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Eufaula Couple Recognized as Alabama Natural Resources Conservation Service 2017 Small Farmers of the Year

AUBURN, Ala., December 6, 2016 – Russell and Jewel Bean of Eufaula, Alabama have been named the Alabama Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) 2017 Small Farmers of the Year. An award plaque and an engraved special-edition bowl were presented to the Beans by Alabama NRCS State Conservationist Ben Malone at the 74th Annual Professional Agriculture Workers Conference at Tuskegee University in Tuskegee, Alabama on December 5, 2016.



Pictured left to right: Jewel and Russell Bean raise livestock and grow a variety of produce on their small farm in Eufaula, Alabama.

Since 2008, the Beans have made their family operation, S&B Farm, a mainstay in their east Alabama community. An 88 acre property, the Beans manage livestock on 20 acres and plasticulture and hoop houses on additional land. In all, the diverse farm includes cropland, pastureland and forestland.

In addition to their main enterprise of raising goats and growing vegetables like collards, turnips, kale and broccoli, the Beans raise pigs,

chickens, cows, ducks and rabbits. They also grow peppers, melons, strawberries and pineapples. The Beans have been able to make it work by learning all they could about sustainability and conservation. Over the years they've participated in workshops, leadership institutes and built relationships with their local RC&D Council, land grant universities such as Tuskegee University, Alabama A&M and Auburn University.

Through their relationship with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, they've been able to combine their knowledge and conservation assistance to make several improvements on their farm. The Beans have used the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to address water quality, water quantity, soil erosion and soil health. A wooden high tunnel helps the Beans address plant vigor.

Not only have the Beans helped the land on their farm, they have made it their mission to help other small and beginning farmers. They regularly host training seminars and workshops on their farm and have been instrumental advocates for conservation programs.

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The Beans' commitment to conservation and determination to give back is why they have been selected and recognized as the Alabama 2017 Small Farmers of the Year in Alabama. To learn more about the Beans, view their story on NRCS Alabama's YouTube channel, here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3sP6X8duaGY>.

For more information about NRCS and its programs, visit your [local USDA Service Center](#) to determine eligibility. Individuals are not eligible for USDA programs until they have completed the Farm Bill eligibility requirements. Contact your local Natural Resources Conservation Service office or Farm Service Agency Office to begin the process.

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