

# Coxey Creek-Tennessee River Watershed of Alabama

## FARM #11

Shun Binford is a third-generation farmer from Athens, Alabama. His family has been on the land since the early 1910s and Shun was born and raised on the farm. Both his father and grandfather ran the operation before passing it on to him. Today, Binford Farms mainly produces grain and cotton, while utilizing both minimum tillage and cover crops.

Shun has been implementing conservation practices since 1997, including several approaches to tillage and cover cropping. He has learned that different approaches are needed for different people and circumstances. Shun has discovered that minimum tillage and rye and wheat cover crops work best for his operation.

Shun sought out cost share programs from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to help him get started with conservation practices. He stuck with it once he was able to reduce his fuel costs by making fewer passes across his fields.

In addition to the economic benefits, Shun sees how these practices are improving the health of his soil. The ground temperature stays cooler longer during hot spells, erosion has been reduced and he can access his fields earlier after a heavy rain. From his experience, Shun knows that it takes time to see results because using conservation practices means building the soil in a completely different way. He feels confident in the minimum tillage and cover crop system he has chosen, and looks to use irrigation on the farm in the future.

If he were to give advice to a farmer thinking about starting out with conservation practices, Shun said to “find one that works for you and that you can live with. Not necessarily what your neighbor’s doing but the one that you can live with and financially sustain.” He knows that not all benefits will show up overnight and it takes patience, but said, “Once you find the benefit in it, there will be no trouble to financially sustain it, but you have to find the one that works.”



View Shun’s interview:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UhrJx5cM1Og>

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