

## Anderson Landowner Discovers Benefits of Reforestation through FIP

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Ross Jameson of Anderson, South Carolina, is a firm believer in the benefits of the Forestry Incentives Program (FIP). A voluntary NRCS program, FIP is designed to help private landowners restore the health and vitality of South Carolina's forest resources. Currently, Jameson has a total of 52 acres of FIP cost-share acreage on his farm and is presently applying for additional FIP assistance.

Jameson consulted with Mike Banks, NRCS district conservationist, and Lisa Good, NRCS soil conservationist, in Anderson County. NRCS assisted him with the application process and provided him with cost-share funds. SC Forestry Commission Forester Kirk Weyman handled the technical aspects from planning to actual tree planting. Banks praised Jameson for his work as a dedicated conservationist. "He has done an outstanding job in diversifying his farming techniques while still keeping conservation close at heart."

Jameson is familiar with the world of conservation and farming. He recalled, "I remember hearing about the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) from my father and also while working at Clemson University." Jameson retired from Clemson, where he was involved with the seed certification program. He grew up on the same farm he is on now and also has contracts in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) as well as FIP. He presently serves as Watershed Chairman for the Anderson-Pickens Watershed.

A dedicated conservationist on his own farm as well as in the community, Jameson promotes NRCS and cost-share programs because he believes in them. "I have received cost-share assistance from NRCS in the past to grow timber, to enhance wildlife habitat, and to turn

idle land into something productive. With FIP, I have seen dramatic changes in the wildlife population on my land, and the aesthetic value of the land has improved too," confirmed Jameson, who is pleased with the increase in wild turkey and rabbits. "He has incorporated wildlife food plots along the edge of his newly planted pines which enhances the wildlife habitat," said Good.



Ross Jameson, Anderson landowner (l), discusses his FIP contract with Lisa Good, NRCS soil conservationist.

Jameson's future plans include planting pines into fields that are subject to erosion. "I want to plant pines in my fields that are sloping, which erode with heavy rains and are also very difficult to clip," said Jameson. He also hopes to turn some idle pastureland into forestland after selling his cattle.

FIP helps landowners apply a variety of different forestry practices including timber stand improvement, forest resource management and protection, and reforestation. FIP is designed to increase the production of sawtimber and pulpwood while also utilizing effective natural resource management on forestland.

South Carolina landowners have shown an overwhelming interest in receiving FIP cost-share and technical assistance. In 1999, over 400 landowners participated in the program, providing tree planting and enhancing existing and future forestland on over 9,500 acres. It is evident from the \$2 million waiting list of FIP applicants that this program is needed in the state. This is due in part to the large area that forestland occupies in the state. South Carolina's forests cover over 11 million acres, 70 percent of the state's land area. There were 250 FIP applications funded in 2000 and



Ross Jameson's FIP pine plantation in Anderson, SC has greatly improved the wildlife habitat on his farm.

many landowners, including Jameson, are waiting to receive word that their applications will be funded. "Private landowners like Jameson hold the key to the future health of South Carolina's forests and FIP can help ensure that forestland is protected and preserved," confirmed Banks.