

Roebuck Lake-Yazoo River Watershed of Mississippi

FARM #22

Dr. Harold Wheeler is a third-generation farmer from Greenwood, Mississippi. While he also has a license to practice medicine, Harold considers himself a true-blood farmer. “I come from living on a farm, working on a farm all my life,” Harold said. His family’s farming history dates back to the 1840s. In the beginning, the operation consisted of a vegetable farm, where they grew spinach and beans among other crops. Now Harold grows corn, soybeans and cotton.

Harold has been implementing different conservation practices since he began farming. They were using irrigation techniques in the early days of the operation and now he has introduced cover crops and planting green into some of his fields.

“I think we were always in the front of most of what other farmers were doing and so it was always talked about,” Harold said. “We were one of the first in the area to adopt 12-row equipment, and so we’ve always set out to do what we thought was the best.”

The main benefit Harold sees from using conservation practices on his land is increased yields. He finds that cover cropping wheat has been a dependable way for him to increase his yields and get a second crop. “We farm next to some of the best farmers in the Delta and have had yields to match any of the other farmers,” Harold said. In addition, utilization of conservation practices has allowed Harold to decrease his inputs and plant on time more consistently.

While he got started on his own, Harold has turned to NRCS on numerous occasions for technical and financial assistance to implement conservation practices. Specifically, he has used NRCS support to install irrigation systems on his farm.

Harold’s advice to other producers interested in conservation practices is to start first with a soil analysis. “Whatever’s in that ground comes on top, so that’s number one,” Harold said. “Once you fix the soil, then all the other issues, compaction issues and so forth, will follow.” In the future, Harold looks forward to trying new varieties and achieving the same success he has had with his current rotation.



View Harold’s interview:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FohbRKF8KeA>

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