

Farmer Success Stories



The Gwinn Family,
1137 Acre Farm in Suwannee
County, Florida

- watermelons, peanuts, iron clay peas, bahiagrass seed, hay, beef cattle
- By utilizing cover crops and herbaceous wind barriers, they conserve many tons of soil by protecting the soil from wind erosion.
- They retrofit their existing center pivot irrigation systems (in an Irrigation Retrofit Initiative through EQIP) to increase their efficiency and distribution uniformity in an effort to conserve water.
- They installed GPS systems in their tractors that are used for precision planting, nutrient application, and pesticide application.

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- precision farming, variable application methods and center-pivot irrigation system have led to a 30% reduction in fertilizer use and a 60% reduction in water use.
- Potatoes are planted from Oct.-Jan., green beans are rotated in to 1,000 acres. This adds organic matter back into the soil and maintains nitrogen levels.
- Soil samples and mapping allow them to add compost, fertilizers and natural manures only where needed to get ideal nutrient levels .

Jones Potato Farm,
4000 Acre Farm in Manatee
County, Florida

<https://www.nature.org/en-us/what-we-do/our-priorities/provide-food-and-water-sustainably/florida-potato-farmer-reaps-the-benefits-of-soil-health/>

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The Grooms Family,
Fancy Farms in Plant City,
Florida
(125 acres of berries)

- .-Grooms focuses on precise nutrient applications because "it makes sense from an economic, environmental, and production standpoint."
- "We are putting the nutrients where they need to be based off grid sampling rather than slinging a bunch of fertilizer across fields that could get blown away or rained down to the creek."
- Plant cover crops in the summer between crops: sun hemp, sunflower, sorghum, buckwheat, mustard, aeschynomene, crimson clover, and cow peas.
- He also applies microbes, humic acids, and biochar to the soil.
- Soil moisture monitors help make more informed decisions on irrigation. He worked with Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services on a cost-share for the sensors.
- The farm also has tailwater recovery ponds on about 1/3 of its fields to recycle irrigation and rainwater.