

# Minority Landowner

Seventh  
Anniversary  
Issue

Anniversary  
Banquet Speaker

**Dr. Jewel Hairston**

Dean of the School  
of Agriculture  
Virginia State University





Committed to the future of rural communities.

[www.rurdev.usda.gov](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov)

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, lender, and employer.

# Contents

Volume VIII Number I

Winter 2013

- 4 Editor's Page**  
7th Anniversary Conference a Huge Success
- 6 Moncrieffe's Law**  
After the Storm
- 8 Letters**  
Readers reflect on the 7th Anniversary Conference
- 10 Forest Service Co-Sponsors *Minority Landowner Magazine's* 7th Anniversary Conference**  
Dean Jewel Hairston captivates the audience at the Anniversary Banquet
- 12 2013 *Minority Landowner* Resource Guide**  
Your national guide to agricultural and forestry resource agencies
- 15 Conservation Easement Funding is Available**  
NRCS Florida works to restore and enhance wetlands and grasslands
- 16 Farmers' Dreams Realized and Refined through Small Farmer Agricultural Leadership Institute**  
Institute continues to train and empower agriculture leaders
- 20 Extend the Growing Season with SARE's New Collection of How-To Resources**  
The Season Extension Topic Room is a one-stop collection of season extension strategies
- 22 Perspectives**  
Unfair and Unbalanced



CIERRA PUBLISHING COMPANY  
Victor L. Harris  
President

Cierra N. Harris  
Executive Assistant

MINORITY LANDOWNER MAGAZINE  
Victor L. Harris  
Publisher and Editor

GRAPHIC DESIGNER  
French Harris Design Group

EDITORIAL BOARD  
Jerry Pennick  
Arthur Phalo

Minority Landowner Magazine is published quarterly by Cierra Publishing Company. Address all inquires to:

**Cierra Publishing Company**  
P.O. Box 97033  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27624

**Phone:** 919.215.1632

**Email:** [ccpublishing@earthlink.net](mailto:ccpublishing@earthlink.net)  
[www.minoritylandowner.com](http://www.minoritylandowner.com)

Editorials, news releases, photographs and artwork are welcomed. Material received becomes the property of Cierra Publishing Company. Cierra Publishing Company reserves the right to edit all manuscripts and letters for the sake of clarity, style and space limitations. All opinions expressed in *Minority Landowner Magazine* are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the publisher or the Editorial Board. Reproduction in whole or in part is prohibited without written permission from the publisher. Copyright 2013.



**Victor L. Harris**  
Registered Forester

*Minority Landowner Magazine's* Seventh Anniversary Conference was a huge success. Over 250 farmers, ranchers, forest landowners and resource professionals gathered in Greensboro, North Carolina to network, learn and share ways to make their farm operation more productive, profitable, and theirs for generations to come.

There were too many great speakers to mention here (you can find the conference program booklet and photos on our website), but Jim McClain, Dr. Jewel Hairston and Vickie Roberts are just a few of the presenters who set the stage for a memorable conference.

Jim was our keynote speaker and shared his story of a career in the military, corporate America, state government and establishing the highly successful McClain's Flying Leatherneck Ranch in North, South Carolina. He challenged the audience to help stem the tide of land loss among minority landowners.

Dr. Hairston, Dean of the School of Agriculture at Virginia State University, was our banquet speaker and had us on the edge of our seat awaiting her every word as she shared the exciting work going on at Virginia State University. And she gave us a "pep talk" on how to make the whole world "awesome."

Vickie Roberts, a landowner in Mississippi, and Managing Partner at Shelton Roberts Properties, LLC kept the discussion real as she revealed "Roberts' Rules for Land Retention." She shared her challenges and successes in retaining family land, holding close the lessons taught to her by her father.

It was easy to tell how much the audience identified with the conference speakers, because there was always a group surrounding each speaker after their presentation.

There were also presentations on "The Anatomy of an Estate Plan" led by estate planning experts from the North Carolina Bar. There was a video introduction to the Penn Center and St. Helena Island, South Carolina. We had presentations on agrofor-

estry, agricultural marketing and NRCS conservation programs. We introduced the Minority Landowner Board Development Program. We held panels on the Farm Turnaround Team, and a panel of agriculture majors from North Carolina A&T State University alongside farmers to discuss the future of agriculture.

Our Seventh Anniversary Conference wouldn't be successful without our volunteers and sponsors. This year's sponsors were the U.S. Forest Service Cooperative Forestry, U.S. Forest Service Southern Research Station, Farm Credit, the Conservation Trust for North Carolina and U.S. Forest Service Research and Development. Thank you to all of our sponsors and conference volunteers for your support and for your commitment to minority and limited resource farmers, ranchers and forest landowners across the country.

Sit back and enjoy this issue of *Minority Landowner*. We've included our annual Minority Landowner Resource Guide. It's a national compilation of phone numbers for agriculture and forestry agencies listed state by state. We provide phone numbers because although all of these agencies have a very strong Internet presence, according to 2011 agriculture census data provided by the National Agricultural Statistics Service, only 62% of farmers have Internet access and only 37% use a computer for farm business. And, only 13% of farmers access USDA reports and services over the Internet. This data represents all farmers, not just minority farmers. ....I have to catch myself I'm starting to write an article. We'll explore minority farmer computer and Internet usage at a later time. It is worthy of a column of its own.

We're proud and excited to have completed seven years of bringing you *Minority Landowner*. Year eight begins right now.

All the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "V. Harris". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Victor L. Harris  
ccpublishing@earthlink.net

# Southern Research Station Webinars



*Invasive plant: Chinese tallowtree*

Southern Research Station webinars cover a wide range of topics, including the Southern Forest Futures Project ([www.srs.fs.usda.gov/futures](http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/futures)), invasive plants, southern pine beetle, timber tax, silvopasture, and climate change.

## Recent webinars include:

- Income Tax on Timber for Your 2012 Tax Return Filing
- The Restoration of the American chestnut
- Forest Farming Non-Timber Products: Opportunities and Challenges
- The Most Prevalent Invasive Plants in Southern Forests



*Non-timber product: ramps*

Visit the Forestry Webinar Portal to search archived webinars and register to receive notification for upcoming webinars, <http://www.forestrywebinars.net/>

## After The Storm

By **Monica Moncrieffe**

A blizzard with the potential to be the worst in decades barreled down on the Northeastern United States. Meanwhile Hurricane Sandy, the storm that shut down the New York subway system and submerged amusement parks along the Jersey Shore is still in the rearview mirror. When a major storm impacts a major city, its major news. FEMA and the Red Cross arrive on the scene to help the folks who are hit hard by the natural disaster, and the whole country raises money and prayers. If Katrina and Sandy taught us anything, it's that our urban centers are not prepared for major natural disasters – if it's possible to prepare for such a thing.



Less prominent in the news after a major storm are stories of how minority landowners, those who work the land they live on, are impacted. Perhaps it's because for farmers of all kind, weather is not major news, but a thing to be considered every day. The phrase "weathering the storm" was probably coined by a farmer. (Actually it referred to a ship coming through a bad storm, but you get the point.) Crops, livestock, trees, or even honeybees can suffer severe damage during a natural disaster, or as we call it in the legal world, an act of God. The good news is that federal laws authorize programs that address many of these situations.

LIP, ELAP, SURE, EFRP, TAP, NAP. At first blush this may sound like scat in a great jazz number. In fact, the letters stand for the names of programs run by the USDA Farm Service Agency. The details and eligibility criteria for each are too much to fit into this article. For now it bears stating that LIP and LFP are programs that benefit livestock owners. ELAP provides emergency assistance for livestock, honey bees, and farm-raised fish owners. EFRP and TAP are programs established for the benefit

of owners of private forestland and tree growers. SURE helps farmers who lose crops because of natural disasters.

Landowners should be aware of one program in particular, the Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP). NAP is a program of the Farm Service Agency that provides financial assistance to eligible producers of non-insurable crops when low yields, loss of inventory or prevented planting occur due to a natural disaster. NAP is important because a farmer's ability to benefit from many of the other programs, such as SURE or TAP, depends upon their participation in NAP.

There are a number of questions a landowner will need to answer to determine whether he qualifies for assistance under NAP. Questions such as whether the farmer meets income requirements, whether the particular type of crop is covered and whether the crop is otherwise insurable for catastrophic risk protections. The landowner will also need to find out whether the natural disaster which occurred is covered under NAP. Finally, since there are fees and cut-off dates that come into play when applying for coverage, the landowner will also want to ask about the coverage period and whether he is eligible for a fee waiver.

"It wasn't raining when Noah built the ark," but he was ready for the rain. His preparedness literally saved his and his families lives. Likewise, none of us can prevent the storms that come or the damage that is often left in their aftermath, but we, too, can be prepared to rebuild. Knowing what type of assistance is available and where to go for more information is the first step.

Information about the Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program and all the other programs mentioned above can be found at [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov). You can also contact your local FSA office.

*Monica Moncrieffe is the owner of The Moncrieffe Law Firm based in Raleigh, North Carolina. She is licensed to practice law in the states of North Carolina and Connecticut. She is a graduate of Tuskegee University ('98) and Howard University School of Law ('01). Attorney Moncrieffe is also a certified mediator. You can learn more about The Moncrieffe Law Firm by visiting [www.moncrieffelaw.com](http://www.moncrieffelaw.com) or by sending an e-mail to [info@moncrieffelaw.com](mailto:info@moncrieffelaw.com).*



United States Department of Agriculture

# County Committee ELECTIONS 2013

VOTE VOTE VOTE VOTE VOTE

**June 17, 2013** The nomination period begins.  
Request nomination forms from the local USDA Service Center or obtain online at  
<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/elections>

**Aug. 1, 2013** Last day to file nomination forms at the local USDA Service Center

**Nov. 4, 2013** Ballots mailed to eligible voters

**Dec. 2, 2013** Last day to return voted ballots to the USDA Service Center

**Jan. 1, 2014** Newly elected county committee members take office

**FSA COUNTS ON YOU:**



**NOMINATE AND VOTE!**

USDA is an equal opportunity employer and provider.

**Hi Mr. Harris,**

What a GREAT Conference! So many people commented to me regarding the conference, there were no negative comments, all positive. They said they do not want to miss next year's conference.

Thank you for everything and allowing me to be a part of your team.

*Ada D. Beatty  
AA & S Farms, Inc.  
Harrells, North Carolina*



**Ada and Al Beatty**

*Photo by Perdita Spriggs*

**Victor,**

Congratulations on hosting another successful *Minority Landowner Magazine* Conference.

*Colmore S. Christian, PhD  
Assistant Professor & Faculty Advisor - MANRRS  
Forestry, Ecology and Wildlife Program  
Alabama A&M University  
Normal, Alabama*



**Keynote speaker Jim McClain and his brother Harold McClain**

*Photo by Perdita Spriggs*

**Good Morning Victor,**

Just a quick note to say "Well Done." I know what it takes to pull off a successful meeting and I can say without reservation this just concluded meeting was a success in every way. I've never participated in an event like this but Good Lord willing it won't be my last. My hope is to have my children attend future meetings if their schedules allow.

The information shared was as timely for me as any I've received. The attendees were interesting and attentive and a delight to speak with. If I can assist in any way as you move forward please let me know. The statistic illustrating the loss of millions of acres once owned by our ancestors is depressing and alarming. My hope is your efforts will help prevent the loss of any more of this precious land. As I said in my presentation, "we have a moral and fiduciary responsibility to hold on to every acre."

*Best regards,  
Jim McClain  
McClain's Flying Leatherneck Ranch  
North, South Carolina*

**What a Conference Mr. Harris!**

I am forever blessed because of this awesome conference. I have never been to one in which I came home excited, informed and ready to start work on my future in farming. I've changed our family reunion to the farm in Alabama and have told everyone how to get their farm number (thanks to the Farm Turnaround Team). You, Mr. Harris are truly a blessing.

*Thanks  
Marie Baxter*

**Dear Mr. Harris,**

Thank you once again for all of your assistance last week. There are no words to describe how grateful I am. I learned a great deal of things over three days, some of which I have been trying to find out since April 2011.

Your assistance has given me the avenue to succeed in making our farm a fully functioning production farm once again. I stopped by the FSA office that supports Avery County and filled out the AD1026 for a division on one parcel and a new farm service number for the additional acreage as Mr. Sutton suggested. I currently have an appointment for the NRCS to come out next week to do a conservation plan and NCFS due out on March 8<sup>th</sup> for timber management. This is something that I was unaware I should have already had done. I look forward to reading all of your upcoming editorials as I am sure they will provide a wealth of information.

*Sincerely,  
Shannonrae Mathes  
Sh-Nanny-Gans  
Avery County, NC*

**Mr. Harris:**

You did it again!

The 2013 edition of the *Minority Landowner Magazine's* Anniversary Conference was your best effort yet!

The event put USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) in front of producers, farmers, and landowners who did not have a relationship with their USDA offices, and were missing opportunities and information that provides assistance and knowledge. In addition, your conference allowed FSA to reconnect with others!

Your 2014 event is already circled on the FSA calendar!

Until then, let me know how I can assist you!

*Eddie Woodhouse  
USDA Farm Service Agency  
North Carolina Public Affairs and Outreach*

**Victor,**

Just want to thank you for such a great conference. The new farmers that came with us from Georgia and South Carolina were truly blessed with a wealth of information that will help them in their endeavors this year and beyond. Thanks also for the opportunity to be of service in helping and blessing the audience. We look forward to supporting the events you have in the coming months.

*Have a purposeful day,  
Helen Brown*



*Photo by Perdita Spriggs*

**Helen Brown and Dean Jewel Hairston**

**Good afternoon,**

Just received the Fall issue of *Minority Landowner*. Glad to hear you all have made great strides last year! As usual you've done a great job with the magazine. Glad to see the forestry article in there about the Thigpens.

Thanks for the copy.

*Evette Browning  
Arkansas Forestry Commission*

Hi Victor, just want to say again how much we really enjoyed the educational, networking conference *Minority Landowner* held on last week, what an outstanding job. Keep up the great work and we look forward to next year's conference.

*Frances Gibson - Coordinator  
United Farmers USA  
Manning, South Carolina*

# Forest Service Co-Sponsors *Minority Landowner Magazine* Conference



Photo by Perdita Spriggs

**Minority Landowner Magazine Publisher Victor Harris (left) and Southern Research Station Project Leader Dr. Jeff Prestemon**

**By Perdita B. Spriggs**

*Eastern Forest Environmental  
Threat Assessment Center*

The *Minority Landowner Magazine* Seventh Anniversary Conference is a favorite among small and limited resource landowners. This year's conference in Greensboro, NC, themed "Keeping Your Farm Productive, Profitable and Yours," engaged more than 250 participants, including federal, state, university, and private agencies and organizations sharing information to help maintain family farms. What keeps participants returning year-to-year? Off-farm networking, advanced technology, and sound advice that enhance their operations' sustainability, profitability, and efficiency.

The USDA Forest Service has offered ground floor support since the magazine's inception. "The Southern Research Station has been a tremendous partner," said magazine publisher Victor Harris who organized the conference with help from sponsors and volunteers. "Since the very beginning, the Station has risen to the top in showing support to help minority landowners improve operations." SRS joined the Forest Service Cooperative Forestry, Forest Service Research and Development, the Conservation Trust for North Carolina, and Farm Credit as conference co-sponsors.



Southern Region Civil Rights Director Debra Harrell (left) and Outreach Specialist Amadou Diop

Photo by Perdita Spriggs



Eastern Threat Center Communications Director Perdita Spriggs (left) and Mississippi landowner Vickie Roberts

Photo by Perdita Spriggs



Cooperative Forestry Management Analyst Cheryl Bailey (left) and Virginia State University School of Agriculture Dean Dr. Jewel Hairston

Photo by Perdita Spriggs

Forest Service representatives from the agency's three Deputy Chief Areas – National Forest System, Research and Development, and Cooperative Forestry – discussed available forest and science-based resources, including SRS Project Leader Dr. Jeff Prestemon, Eastern Forest Environmental Threat Assessment Center Communications Director Perdita Spriggs, Cooperative Forestry Management Analyst Cheryl Bailey, Southern Region Civil Rights Director Debra Harrell, and Regional Outreach Coordinator Amadou Diop. Other USDA agencies, including the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency, and Agricultural Marketing Service shared conservation, loan, and marketing assistance.

Harris carefully chose topics that resounded with generational family farmers and messages focused on estate planning, forest land management, legacy farming, and conservation programs. Successful minority and female farmers shared their paths to success, including keynote speaker Jim McClain, owner of McClain's Flying Leatherneck Ranch in North, SC, who emphasized, "There's nothing like owning a piece of land free and clear." Mississippi farmer Vickie Roberts shared her rules for land retention and offered "destination farming" as an option for expanding traditional operations. Banquet speaker Dr. Jewel Hairston, Dean of Virginia State University's School of Agriculture, encouraged farmers to "look for unique opportunities, like urban agriculture and niche markets...and embrace social media because that's how consumers communicate and share information."

The conference wrapped up with the *Agriculture: Past, Present and Future* panel discussion, providing seasoned landowners, young farmers, and North Carolina A&T University ag students time to share small farming perspectives, challenges, and dreams.

# Minority Landowner Resource Guide

|               | Cooperative Extension Service | Farm Service Agency (FSA) | National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) | Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) | Risk Management Agency (RMA) | Rural Development (RD) | State Agriculture Agency | State Forestry Agency |
|---------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|---|---|------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Alabama       | (334) 844-4444                | (334) 279-3500            | (800) 832-4181                                  | (334) 887-4500                                | (229) 219-2200               | (334) 279-3400         | (334) 240-7100           | (334) 240-9304        |
| Alaska        | (907) 474-5211                | (907) 761-7738            | (800) 478-6079                                  | (907) 761-7760                                | (509) 228-6320               | (907) 761-7705         | (907) 761-3867           | (907) 451-2666        |
| Arizona       | (520) 621-7205                | (602) 285-6300            | (800) 645-7286                                  | (602) 280-8801                                | (530) 792-5870               | (602) 280-8701         | (602) 542-0990           | (602) 771-1412        |
| Arkansas      | (501) 671-2000                | (501) 301-3000            | (800) 327-2970                                  | (501) 301-3100                                | (601) 965-4771               | (501) 301-3200         | (501) 663-4851           | (501) 296-1941        |
| California    | (530) 752-0127                | (530) 792-5520            | (800) 851-1127                                  | (530) 792-5600                                | (530) 792-5870               | (530) 792-5800         | (916) 654-0433           | (916) 653-7772        |
| Colorado      | (970) 491-6281                | (720) 544-2874            | (800) 392-3202                                  | (720) 544-2810                                | (785) 228-5512               | (720) 544-2903         | (303) 239-4100           | (970) 491-6303        |
| Connecticut   | (860) 486-9228                | (860) 871-2944            | (800) 642-9571                                  | (860) 871-4011                                | (919) 875-4880               | (413) 253-4300         | (860) 713-2500           | (860) 424-3630        |
| Delaware      | (302) 857-6424                | (302) 678-4250            | (800) 282-8685                                  | (302) 678-4160                                | (919) 875-4880               | (302) 857-3580         | (302) 698-4500           | (302) 698-4548        |
| Florida       | (352) 392-1761                | (352) 379-4500            | (800) 344-6277                                  | (352) 338-9500                                | (229) 219-2200               | (352) 338-3402         | (850) 488-3022           | (850) 488-4274        |
| Georgia       | (800) 275-8421                | (706) 546-2266            | (800) 253-4419                                  | (706) 546-2272                                | (229) 219-2200               | (706) 546-2162         | (404) 656-3600           | (478) 751-3480        |
| Hawaii        | (808) 956-8139                | (808) 441-2704            | (800) 804-9514                                  | (808) 541-2600                                | (530) 792-5870               | (808) 933-8380         | (808) 973-9560           | (808) 587-4182        |
| Idaho         | (208) 736-3603                | (208) 378-5650            | (800) 691-9987                                  | (208) 378-5700                                | (509) 228-6320               | (208) 378-5600         | (208) 332-8503           | (208) 334-0242        |
| Illinois      | (217) 333-5900                | (217) 241-6600            | (800) 622-9865                                  | (217) 353-6600                                | (217) 241-6600               | (217) 403-6200         | (217) 782-2172           | (217) 785-8774        |
| Indiana       | (765) 494-8491                | (317) 290-3200            | (800) 363-0469                                  | (317) 290-3200                                | (217) 241-6600               | (317) 290-3100         | (317) 232-8770           | (317) 232-4116        |
| Iowa          | (515) 294-4603                | (515) 254-1540            | (800) 772-0825                                  | (515) 284-6655                                | (651) 290-3304               | (515) 284-4663         | (515) 281-5322           | (515) 242-6898        |
| Kansas        | (785) 532-5820                | (785) 539-3531            | (800) 258-4564                                  | (785) 823-4500                                | (785) 228-5512               | (785) 271-2700         | (785) 296-3556           | (785) 532-3300        |
| Kentucky      | (859) 257-4302                | (859) 224-7601            | (800) 928-5277                                  | (859) 224-7350                                | (601) 965-4771               | (859) 224-7300         | (502) 564-5126           | (502) 564-4496        |
| Louisiana     | (225) 578-6083                | (318) 473-7721            | (800) 256-4485                                  | (318) 473-7751                                | (601) 965-4771               | (318) 473-7921         | (225) 922-1234           | (225) 952-8002        |
| Maine         | (207) 581-3188                | (207) 990-9100            | (800) 642-9571                                  | (207) 990-9100                                | (919) 875-4880               | (207) 990-9160         | (207) 287-3419           | (207) 287-2791        |
| Maryland      | (410) 651-6206                | (443) 482-2760            | (800) 675-0295                                  | (410) 757-0861                                | (919) 875-4880               | (302) 857-3580         | (410) 841-5880           | (410) 260-8501        |
| Massachusetts | (413) 545-4800                | (413) 253-4500            | (800) 642-9571                                  | (413) 253-4351                                | (919) 875-4880               | (413) 253-4300         | (617) 626-1701           | (617) 626-1250        |
| Michigan      | (888) 678-3464                | (517) 324-5100            | (800) 453-7501                                  | (517) 324-5270                                | (217) 241-6600               | (517) 324-5190         | (517) 373-1052           | (517) 335-7009        |
| Minnesota     | (612) 624-1222                | (651) 602-7700            | (800) 453-7502                                  | (651) 602-7900                                | (651) 290-3304               | (651) 602-7800         | (651) 201-6219           | (651) 259-5284        |
| Mississippi   | (601) 877-6128                | (601) 965-4300            | (800) 535-9609                                  | (601) 965-5205                                | (601) 965-4771               | (601) 965-4316         | (601) 359-1100           | (601) 359-2801        |
| Missouri      | (573) 882-7477                | (573) 876-0926            | (800) 551-1014                                  | (573) 876-0901                                | (785) 228-5512               | (573) 876-0976         | (573) 751-5617           | (573) 751-4115        |



|                | Cooperative Extension Service | Farm Service Agency (FSA) | National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) | Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) | Risk Management Agency (RMA) | Rural Development (RD) | State Agriculture Agency | State Forestry Agency |
|----------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|---|---|------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Montana        | (406) 994-1750                | (406) 587-6872            | (800) 832-4181                                  | (406) 587-6811                                | (406) 657-6447               | (406) 585-2580         | (406) 444-3144           | (406) 542-4300        |
| Nebraska       | (402) 472-2966                | (402) 437-5581            | (800) 582-6443                                  | (402) 437-5300                                | (785) 228-5512               | (402) 437-5551         | (402) 471-2341           | (402) 472-2944        |
| Nevada         | (775) 784-7070                | (775) 784-5411            | (888) 456-7211                                  | (775) 857-8500                                | (530) 792-5870               | (775) 887-1222         | (775) 353-3600           | (775) 684-2500        |
| New Hampshire  | (603) 862-1520                | (603) 224-7941            | (800) 642-9571                                  | (603) 868-7581                                | (919) 875-4880               | (802) 828-6000         | (603) 271-3551           | (603) 271-2214        |
| New Jersey     | (732) 932-5000                | (609) 298-3446            | (800) 328-0179                                  | (732) 537-6040                                | (919) 875-4880               | (856) 787-7700         | (609) 292-3976           | (609) 292-2520        |
| New Mexico     | (575) 646-3015                | (505) 761-4900            | (800) 530-8810                                  | (505) 761-4400                                | (405) 879-2700               | (505) 761-4950         | (575) 646-3007           | (505) 476-3328        |
| New York       | (607) 255-2237                | (315) 477-6304            | (800) 821-1276                                  | (315) 477-6504                                | (919) 875-4880               | (315) 477-6400         | (518) 457-8876           | (518) 402-9405        |
| North Carolina | (336) 334-7691                | (919) 875-4800            | (800) 437-8451                                  | (919) 873-2102                                | (919) 875-4880               | (919) 873-2000         | (919) 733-7125           | (919) 857-4801        |
| North Dakota   | (701) 231-8944                | (701) 239-5224            | (800) 626-3134                                  | (701) 530-2000                                | (406) 657-6447               | (701) 530-2037         | (701) 328-4754           | (701) 228-5422        |
| Ohio           | (614) 292-6181                | (614) 255-2441            | (800) 858-8144                                  | (614) 255-2472                                | (217) 241-6600               | (614) 255-2400         | (614) 466-2732           | (614) 265-6690        |
| Oklahoma       | (405) 744-2474                | (405) 742-1130            | (888) 525-9226                                  | (405) 742-1204                                | (405) 879-2700               | (405) 742-1000         | (405) 521-3864           | (405) 521-3864        |
| Oregon         | (541) 737-2713                | (503) 692-3688            | (800) 338-2157                                  | (503) 414-3200                                | (509) 228-6320               | (503) 414-3300         | (503) 986-4552           | (503) 945-7211        |
| Pennsylvania   | (814) 865-2541                | (717) 237-2117            | (800) 498-1518                                  | (717) 237-2100                                | (919) 875-4880               | (717) 237-2299         | (717) 772-2853           | (717) 787-2703        |
| Rhode Island   | (401) 874-2900                | (401) 828-8232            | (800) 642-9571                                  | (401) 828-1300                                | (919) 875-4880               | (413) 253-4300         | (401) 222-2781           | (401) 647-3367        |
| South Carolina | (864) 656-3150                | (803) 806-3830            | (800) 424-9406                                  | (803) 253-3935                                | (229) 219-2200               | (803) 765-5163         | (803) 734-2190           | (803) 896-8800        |
| South Dakota   | (605) 688-4792                | (605) 352-1160            | (800) 338-2557                                  | (605) 352-1200                                | (406) 657-6447               | (605) 352-1100         | (605) 773-5436           | (605) 773-3623        |
| Tennessee      | (865) 974-7114                | (615) 277-2600            | (800) 626-0987                                  | (615) 277-2531                                | (601) 965-4771               | (615) 783-1300         | (615) 837-5100           | (615) 837-5411        |
| Texas          | (936) 261-5137                | (979) 680-5150            | (800) 626-3142                                  | (254) 742-9800                                | (405) 879-2700               | (254) 742-9700         | (512) 463-7476           | (979) 458-6606        |
| Utah           | (435) 797-2215                | (801) 524-4530            | (800) 747-8522                                  | (801) 524-4555                                | (530) 792-5870               | (801) 524-4320         | (801) 538-7101           | (801) 538-5389        |
| Vermont        | (802) 656-2990                | (802) 658-2803            | (800) 642-9571                                  | (802) 951-6796                                | (919) 875-4880               | (802) 828-6000         | (802) 828-2430           | (802) 241-3680        |
| Virginia       | (540) 231-5299                | (804) 287-1500            | (800) 772-0670                                  | (804) 287-1691                                | (919) 875-4880               | (804) 287-1550         | (804) 786-3501           | (434) 977-6555        |
| Washington     | (509) 335-2933                | (509) 323-3000            | (800) 435-5883                                  | (509) 323-2900                                | (509) 228-6320               | (360) 704-7740         | (360) 902-1887           | (360) 902-1603        |
| West Virginia  | (304) 293-5691                | (304) 284-4800            | (800) 535-7088                                  | (304) 284-7540                                | (919) 875-4880               | (304) 284-4860         | (304) 558-2201           | (304) 558-3446        |
| Wisconsin      | (608) 263-2775                | (608) 662-4422            | (800) 789-9277                                  | (608) 662-4422                                | (651) 290-3304               | (715) 345-7600         | (608) 224-5012           | (608) 264-9224        |
| Wyoming        | (307) 766-5124                | (307) 261-5009            | (800) 892-1660                                  | (307) 233-6750                                | (406) 657-6447               | (307) 233-6700         | (307) 777-6569           | (307) 777-7586        |

These agencies provide free technical and financial assistance to farmers, ranchers and forest landowners.

# **Puckett Greenhouses LLC**

**\*\*\*HIGH TUNNELS MEET NRCS REQUIREMENTS!!\*\*\***

(276) 251-5286

1-800-PUCKETT (for East Coast only)



Family owned and operated, we strive to have the best service and products available. Our knowledgeable staff and crew are here to assist you with all your building and growing needs. Give us a call today for a free estimate on your customized high tunnel or greenhouse structure!

Full Service Construction \*Maintenance\* Delivery\* Unlimited Tech Support

\*High Tunnels\*Greenhouses\*Gutter connects\*A-Frames\*Gothic & Quonset Style  
Frames\*Chemilizers\*Pots\*Trays\*Inserts\*Rooting Hormone\*Modine & Hot Dawg  
Heaters\*Fans\*Shutters\*Thermostats\*Kool Cell Units\*Greenhouse Plastic\*  
Wiggle Wire & Base\*Polycarbonate\*Hobby Houses\*

For a detailed listing of products, visit our website:

[www.puckettgreenhouses.com](http://www.puckettgreenhouses.com)

**\*\*\*\*\*HIGH TUNNELS MEET NRCS REQUIREMENTS\*\*\*\*\***



PUCKETT GREENHOUSES LLC  
1461 GREEN SPRING ROAD  
ARARAT, VA 24053

# Conservation Easement Funding is Available



Wildlife and birds return when wetlands are restored.

Photo courtesy of USDA NRCS

## By NRCS Florida

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Florida is calling for applications from landowners interested in restoring or enhancing wetlands and/or grasslands on their private lands; especially in the 17 county Everglades priority area.

Roney Gutierrez, NRCS Acting State Conservationist announced that applications for the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) and Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) are being accepted at all NRCS offices. In addition, there will be special funding available through the Everglades Initiative (EI). NRCS employees can supply more information and help landowners decide which program would work best for them.

Although the application process for 2008 Farm Bill conservation programs is continuous, the cutoff date for consideration for Federal Fiscal Year 2013 funds in these programs in Florida is May 28, 2013. Applications received after that date will be considered for future funding periods.

- The **Wetlands Reserve Program** (WRP) is a voluntary easement program designed to provide a financial incentive to private landowners to encourage the protection and restoration of historically wetlands that have been drained. Most applications are for the permanent easement option, where NRCS pays a per-acre easement fee, plus 100 percent of the cost to restore the agricultural lands back to natural wetland ecosystems.
- The **Grassland Reserve Program** (GRP) is a voluntary conservation easement program that emphasizes support for working grazing operations, enhancement of plant and animal biodiversity, and protection of grassland under threat of conversion

to other uses. Participants voluntarily limit future development and cropping uses of the land while retaining the right to conduct common grazing practices and operations related to the production of forage and seeding. A grazing management plan is required for participants.

- The **Everglades Initiative** (EI) covers 17 counties: Broward, Collier, Glades, Hendry, Lee, Miami-Dade, Monroe, Okeechobee, Palm Beach, Highlands, Glades, Lee, Martin, Osceola, Orange, Indian River and St. Lucie. NRCS works with landowners to implement voluntary conservation practices that improve water quality, control invasive plant species, benefit wildlife and fish habitat and support rural economies in the Florida Everglades region.

By 1984, over half of all the wetlands in the U.S. had been drained or filled for development or agriculture. Today, natural wetlands are still being lost, but at a much slower rate than in the past. In an increasingly urban state like Florida, wetlands and grasslands are dwindling and habitat for wildlife is being lost. Stewardship by private landowners is vital to the health of our Nation's environment. NRCS is encouraging landowners, farmers and ranchers to visit their local NRCS office now to receive more information and apply for these programs before May 28, 2013.

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service helps America's farmers and ranchers conserve the Nation's soil, water, air and other natural resources. All programs are voluntary and offer science-based solutions that benefit both the landowner and the environment.

Additional information on NRCS, conservation assistance, and programs is available on its website at [www.fl.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.fl.nrcs.usda.gov) or at your local USDA - NRCS office. To find the nearest office go to your telephone directory under "U. S. Government, Department of Agriculture", or <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>.

# Farmers' Dreams Realized and Refined Through Small Farmer Agricultural Leadership Institute

**By Candace J. Semien**

*Contributing Writer*



**Brennan Washington addressing class on his farm in Lawrenceville, GA**

**R**etired Alabama teacher Willonese Tillman-Adams had no desire to work when she moved back home to north Florida—especially not to work on a farm. “I was like so many young people. When I left the farm and the country, in my heart I had left it,” she said.

It was not her idea of retirement to return to her grandfather’s five acres and rundown home and raise goats with her sister, Norma. “It was more my sister’s dream than it was mine,” she said. “Once I committed myself, I learned the head work and the hands-on work by attending master goat and Heifer International goat training at Florida A&M University. But, something was missing.”

“We were just hanging on,” she said. “We had a few animals—about five Andys and one Billy—and a very basic infrastructure, but that was it.”

Then, she enrolled in the inaugural class of the Small Farmer Agricultural Leadership Training Institute at the Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center in Baton Rouge.

Now at 68, she and her sister have tripled the land size, added rotational grazing for the herd, established their farm’s infrastruc-

ture, and are planning to incorporate herb production and sell scotch bonnet pepper jelly.

Tillman-Adams said her love for farming and its success is a result of the 18 months she spent studying in the Institute with director Dawn Mellion-Patin, Ph.D.

To participate in the Institute, small farmers needed to be recommended by agricultural professionals from the 1890 institution in their home state, be interested in developing their leadership and business management skills, and actively engaged in an agricultural based business.

“We are promoting small and family farm sustainability,” said Dr. Mellion-Patin. To date, over 100 small farmers have either gone through or are currently enrolled in the Institute.



**Dawn Mellion Patin,  
Project Director**

“For all four classes, the Institute has been about their dreams being realized,” said Dr. Mellion-Patin, who enrolled the first class in 2005. “We are taking hard-working farmers and producers from within their corner of the region and moving them into a position to claim a broader space

in the local, regional, national and, indeed, global agricultural system. During the program, the small and limited resource



**Class II in front of the United States Capitol**

*Continued on page 18*



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture



# Ask for a Receipt for Service. It's your right.

All USDA representatives must provide you with a receipt upon request, for any approved, denied, or requested services.



## Don't leave without it.

Should you experience any problems obtaining a Receipt for Service,  
call the USDA Office of Advocacy and Outreach Toll-Free at

1-800-880-4183



**Class I assessing leadership styles**

farmers study enhanced business management skills, leadership development, and effective utilization of USDA programs that are critical for them to become, and remain, sustainable.”

The training, site visits, and guest lectures from other small farmers, USDA representatives, and university officials, help these farmers realize the critical place they hold in the future of agriculture and the food industry, not just in their community but broadly.

“Dr. Patin let us know that agriculture was really more than the hand-in-the-dirt kind of thing. There were a whole array of agencies that we didn’t know about who were there for farmers,” said Tillman-Adams. “We were constantly exposed to the government agencies, legal issues, and other farmers who had like and different philosophies.”

Tillman-Adams said she was first introduced to the Grazing Coalition while in Class I of the Institute. “We knew nothing about that and that knowledge opened the door for us to get off the farm and get involved in farming and the political side of it.” Since graduating from the Institute in 2007, Tillman-Adams has served on the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) board in Florida.

When it came to national opportunities and connections, Georgia farmer Brennan Washington, said he and his wife, Gwen, “were pretty much on the seat of the pants. For example, I didn’t know about an organization as basic as NRCS until I joined the Institute and it really helped put me in touch with resources that are out there.”

“The Institute helped me to refine and crystallize what I wanted to do and what I wanted to see on the farm,” said the 53-year-old IT professional. “We were fairly well established since we had been in operation for four years before the Institute. But it helped established a vision of what I really wanted my farm and operation to do on a larger scale...and to take on a leadership role and nurture more farmers, and more farmers of color.”

Washington took his family’s gardening “hobby” from being just enough to cover supplies and seeds to yielding more than 10,000 pounds of produce and 75-100 laying hens annually. These and other accomplishments, he said, are result of the training he received with Georgia Organics and the Small Farmer

Training Institute. “They really guided us. I still deal with and talk with people who I met through the Institute and that has been absolutely invaluable,” said Washington who completed the course in 2011.

The Institute’s curriculum, as developed by Dr. Mellion-Patin and the leadership team, emphasizes strategic planning and board participation. Two aspects both Adams and Washington say were most beneficial.

“They really played up planning,” he said. Planning helped the business support the family after he went through major spinal surgery. “That wiped out my salary. If I didn’t have some of the knowledge, the plans, and resources that I’d learned at the Institute, we’d probably be way under water now.” The Washingtons used the planning lessons to further determine the yield and profit of their Phoenix Gardens.

Phoenix Gardens sits 30 miles north of Atlanta and is an urban/suburban farm that produces niche produce including New Zealand spinach, artichokes, European patty pads, Lebanese type squash, and European melons. “People visit and tell us ‘you can get more out of two acres than most people get out of one hundred,’” he said. He attributes that success to the rough and tumble school of hard knocks type of experience, Georgia Organics and the Southern University Ag Center’s Institute. Now, they mentor new farmers, sit on the Southern SARE Advisory Council and other boards. They have also helped expand a community farmers’ market into one thriving with 40 vendors and 1,000 customers.

Now, the Class III participant is expanding his produce and



**Small group discussion**

poultry output and mentoring new farmers using the skills he honed while in the Institute and his new relationships with national contacts.

To have small farmers fulfilling leadership roles is exactly what the Institute is designed for, said M. Ray McKinnie, Ph.D., associate dean and extension administrator for the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Program at NC A&T State University, who serves on the Institute’s advisory council. “The Institute has and is creating the next generations of small farm leaders, advocates and spokespersons in the US. These graduates are giving both a voice and face to small farmers; speaking out and

being heard on issues impacting not only the survivability but also the viability of America's small, part-time farmers with limited resource bases. No longer will these voices remain silent."

Prior to graduating from the Institute, participants complete classes on leadership theory; alternative enterprises; agricultural policies; best practices; communications; financial management; tax planning; board responsibilities; loan qualifications; and computer applications.

"The classes opened up a whole new world; all I was seeing was very basic farming," said Tillman-Adams.

"The Institute is not teaching you how to farm but to act as a voice and proponent for the local community," said Washington. "By going through the Institute, it was clear that we needed people to serve on those boards and share perspectives. Our folks get excluded from conversation. Someone needed to talk about (issues) from our side of the fence, and we have to make sure that minority and limited-resource farmers are included in those conversations," he said. "When they've seen that we have gone through the Institute, they know we are serious."

Washington is planning to add a state-of-the art rainwater harvesting system on his 25 acre property that will help him manage 110,000 gallons of water for his produce annually. This type of forward thinking and the continuous relationship with USDA came out of his training at the Institute. "It is a great program," Washington said.

"It has been a great experience working with the Small Farmer's Leadership Institute and helping them to understand that as they work with others in their leadership role, they will discover that individuals receive and process information differently. As a result, it is a must to learn various ways to communicate so that they do not become frustrated when transferring information to others," said Celvia E. Stovall, PhD., associate director, Urban Affairs and New Nontraditional Programs at Alabama A&M University.

The lessons from Dr. Stovall and others verified the life lessons and experiences many of the farmers said they were learning back at home. "We were truly polished as farmers," said Tillman-Adams. "It was just an excitement. There was so much information that I wish I'd known sooner. Had I known this when I was younger, I would have stuck around the farm and made sure my family acquired more property and been successful."

Her advice to older farmers: "Run to whoever the representative is at an 1890 (university) and beg to be a part of this program, because it will be more valuable to a farmer than anything they have ever done. It is ageless."

Tillman-Adams and Washington's successes follow those of Institute alumni including Jenga Mwendo of New Orleans, Louisiana, who left Pixar Studios to establish community gardens in the Ninth Ward; Rhonda Benton, of Alabama, who operates a horse ranch restoring hope to young teens; Diane Kimble of Colfax, Louisiana, whose family land is a resort for families to learn organic and natural lifestyle through farming; Alease Williams of Autryville, North Carolina, who raised

pastured hogs for commercial markets; Hope and Travis Beasley of Jay, Oklahoma, whose farm is now used as a demonstration farm; and Karen Davis of St. Louis, Missouri who after graduating from the Institute pursued a career with the Cooperative Extension Service. In addition, several graduates of the program were among the founding members of the Southeastern African-American Farmers Organic Network (SAAFON), all of whom are certified organic growers with excellent marketing strategies. SAAFON members include Sandra Simone of Talladega, Alabama, Mary James of Maple Hill, North Carolina and Mary Fields of Johns Island, South Carolina.

The Institute is managed by a leadership team of partnering university faculty and administrators. Current and past members are: Gregory Reed and Anthony Reed, Alcorn State University; Nelson Daniels, Prairie View A & M University; Michelle Eley and M. Ray McKinnie, North Carolina A & T State University; Orlando Phelps, USDA Agricultural Marketing Service; Marion Simon, Kentucky State University; Edoe Agbodjan, South Carolina State University; Angela McKenzie Jakes, Florida A&M University; James Hill, Southern SARE/Fort Valley State University; Christie Monroe and Frank Taylor, past participants; Tasha Hargrove, Tuskegee University; Allison Johnson, USDA Office of Advocacy and Outreach; Candace Semien, Zanetta Augustine and Gina E. Eubanks, Southern University Ag Center; and L. Washington Lyons, Association of Extension Administrators.

Alumni of the Institute are serving in a number of ways.



**Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack addressing graduates**

One participant has been named by Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack to serve on the Secretary's Advisory Committee on Animal Health, and two others have been appointed to the Advisory Committee on Beginning Farmers and Ranchers. Two participants have been appointed to regional advisory boards, one to Southern Region Risk Management Education Advisory Board and one to Southern Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education. Several are on state and local advisory

boards in Florida, Mississippi, Texas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Alabama, and Maryland. Several have been selected as Small Farmer of the Year in their states and all of the participants have dedicated their lives and farms to serving others.

For a list of 1890 institutions or to find out more about the Institute visit [www.suagcenter.com](http://www.suagcenter.com). Contact Dawn Mellion Patin by email at [dawn\\_mellion@suagcenter.com](mailto:dawn_mellion@suagcenter.com) or Zanetta Augustine at [zanetta\\_augustine@suagcenter.com](mailto:zanetta_augustine@suagcenter.com) or call (225) 771-2242.

# Extend the Growing Season with SARE's New Collection of How-To Resources

**W**ith consumer interest in locally raised foods steadily growing, vegetable farmers are discovering they can add an important income stream through high tunnels – a cost-effective means to extend production and sales into the traditional off season. One Maryland farmer started using a high tunnel to raise spinach and tomatoes from early spring through late fall, and in the first three years earned an extra \$32,000 at the farmers' market.

The farmer was one of 41 in the Mid-Atlantic who built high tunnels from 2004-2007 as part of a SARE-funded project to share knowledge about the structures and promote them as a primary tool of season extension.

Now, in-depth information about high tunnels can be found in SARE's new Season Extension Topic Room - a one-stop collection of dozens of guidebooks, curricula, webinars, bulletins and other how-to materials to help farmers, educators and researchers across the country implement effective season extension strategies.

Bookmark the Season Extension Topic Room now: [www.SARE.org/Season-Extension](http://www.SARE.org/Season-Extension).

Information products in the Season Extension Topic Room derive from SARE-funded research and education projects, and are organized according to key topic areas: Overview; Types and Construction; Variety Trials and Selection; Fertility Management; Pest Management; Water Management; Energy; and Marketing and Economics. While the Season Extension Topic Room includes extensive information on high tunnels (also known as hoop houses), some materials also address greenhouse and nursery production, low tunnels and winter storage.

Example Season Extension Topic Room features include:

- *High Tunnel Specialty Crop Production in Colorado*. This April 2011 webinar, presented by Colorado State University Extension and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), gives an introduction to high tunnels and addresses design considerations, summer and winter production, economics, and future research needs.
- *Greenhouse Energy Conservation Strategies and Alternative Fuels*. This series of bulletins, curriculum materials and other resources was developed by the University of Wisconsin, and is intended for Cooperative Extension educators, college instructors and high school vocational agricultural teachers.



**A high tunnel under construction**

- *Organic Control of White Mold in High Tunnels*. This Kentucky State University video describes two organic practices for controlling white mold-solarization and biofumigation.
- *Expanding Winter Harvest and Sales for New England Vegetable Crops*. This website, hosted by University of Massachusetts Extension, includes information on high tunnels and low tunnels, winter storage, and strategies for marketing produce in the winter.

Recognizing the role that high tunnels can play in diversifying farmer income while meeting growing consumer demand for local food, NRCS offers grants that help pay for high tunnel construction. In 2010, its first year, the program led to the construction of 2,400 structures in 43 states.

The Season Extension Topic Room will be updated with new resources as they become available, so check back often!

*Submitted by SARE Outreach for the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program, which is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture- National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA-NIFA). SARE's mission is to advance - to the whole of American agriculture - innovations that improve profitability, stewardship and quality of life by investing in groundbreaking research and education. SARE Outreach operates under cooperative agreements with the University of Maryland and the University of Vermont to develop and disseminate information about sustainable agriculture.*

# 2013 Farmers of the Year

**Minority Landowner Magazine will produce a special feature, 2013 Farmers of the Year. We will provide a brief profile of minority Farmers of the Year as selected by state and federal agencies, universities and community based organizations across America.**

**If your organization selects a minority Farmer of the Year, and you want to be included in this special feature, submit the following information by June 28, 2013.**

- Name of the Farmer of the Year recipient
- Recipient's mailing address, phone number and email address
- Name of selecting organization
- Selecting organization's contact person, mailing address, phone number, and email address
- A high resolution digital photograph of the Farmer of the Year winner
- Up to a 200 word narrative summarizing the outstanding accomplishments of the Farmer of the Year winner

## How to Submit Nominations

Submittal forms are available at  
[www.minoritylandowner.com](http://www.minoritylandowner.com).

Completed forms and photos may be emailed to [minoritylandowner@earthlink.net](mailto:minoritylandowner@earthlink.net) or mailed to:

**Minority Landowner Magazine**  
Farmers of the Year  
PO Box 97033  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27624

**Deadline for submittal is June 28, 2013**



# Unfair and Unbalanced

Recently the *New York Times* published an article critical of the racial and gender discrimination lawsuits against the United States Department of Agriculture. The primary target of the article was the Black farmers' lawsuit. It strongly suggested that the settlement in that case opened the floodgate for fraud in the women, Hispanic and Native American cases that followed, even though there has been little evidence of fraud in any of the settlements. The writer cherry-picked disgruntled claimants and USDA employees and used fuzzy evidence to make her case. She also went for the sensational by trying to lump all African-American claimants and farm organizations together and highlighting the very few that tried and in some cases took advantage of the situation. It did not matter to her that investigations found no widespread fraud – in fact of the thousands of claims, approximately 60 were worthy of investigation. She tried to make it seem that African-Americans were lined up at the USDA and receiving checks whether they were discriminated against or not.

The truth is that the USDA admitted discriminating against African-American farmers and those who tried to farm. The settlement of the class action lawsuit was like no other that I



am aware of because it was a vigorous process and put an extra burden on the aggrieved. Each one had to individually prove that he or she had indeed been discriminated against even though USDA had admitted it! Those who prevailed (it took months to settle each claim) were rewarded a paltry \$50,000. Most farmers know that \$50,000 won't buy a good tractor and can in no way compensate a family who lost their farm or were denied the opportunity to farm. It deserves mentioning that between 1969 and the filing of the lawsuit African-Americans lost over three million acres of agricultural land that could conservatively be valued at over \$3 billion dollars. Because of the dramatic loss of land, billions of dollars in economic development opportunities were denied the Black Belt Region where most African-American farmers and landowners are located. Much if not most of these losses can be directly attributable to discrimination by the USDA. The unfortunate truth is that African-Americans will never be fully compensated for these losses and for the most part are still struggling to hold on to the remaining farms and land that have been in their families for generations.

This lawsuit was an attempt to right the wrongs that took place over more than 50 years. It was not perfect but it was a step in the right direction. Much more needs to be done by the USDA and Congress before African-Americans are truly integrated into this country's production agriculture system as equals. The famous "liberal" *New York Times* would have done well to tell the rest of the story.

*Jerry Pennick can be contacted at [epennick@yahoo.com](mailto:epennick@yahoo.com).*

Discover a Unique Sense of Place

# PENN CENTER

31st Annual Heritage Days Celebration  
November 7-9 2013

*Eyes Still on the Prize*  
*Continuing the Legacy of Change*



St. Helena Island, SC  
(843) 838-2432 [www.PENNCENTER.com](http://www.PENNCENTER.com)

**FINANCING TO GET  
YOU GROWING.**

**FINANCING AVAILABLE FOR:**

- Farms and land
- Equipment and machinery
- Trucks and other vehicles
- Barns and outbuildings
- Operating expenses
- Home purchase and construction

*Lending support to  
rural America™*

Find a local lender near you:

**800.343.6940**

[www.MyLandLender.com](http://www.MyLandLender.com)



**FARM CREDIT**

 Equal Housing Lender