

Greensboro Echo

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COOPER BENEFITS by Frank Taylor



Shelton Cooper lives in Greensboro, MS and he is committed to help save rural America by protecting and caring for the natural resources. Cooper is an active member of the Winston County Self Help Cooperative and a part-time farmer with cattle and other farming interest. Shelton received 5 bred heifers in August of

2002 from the cooperative HPI project, which he describes as a blessing to help further his dreams' of

becoming a full-time farmer after retirement. Additionally, he has been on a learning curve about USDA's programs to assistance farmers with cross fencing, fertilization, buffers, and other services. Cooper stated this has been a wonderful marriage with the Winston County Self Help Cooperative, which has allowed an opportunity to meet other individuals with common interest in farming and protecting the natural resources. Additionally, the quality of my cattle has improved through genetics; therefore, it will increase the price on sale day. Cooper has completed "pass on" of animals back to the organization within 3 years. Cooper stated the information learned is immeasurable to the success of his family's farm and he encourages everyone to join with the Winston County Self Help Cooperative to "help save rural America". The cooperative meets on the first Monday of each month 3:55pm at the extension office on Vance Street in Louisville, MS. For further information contact Gloria Moore 662-705-0112 or Frank Taylor 601-346-9850.

HOBSON'S MISSION



Winston County Self Help Cooperative is inspiring new beginning farmers with zeal. The cooperative memberships consist of 35 members with 30 percent females. According to USDA statistic, women are the fastest growing segment in farms ownership and women usually lives longer by 7 years. Elaine Miller Hobson, WCSHC member has embarked on a new journey into agriculture. She is planning to start raising goats by mid summer of 06. Hobson joined the cooperative with a vision of rising the social conscious from within her beloved's community of Greensboro; nevertheless, this process is slowly evolving because change requires patience and above all, prayer. Hobson recently participated in the cooperative forest landowner's conference and she vastly increased knowledge by touring Elgnene Nunn's goat

farms. Amadou Diop, the Federation goat specialist held hands-on activities doing the tour, such as, vaccinating, tagging, and recording vital statistics to create a successful goat farm. Hobson moved into action after the presentation and extended an invitation, which was accepted by Amadou to tour the family farm. Amadou, stated Hobson farm is 95 percent ready for goats. He suggested Hobson should exploit conservation measures with the local office of natural resource conservation service and perhaps enroll in the equip program for cross fencing and fertilization. Yes, I am committed to "help save rural America" by supporting Winston County Self Help Cooperative efforts to create economic opportunities and protecting the natural resources.

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Winston County Self Cooperative holds Forest Landowner Workshop in Louisville by Jim Hamilton



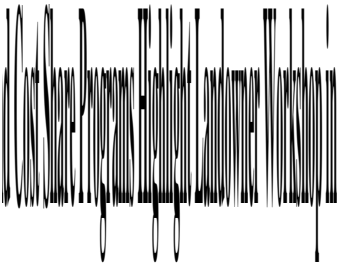
The Winston Self-Help Coop along with Alabama A&M University and the US Forest Service recently hosted a minority landowner workshop in Louisville on November 4-5. Twenty-eight landowners and youth attended the event that was held at the Mt. Moriah Baptist Church in Louisville. Frank Taylor of the Winston Self-Help Coop organized the workshop that included tours of several area properties. Invited speakers at the event included representatives from the Mississippi Forestry Commission, the Federation of Southern Cooperatives, Alabama A&M University, NRCS (Natural Resource Conservation Service), and the National Agroforestry Center.



The workshop is one of 20 taking place throughout the Southeast as part of a grant from the US Forest Service. Dr. Rory Fraser, a faculty member of Alabama A&M's forestry program said, "The purpose of these workshops is to reach landowners who traditionally haven't been exposed to many of the land management options that are out there." Greg Ruark, the Director of the National Agroforestry Center spoke about silvopasture, which is a method of managing pine trees for saw timber concurrently with cattle, which provides short and long term economic and environmental benefits. Ramsey Russell, a forester with the NRCS, spoke about cost-share programs available to landowners, while members of the Mississippi forestry commission addressed forest management and the recent drop in timber prices due to the amount of timber salvaging due to the hurricanes.



Goat production was a hot topic of the workshop. Workshop organizer, Dr. Jim Hamilton from Alabama A&M University, said, "many properties have unmanaged forests or marginally productive pasture acreage that would be ideal for goat production." At one of the property visits, Amadou Diop, from the Federation of Southern Cooperatives in Epes, Alabama demonstrated how to test for worms, a common problem for goats, and gave recommendations on effective treatments as well as the associated costs and infrastructure for rearing and managing goats—including tagging and feeding. Area youth participated in the tagging process which provided "hands-on" experience (and a good time!) with goats.



Workshop participants also mapped their properties (using colored markers and posterboard) in an exercise that allowed them to highlight priority areas of their properties and see where further management emphasis could be placed. By mapping the same property, some landowners could see how different family members see it and what features matter the most to them.



Overall, the participants enjoyed locally cooked meals and fellowship, made some contacts, and hopefully brought back some good ideas and options to implement on their own properties.

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