

District Earns State Award - Conservation District of the Year Award

Feb. 25th - Airport Marriott, Nashville



Board & Staff pictured left to right: Don Pearson, Benton James, Mary Beth Flowers, Don Johnson, Brad Denton. Not pictured: Allen Verell, Joel Haynes, Bob Bryant, and Kenneth Williams.

The Madison County Soil Conservation District was honored at the Tennessee Association of Conservation Districts (TACD) 70th annual convention as we were presented the Conservation District of the Year Award. The award is sponsored by TACD and TVA. The award is earned by the district for its outstanding accomplishment in Education Programs & Implementing Best Management Practices for Erosion Control and Water Quality. The Madison County SCD is one of 95 soil conservation districts serving Tennessee. Thanks to all our district cooperators, district sponsors, and district partners who support and are a part of the Madison County Soil Conservation District.

A Word from our Chairman



This past year, at the Tennessee Association of Conservation Districts (TACD) convention in Nashville, the district received statewide recognition for our successful program, as we were recognized as the Tennessee Conservation District of the Year. Let it be noted that the District is not any one individual or group but it is the community of individuals and groups working together as one. Thereby, this award does not recognize the work of a single individual or group but it recognizes the work of the many individuals of our community of which I wish to acknowledge.

First, as Chairman of the Madison County Soil Conservation District, I wish to recognize and extend my thanks to the many individual farmers and landowners that work with the District. Your voluntary efforts to protect your land serve to benefit the greater community both ecologically and economically. Your stewardship of the land is appreciated and is indeed commendable. The District is honored to serve your conservation needs. You and the conservation work you do are the essence of the District program. I thank you for your conservation work as District cooperators and I congratulate you as recipients of this award.

Second, but of no less importance, as Chairman of the Madison County Soil Conservation District, I wish to recognize and extend my thanks to the SCD board, the office staff, the Madison County Commission, the many participating agencies of the state, and the federal government, local sponsoring businesses, and other groups and individuals for the partnerships we have forged. Together we are able to work together as one to assist rural landowners and farmers in their voluntary efforts to conserve and protect their soil and soil related natural resources. You are very important to our District program. Without your efforts and support our program would not be so successful. I thank you for your partnership, your work, your good faith, and your continued support. I congratulate you as recipients of this award.



_____, Chairman
Madison County Soil Conservation District

Non Discrimination Statement:

The Madison County Soil Conservation District does not discriminate on the basis of a person's race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status.

Notice:

This District is a recipient of taxpayer funding. If you observe an agency director or employee engaging in any activity which you consider to be illegal, improper, or wasteful, please call the comptroller's toll free hotline: 1-800-232-5454.

MADISON COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2014

Presented by the board of supervisors of the Madison County Soil Conservation District
to inform district cooperators and the public about the District's activities.

INTRODUCTION - The District is a corporate and political subdivision of the state, established by the state soil conservation committee in 1941, organized in accordance with the purposes, provisions, powers and restrictions set forth within the Tennessee Soil Conservation District Law 43-14-201 through 43-14-223. The geographic and political boundaries of the District are the same as those of Madison County. The District is a member of the Tennessee Association of Conservation Districts (TACD), and the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD). This district is 1 of 95 districts in Tennessee and 1 of nearly 3,000 districts in the United States. The District works closely with NRCS, a Federal agency of USDA. The two entities along with TDA work together through a Memorandum of Understanding with the purpose of conserving soil and soil related natural resources on private agricultural land. The district board is responsible for developing the District's Plan of Work. NRCS is responsible for providing technical assistance to private landowners through the local Soil Conservation District program. In no way does NRCS have authority over the district nor does the district have authority over NRCS. Together the two form a powerful partnership.

MISSION STATEMENT – Our mission is to improve the quality of life in Madison County through the conservation of soil and its related natural resources by promoting conservation and by locating technical expertise and financial aid that will assist and encourage land managers including farmers, ranchers, and wildlife enthusiasts to voluntarily apply conservation practices meant to conserve soil productivity while enhancing the vitality of the related resources of water, plants, animals, air, and most importantly people.

DISTRICT SUPERVISORS - A board of supervisors, responsible for developing and administering the District's long range program, and governs the District. The board is composed of five landowners residing within the District. Two of the supervisors are appointed by the state soil conservation committee, while three of the supervisors are elected by the land owners within the District. The term served by a supervisor is three years. However, there are no term limits. The board receives no salary but each receives \$30 for attending monthly board meetings. Presently, the board consists of Allen Verell, Don Johnson, Joel Haynes, Bob Bryant, and Don Pearson.



Chairman, Allen Verell, of the Huntersville Community was elected to the board in 1995, and was elected to serve a 7th term in 2013. Allen served as a past Director of TACD for Area VIII. Allen is a full time farmer and is a past recipient of the District Conservation Farmer Award.



Vice-Chairman, Don Johnson, of the Denmark Community was appointed to the Board in 2003 by the state soil conservation committee and reappointed to a 4th term in 2012. Don is a full time farmer and cotton ginner. Don is a past recipient of the District's Conservation Farmer Award and TACD Category I state winner. Don is a second generation SCD Board member preceded by his father Kenneth Johnson who served on the board in the 1950s and 1960s.



Secretary-Treasurer, Joel Haynes, of the Huntersville Community, was appointed to the board in 2000 by the state soil conservation committee, and was reappointed to a 5th term in 2014. Joel currently serves as the Director of TACD for Area VIII. Joel is a full time farmer, as well as a partner in a construction company. Joel is a past recipient of the District Conservation Farmer Award and TACD Category I state winner.



Bob Bryant, of the Beech Bluff Community was elected to the board in 2001 and was elected to serve a 4th term in 2013. Bob is an avid sportsman. He has held leadership positions in the conservation of our natural resources at the local, state, and national levels. Bob's passion for the outdoors and his concerns for wildlife led him to found the local, "Forked Deer", chapter of Quail Unlimited, of which Bob has served as its President. Bob is also a former chairman of the Tennessee Council of Quail Unlimited and served as a Trustee on the Quail Unlimited National Board.



Don Pearson of the Adair Community was elected to the board in 2013. Don is a full time farmer and is a past recipient of the District Conservation Farmer Award. Don is a graduate of the AgStar program.

OFFICE STAFF

Technically the District does not have any employees. However, there were 4 employees working out of the office in 2014, which we claim as our own. They were:



Kenneth Williams “left”

Kenneth, a Soil Conservationist for NRCS, has been stationed in the Jackson Field Office since January of 1997. Among other duties, Kenneth is responsible for carrying out the duties and tasks assigned to him by the District Conservationist.

Brad Denton “middle left”

Brad, a District Conservationist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), has been stationed in the Jackson Field Office since 1986. Among other duties, Brad is responsible for providing private landowners and operators, as District cooperators, the technical assistance necessary for them to achieve their conservation goals and objectives.

Mart Beth Flowers “middle right”

Mary Beth Flowers has been the Office Secretary for the District since 2010. As office secretary Mary Beth is responsible for assisting the board with the administration of the district’s plan of work including the various conservation cost-share programs provided by NRCS and TDA through the District to district cooperators.

Benton James “right”

Benton James has been an Engineering Technician for the District since 1979. Benton is responsible for providing private landowners technical assistance in evaluating resource problems, planning, designing, supervising, and certifying the installation of conservation practices according to NRCS design standards and specifications.

District Annual Awards Banquet:

March 11th -



Over 100 guests attended our Awards & Appreciation Banquet including Tennessee's Deputy Commissioner of Agriculture Jai Templeton and NRCS State Conservationist Kevin Brown. Jared King was recognized as the District's Outstanding Cooperator of 2013. Jared has worked closely with the district to protect his soil from erosion and to improve his soil health. Jared has installed two large grade control structures to address severe soil erosion that was devastating his cropland. To enhance soil health, improve soil structure, and enhance the soil biology and soil chemistry Jared is incorporating practices that disturb the soil as little as possible, practices that keep the ground covered, and practices that keep the root zone active. Good soil health practices that Jared uses include no-till, crop rotation, and the planting of multi-species cover crops.

Mike Pearson was recognized for his 18 years of service as a district supervisor as he was presented the District's distinguish service award. Mike has served the District well both on the board and in the field with his conservation work and ethics.

Everyone was treated to a steak dinner. Kevin Brown, NRCS State Conservationist, delivered a presentation on soil health and Jai Templeton, Tennessee's Deputy Commissioner of Agriculture spoke to the group.

We thank our many sponsors for making the banquet possible. We also thank Sand's Old Hickory Florist for donating the beautiful floral centerpiece and Four Seasons Nursery for donating the 21 potted plants and the \$25 gift card to Four Seasons. The centerpiece, the potted plants, and the gift card were given as door prizes.

PARTNERSHIPS AND PROGRAMS

The district works with federal, state, and local governments, various agencies, conservation groups, and businesses to obtain technical and financial assistance for district cooperators. The following are conservation programs that were utilized by district cooperators in 2014:

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVE PROGRAM (EQIP) -

EQIP is a USDA-NRCS program which provides agricultural landowners and operators with technical assistance and cost-share toward the installation of conservation practices such as gully control structures. In 2014 the District had \$399,000 of contracts covering 2,214 acres.

TDA AG BMP GRANT – In 2014, the District completed 9 contracts with cooperators and provided them with \$28,000 of cost-share to apply over \$37,000 of conservation practices that serviced over 200 acres. The work benefits the water quality of streams by reducing soil erosion from cropland. The funding was provided through a Tennessee Department of Agriculture grant to the District which provided up to 75% cost-share to farmers that applied Best Management Conservation that improve water quality of Tennessee's rivers and streams. Practices applied included, grade stabilization structures, terraces, and diversions.

WETLAND RESERVE PROGRAM (WRP) – The Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) is a USDA-NRCS program where the government purchases permanent or temporary easements on lands that would have been considered wetlands before they were cleared and cropped. The land is restored to its natural hydrology and planted to bottomland hardwood trees. Wetlands benefit the environment in many ways, including filtering ground water, recharging aquifers, and providing habitat for wetland plants and animals. As of the end of 2014, the District has 11 WRP contracts totaling 746 acres of wetland easements that were acquired by USDA for \$970,276.

CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CRP)

CRP is a USDA-FSA farm program that seeks to conserve soil on non-federal lands, improve the water quality of rivers and streams, enhance wildlife habitat, and stabilize and diversify farm income. Through CRP, landowners can rent out eligible cropland to the government for 10 to 15 years. The landowner has to establish the land to an acceptable conservation cover and the cover must be maintained for the life of the contract. USDA reimburses the landowners up to 50% of the establishment costs and will pay the landowner an annual rent based on the soil's relative

productivity. In Madison County, the soil rental rates range from \$48 to \$185 per acre. There are several different CRP programs available. Some CRP programs are open for enrollment year round. A general CRP enrollment is unpredictable and is usually only open for a few weeks. In 2014, Madison County landowners had 8,693 acres enrolled in CRP through 403 contracts. CRP provided Madison County land owners approximately \$905,000 in federal funding in 2014.

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) -

is a USDA-NRCS program in which the sign-up is continuous. The District has 24 CSP contracts on 18,543 acres with payments totaling \$408,601 in 2014. CSP are 5 year contracts that encourage producers to maintain existing conservation while incorporating more conservation. Landowners can apply to enroll in CSP for crop, pasture, and forest land. To be eligible, among other things, a producer must control the land for 5 years, be the operator on record at the FSA office, enroll all such eligible land in CSP, keep good farm records, have already done substantial conservation work and must be willing to incorporate additional conservation practices.

INFORMATION ASSISTANCE – The District is on the web; www.madisonscd.com. The site is packed with information about the District and has many links to useful sites. We have several tools in the office including historical aerial photography of the county dating back to 1965, topographic maps, wetland maps, Flood Insurance Rate Maps with 100 year flood lines delineated. Our computer has digitized aerial photography of Madison County covering several years back to 1997. We also have digitized geo-referenced layers that can be layer over the aerial photography, including soils, streams, roads, property boundaries, ect. In 2013 we acquired access to LIDAR imagery. With LIDAR we are able to create customized topographic and relief maps of any land in the county. Contour lines can be less than a foot apart. Based on field checks the accuracy of the contour lines is remarkable and ground covers such as trees do not noticeably affect the precision of the lines; it is as if the surface of the earth was wiped clean and only the bare earth remains. The precision appears to be good enough that dams and storage pools can be designed with reasonable accuracy from within the office. draw contour lines and reveal peaks, and gullies even under the canopy of trees.

ENGINEERING ASSISTANCE

Each year, the District is involved with the installation of several conservation practices that control soil erosion; improve the water quality of rivers and streams. Office staff provides cooperators with

engineering services including site surveys, practice design, practice layout, construction assistance, checkout and certification.

Through funding from TDA, EQIP, and other programs, the District provided engineering assistance on several practices in 2014 including 29 grade stabilization structures, and thousands of feet of terraces, and diversions. By functioning to stop the advancement of in-field gullies, installation of these conservation practices serves to preserve the

productivity of farmland, improve the water quality of rivers and streams, and reduce flooding.



Before: A 4 ft. deep 300 ft. long head cut is Devouring Prime Farmland & filling the stream with sediment after every rain.



After: The farmer, with our technical assistance, installed a drop structure to control the head cut.



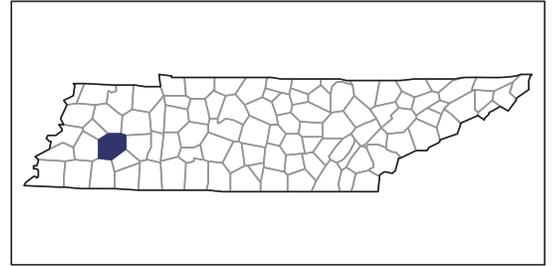
A 20 ft. head cut is advancing into the crop field.

The following is a summary of USDA and TDA programs in Madison County

<u>Item</u>	<u>Dollar Amount 2014</u>	<u>Acres</u>
• CRP Program:	905,000	8,693
• CSP Program 2014 (NRCS):	408,601	18,543
• EQIP Program 2014 (NRCS):	399,245	2,214
• TDA Program: 2014 (SCD):	28,000	212
• WRP acres under contract (NRCS):		745
• EWP-FPE acres under contract (NRCS):		340
• Active Conservation Farm Plans (1,950 Plans) (NRCS:)		104,000
• Worked with Cooperators on 29 Grade Stabilization Structures and thousands of feet of terraces and diversions.		
	<u>\$1,740,000</u>	

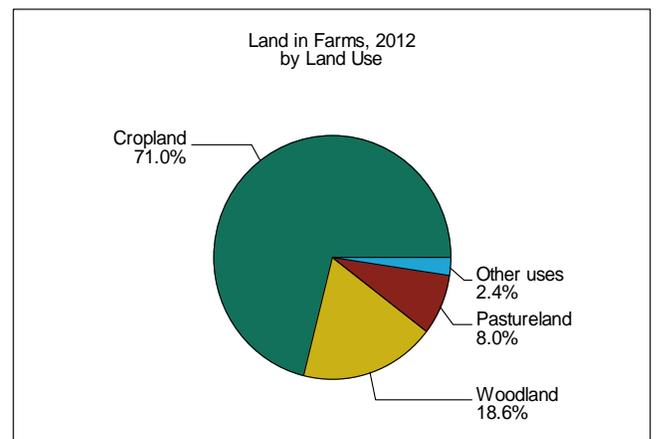
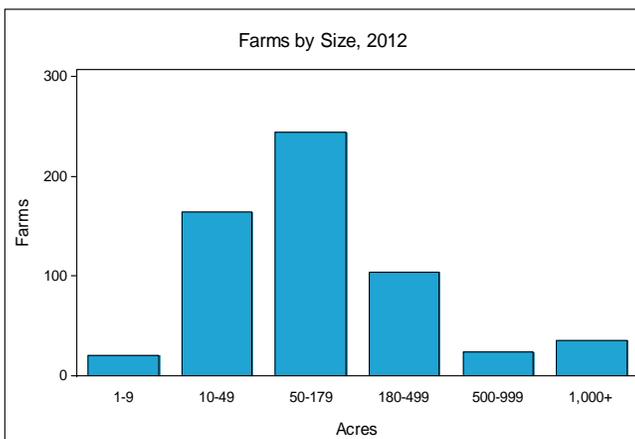
2012 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

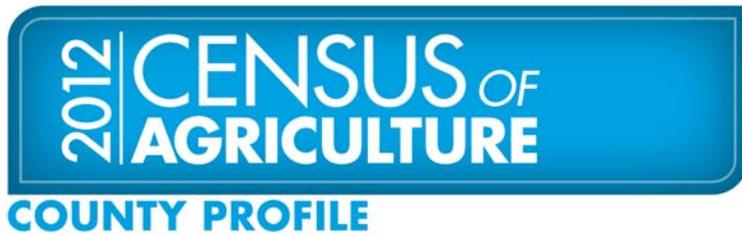
COUNTY PROFILE



Madison County Tennessee

	2012	2007	% change
Number of Farms	592	706	- 16
Land in Farms	165,946 acres	177,090 acres	- 6
Average Size of Farm	280 acres	251 acres	+ 12
Market Value of Products Sold	\$66,039,000	\$28,159,000	+ 135
Crop Sales \$62,369,000 (94 percent)			
Livestock Sales \$3,670,000 (6 percent)			
Average Per Farm	\$111,552	\$39,885	+ 180
Government Payments	\$2,288,000	\$5,548,000	- 59
Average Per Farm Receiving Payments	\$6,251	\$12,034	- 48





Madison County – Tennessee

Ranked items among the 95 state counties and 3,079 U.S. counties, 2012

Item	Quantity	State Rank	Universe ¹	U.S. Rank	Universe ¹
MARKET VALUE OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS SOLD (\$1,000)					
Total value of agricultural products sold	66,039	18	95	1,546	3,077
Value of crops including nursery and greenhouse	62,369	11	95	999	3,072
Value of livestock, poultry, and their products	3,670	74	95	2,587	3,076
VALUE OF SALES BY COMMODITY GROUP (\$1,000)					
Grains, oilseeds, dry beans, and dry peas	45,246	11	95	893	2,926
Tobacco	-	-	56	-	436
Cotton and cottonseed	16,382	7	25	112	635
Vegetables, melons, potatoes, and sweet potatoes	(D)	(D)	94	(D)	2,802
Fruits, tree nuts, and berries	(D)	7	91	(D)	2,724
Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture, and sod	(D)	(D)	93	(D)	2,678
Cut Christmas trees and short rotation woody crops	(D)	22	44	(D)	1,530
Other crops and hay	299	62	95	2,643	3,049
Poultry and eggs	(D)	(D)	94	(D)	3,013
Cattle and calves	3,410	66	95	2,051	3,056
Milk from cows	(D)	65	71	(D)	2,038
Hogs and pigs	48	27	88	1,463	2,827
Sheep, goats, wool, mohair, and milk	43	59	94	2,016	2,988
Horses, ponies, mules, burros, and donkeys	70	71	94	2,088	3,011
Aquaculture	-	-	38	-	1,366
Other animals and other animal products	6	73	95	2,391	2,924
TOP CROP ITEMS (acres)					
Corn for grain	36,775	9	95	722	2,638
Soybeans for beans	28,363	13	87	804	2,162
Cotton, all	26,092	6	25	100	635
Upland cotton	26,092	6	25	97	635
Wheat for grain, all	10,525	9	81	658	2,537
TOP LIVESTOCK INVENTORY ITEMS (number)					
Cattle and calves	5,768	85	95	2,322	3,063
Goats, all	761	41	94	772	2,996
Layers	743	78	94	2,097	3,040
Horses and ponies	720	55	95	1,631	3,072
Hogs and pigs	140	49	93	1,839	2,889

Other County Highlights, 2012

Economic Characteristics	Quantity	Operator Characteristics	Quantity
Farms by value of sales:		Principal operators by primary occupation:	
Less than \$1,000	275	Farming	277
\$1,000 to \$2,499	52	Other	315
\$2,500 to \$4,999	37	Principal operators by sex:	
\$5,000 to \$9,999	45	Male	502
\$10,000 to \$19,999	53	Female	90
\$20,000 to \$24,999	21	Average age of principal operator (years)	61.8
\$25,000 to \$39,999	21	All operators by race ² :	
\$40,000 to \$49,999	7	American Indian or Alaska Native	1
\$50,000 to \$99,999	16	Asian	4
\$100,000 to \$249,999	21	Black or African American	91
\$250,000 to \$499,999	13	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	-
\$500,000 or more	31	White	700
Total farm production expenses (\$1,000)	51,064	More than one race	11
Average per farm (\$)	86,256	All operators of Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino Origin ²	4
Net cash farm income of operation (\$1,000)	20,726		
Average per farm (\$)	35,009		

See "Census of Agriculture, Volume 1, Geographic Area Series" for complete footnotes, explanations, definitions, and methodology.

- Represents zero. (D) Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual operations.

¹ Universe is number of counties in state or U.S. with item. ² Data were collected for a maximum of three operators per farm.

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