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Madison County’s J.B. Turner Named the Alabama Natural Resources Conservation Service 2016 Small Farmer of the Year

AUBURN, Ala., August 26, 2015– Mr. J.B. Turner of Harvest, Alabama has been named the Alabama Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) 2016 Small Farmer of the Year. An award plaque and an engraved clock were presented to Mr. Turner by Acting NRCS State Conservationist Kurt Simon at the Federation of Southern Cooperative’s 48th Annual Meeting at Epes, Alabama.



Pictured left to right: NRCS Associate Chief for Conservation Leonard Jordan, Regional Conservationist James Tillman, Small Farmer of the Year J.B. Turner and Alabama NRCS Acting State Conservationist Kurt Simon

Mr. Turner farms 152 acres in Harvest, Alabama where he grows vegetables, raises registered Angus and Hereford/Simmental cattle and produces high quality fescue, millet and sudex hay.

He has been working with NRCS and Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) programs since the 1980s.

Turner believes that the land was entrusted to him and he wants to be a good steward of

it and leave it in better condition than when he bought it. Turner has completed an impressive seven Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) contracts in less than ten years.

In 2010, he read about high tunnel houses in a magazine and visited his local USDA service center to learn more. NRCS District Conservationist Joyce Lane told him that NRCS was promoting that practice through EQIP. After applying for the practice, Turner says he is very pleased with his hoop house. Benefits include better utilization of fertilizer, an extended growing season and an improved final product. In fact, his customers eagerly await those ripe tomatoes each season.

A committed conservationist, Turner also adopted the ideals of the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) in 2005. CSP was a pilot program for Madison County at that time. He followed that contract with a 2011 application, and is currently renewing that contract as well. Turner has installed many conservation practices through CSP including pasture planting, improved water facilities, cross fencing, pipelines, nutrient management, and heavy use areas.

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Turner's hard work and dedication is seen throughout his community. He is an active member of Madison County Farmers Federation, Madison County Cattleman's Association Board (past-president, 2010), Alabama AG and Industries Board, North Alabama Bull Evaluation Committee, Alabama Beef Cattle Improvement Association, and Minority Advisor for the Farm Service Agency County Committee.

He has participated in local educational programs such as the SWCD Environmental Teacher Workshop and local agricultural tours. He also hosts field days at his farm. Essentially, Mr. Turner is an excellent steward of the land and role model for small scale farmers because of his unwavering commitment to conservation.

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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