

## **FEATURE – ALABAMA FARM FAMILY RECOGNIZED FOR PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT**

INTRO: An Alabama farm family has been recognized for its efforts to protect the environment by the federal government. The U-S-D-A's Bob Ellison has more. (1:31)

THE DEE FAMILY OF ALICEVILLE, ALABAMA WAS PRESENTED WITH THE TWO THOUSAND EIGHT EXCELLENCE IN CONSERVATION AWARD BY THE U-S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE'S NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE. THE DEES WERE RECOGNIZED FOR THEIR VOLUNTARY EFFORTS TO PROTECT SOIL AND WATER ON THEIR WEST-CENTRAL ALABAMA FARM AND RANCH.

Mike Dee, Aliceville, Alabama Farmer/Rancher: Conservation has to be one of your highest priorities because all of agriculture is based on the land and the soil and everything we do is tied to that soil so we have to use every tool available and conservation is the primary tool of protecting and improving that land.

THE DEES WORKED WITH N-R-C-S TO KEEP THEIR LAND HEALTHY AND THEIR WATER CLEAN BY KEEPING THEIR CATTLE AWAY FROM STREAMS AND CREEKS.

Terry Williamson, USDA NRCS District Conservationist: We've put in approximately three and a half miles of cross-fencing. We've put in cattle-watering facilities here.

TO INCREASE PROFITS, THE DEES GROW THE FEED FOR THEIR CATTLE AND PRODUCE FUEL FOR THEIR EQUIPMENT FROM THE CROPS THEY RAISE.

Annie Dee, Aliceville, Alabama Farmer/Rancher: We can crush those crops and extract the oil and turn it into biodiesel that we can use to power our tractors and our farm equipment. We have a co-product with that we feed to our cattle, a high protein feed source.

USDA OFFICIALS SAY THE EXCELLENCE IN CONSERVATION AWARD IS THE HIGHEST AWARD GIVEN OUTSIDE GOVERNMENT FOR CONSERVATION ON PRIVATE LAND. THEY ADD IT BRINGS ATTENTION TO EFFORTS TO IMPROVE LAND AND WILDLIFE HABITAT.

Gary Mast, Deputy Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment: This excellence in conservation award highlights what kind of a good job a lot of the ag community is doing.

FOR THE U-S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, I'M BOB ELLISON.