spring crops and certain forage crops and warm season grasses.

Due to the Disaster declarations from the hurricane season, Emergency Loans are available. The Emergency Conservation Program is available to assist in repairing damages caused by the disaster also. Be looking for more information to be announced on the Crop Disaster Program, with a projected signup period to begin in Late February. Helpful links on the web for more information on these programs are listed in the textbox on this page. You may also contact your local FSA office staff for more info.

As a result of the recent FSA Elections, Teel Warbington replaces Bruce Calhoun on the Dooly County FSA Committee, and Kenny Sheffield replaces



Contact your local ag agencies to stay abreast of the latest program developments

Randy Coffee on the Crisp County FSA Committee. We appreciate their willingness to serve our farming community in their roles on the Committee.

NRCS has a new program soon to be available in parts of the Crisp/Dooly farming area: **CSP** (Conservation Security Program) will be available in the Middle Flint Watershed area of Dooly, Crisp, and neighboring counties in fiscal year 2005. More information on the provisions of the program are becoming available daily. NRCS staffers look for a signup period to be announced sometime in the spring, and encourage farmers to become more informed about the program, to determine their eligibility. See the article on page 4 for more details. Pertinent websites are listed in the text box on this page also.

AgAmerica Website— Online Source of Current Local Ag News

Though under construction and primitive in appearance, AgAmerica online is gearing up to be a useful source for local agriculture news.

Our program guidelines for the Equipment Library, schedule of fees, and contact information are in place for farmers to access. Current publications, such as this one, are posted online as well. Our news page is updated at least once weekly, and during the peak marketing season, will also post the current LDP rate for cotton and provide a link to the cotton market.

AgAmerica's Ag Technologies page provides a link to the Catahoula Farm weather station in Crisp County, and will also host instant links to our other

weather stations as they go up in 2005. We hope to have a directory of farm and agribusiness sponsors listed for the weather stations also.

AgAmerica's News page already provides the visitor routine updates or summaries on programs of interest to area farmers, and provides links to more detailed information. News will include other ag agencies as well as AgAmerica's program activities.

Please bear with us as we learn, and provide us with your suggestions as we work to develop a useful internet tool for you. Feel free to email us at: phyllis@ag-america.org or call us at the office with your feedback.

Extension staff members are closing out 2004 activities, attending training sessions, and gearing up for crop production meetings to be held in early 2005. Already slated for March 1 is the Crisp/Dooly Conservation Tillage Production Workshop, geared toward problems producers are having in CT systems. Be looking for a schedule of meetings to be announced for February and March.

Soil sampling and analysis keep the extension office busy at this time of year. Staffers remind everyone to be aware of the shipping procedures and associated sample fees to insure that results are received within the desired timeframe.

USEFUL WEBSITES

AgAmerica News & Links:

www.ag-america.org/news.htm

Georgia FSA Newsletter:

www.fsa.usda.gov/GA/GANews/December04.pdf

FSA Disaster Program Info:

<http://disaster.fsa.usda.gov/fsa.asp>

& click on "Emergency Programs for Disaster Assistance 2003-2005 (PL 108-324)"

NRCS CSP 2005:

www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp

& click on "CSP watershed info 2005"

Our homepage is www.ag-america.org.

- Hit the "NEWS" button for current info
- Click on "Equipment Library" for inventory details
- "AgAmerica Programs" and related links tell about our technology initiative and other programs.

Equipment Library – Current Price List (Thru Feb 2005)

Here's what is available in the Equipment Library at this time. Very low user maintenance fees are charged on the equipment, and a security deposit and insurance coverage is required prior to pickup. Please make note of changes in fees on some units, and on user agreements on others. We continue to strive for the lowest fees possible to cover our expenses (which have increased this year).

Stalk Pullers:

- 1—Orthman 6-row Stalk Puller (with scatter attachments)
- 1—Orthman 4-row Stalk Puller (with scatter attachments)

Fees on pullers: \$2/acre, \$100 minimum—5-day limit during high demand

No-Till Drills:

- 2—John Deere 15' No-Till Drills
- 1—Case 15' No-Till Drill

Fees on drills: \$3.50/acre, \$175 minimum—10-day limit during high demand

(JD units have small seed attachment)

Solid Stand Seeder:

- 1—Greenscape 5' Solid Stand Seeder (which is similar to a small no-till drill)
- Fee on seeder: \$50/day, \$75 minimum with a 3-day limit during heavy demand.

Field Maintenance & Repair:

- 1—Marden Brush Chopper
- 1—6yd Prime Dirtpan

Fees on these units—\$150 per 5-day use period

- 2—KMC 9-shank Subsoiler/Levelers

Fees on subsoilers—\$3.50/acre (\$200 minimum). 5-day limit during heavy demand. User is responsible for point replacement prior to return.

NEW:

- 1—Newton Crouch Fertilizer Spreader

Spreader fees: \$100 plus \$2/acre (50 ac minimum); 5-day limit during peak demand—Spreader must be returned CLEAN—Users returning the unit in excellent condition will be refunded \$100.

Parallel Tracking:

- 2—Trimble AgGPS EZ Guide Lightbars

Fees on lightbars—\$10/day, 5-day limit during heavy demand.

REFUNDABLE SECURITY DEPOSIT IS \$250 FOR ALL UNITS.



To arrange to use any of these units contact Brad at 268-8928 or 877-311-1779 (toll free).

We have purchased a trailer to improve movement of our smaller units over our large service area.

8 Strip-Till Rigs are still in inventory and available for anyone with a need, although peak use season will not resume until the Spring.

Contact us for more details.

Farm Initiatives strongly supported at EZ Community Meetings

Robert Cooke, Executive Director of the SW Georgia United Empowerment Zone has posted evaluations of the recent EZ Community Meetings held in Pinehurst and Cordele. The meetings were held to help the EZ board determine community emphasis on various programs, benchmarks, and strategies within the EZ Community Plan.

Support was given in a wide variety of community social, economic, and quality of life issues. The high number of

attendees demonstrated citizen concerns for progress in all areas of the strategic plan, and gave a variety of input and suggestions for the EZ Board of Directors to consider for future grant funding awards as well as community-wide development efforts.

Agriculture once again was well represented and supported by those involved in and aware of its economic impact on the area. Reflecting an understanding of the multiplier effect of positive local

farm economics, substantial citizen support was given for areas of ag innovation, ag technologies, agribusiness expansion/development, value-added opportunities, and expansion of the AgAmerica Equipment Library concept.

As the lead ag agency for ag project development and fund acquisition in the zone, AgAmerica expresses its appreciation to all those who took time from their busy schedule to participate in this important community activity.

AgAmerica will work hard to collaborate with all agencies to achieve the expressed goals of the community in areas concerning agriculture.

Read Mr. Cooke's summary for yourself available online at:

<http://crispdooly.org/ez/>

Click on both "Community Meeting Outcomes" documents at the bottom of the webpage.

Weather Station & GIS Data Conversion update:

Five automated weather stations to be added to the Georgia Weather network courtesy of a 2004 EZ grant will go up in early 2005. AgAmerica has one site near Lilly under evaluation, and would like to hear from those of you willing to provide an open, secure area near phone access on your property for a con-

tinuously updated weather station.

County data conversion to GIS format for Dooly County is awaiting a revised aerial map flight scheduled for January. County data to be layered onto the maps is scheduled for conversion and infusion immediately thereafter.

AgAmerica Empowerment Agency, Inc.

209-C W. Union Street
P.O. Box 219
Vienna, GA 31092

Phone: 229-268-8928
Fax: 229-268-8928
Email: phyllis@ag-america.org

"Working together to make ag better"

We are now online at:
www.ag-america.org



Ag.Aware

AgAmerica's Board Members:

Steve Whelchel (Chairman), Stephanie Chapman (Secretary-Treasurer), Don Tucker, Arthur Roney, Randy Coffee, David Leary, Kathy Weesner, Charles Hardin, and Eddie Green

Advisory Members:

Chuck Ellis (Dooly Extension), and Ken Lewis (Crisp Extension)

Staff: Phyllis Roney (Office Mgr./Pres.), Brad Sangster (Equipment Technician)

Funded by Southwest GA United Empowerment Zone, Crisp-Dooly Joint Development Authority, and USDA Rural Development; Cooperating with local Extension.

Does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or religion in its programs or policies.

Our office will make special arrangements to accommodate persons with special access needs. Contact us at 268-8928.

Is the CSP Program a Good Opportunity for your Farm?

"CSP (Conservation Security Program) is a voluntary conservation program that supports ongoing stewardship of private agricultural lands by providing payments for maintaining and enhancing natural resources. CSP identifies and rewards those farmers and ranchers who are meeting the highest standards of conservation and environmental management on their operations.

...CSP rewards the best and motivates the rest...

How CSP Works

1. The CSP sign-up will be offered in selected priority watersheds across the Nation. (Locally eligible: Middle Flint watershed—located in parts of Dooly, Crisp, and neighboring counties)
2. Producers complete a self-

assessment to determine eligibility (available online—see page 2)

3. Eligible producers within these watersheds submit an application
4. Based on the application, description of conservation activities, and a follow-up interview, the NRCS will determine which program tier and enrollment category are available for the applicant."

Both the producer and the producer's operation must meet a set of basic eligibility criteria, and additional tier and contract requirements, plus any additional requirements announced at the sign-up. Some of these criteria are already available at your local NRCS office or online at www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp. Details are under development now, in anticipation of a sign up date announcement in the spring. Soil quality practices and water quality practices are evaluated in the assessment workbook, already available.

"Contract payments include one or more of the following:

- An annual stewardship component for the existing base level conservation treatment
- An annual existing practice component for maintaining existing conservation practices
- A one-time new practice component for additional needed practices
- An enhancement component for exceptional conservation practices...etc...that provide increased resource benefits beyond the prescribed level...."

The CSP program will be most advantageous for farmers that have been utilizing conservation practices in their operations before EQIP and other conservation incentives. This program will provide funding for such farmers who due to their independent, early conservation initiatives were excluded from eligibility in other NRCS programs.

Contact your NRCS office for more details as they become available. *Quoted sources: NRCS CSP website information*