



"Delta Moon" by Matthew Hasty
In Celebration of Delta F.A.R.M.'s 1,000,000th Acre

DELTA F.A.R.M.

10th Anniversary

In the 1990's, a group of farm leaders in the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta began discussing the need for an organization that could empower farmers to become more proactive in addressing natural resource issues and environmental concerns. After consulting with more than 100 professionals who represented both agricultural and environmental interests from 21 private, state and federal agencies, Delta F.A.R.M. was established on October 10, 1998.

Landowners and farm operators began enrolling their farms into the program. Each one agreed to participate in a private environmental assessment each year and use the assessment to improve their personal environmental stewardship.

This would ultimately provide benefits for the entire region and provide information on voluntary conservation in the region. The information would ultimately help the organization highlight the positive things farmers are doing for the environment and surgically target areas that need improvement. Targeting areas that need improvement further promoted Delta F.A.R.M.'s proactive philosophy and the idea that "the merits of one's solution are almost always in direct proximity to their distance from the problem."

Delta F.A.R.M. has earned the trust of farmers in the Mississippi Delta and subsequently earned a key to the farm gate. Delta F.A.R.M. has also earned the respect and confidence of natural resource and regulatory agencies by making real and accountable environmental improvements in the region. This places Delta F.A.R.M. in the enviable position of being an ally of both the farmer and the environmental community.

Delta F.A.R.M. now celebrates the enrollment of one-million acres of land into the program and 10-years of service to the landowners, farmers, allied Ag industry and the natural resources of Northwest Mississippi. Delta F.A.R.M. is proud to share this occasion with you and report that we have, indeed, surpassed our original goals. But these goals and achievements could not have been possible without the financial support of Delta F.A.R.M.'s sponsors and grantors and the technical assistance and cooperation of many individuals, groups, and public agencies. And more than anyone, Delta F.A.R.M. must thank the farmers and landowners of this region for their participation and willingness to do the right thing for our environment and our industry.

DELTA F.A.R.M. Executive Committee

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2008 Chairman - Mike Sturdivant, Jr., Glendora

2008 Directors - Dan Branton, Leland - Nolen Canon, Tunica - Bobby Carson, Marks Jimmie Dick Carter, Rolling Fork - Rob Coker, Yazoo City

Mattson Flowers, Clarksdale - W. A. Percy, II, Greenville - Reese Pillow, Greenwood Travis Satterfield, Benoit

DELTA F.A.R.M. Partners

Careful by Nature - Delta Council - Delta Wildlife - MS Assoc. of Conservation Districts
MS Dept. of Ag and Commerce - MS Dept. of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks
MS Dept. of Environmental Quality - MS Farm Bureau - MS Health Dept. - MS State Univ.
National Farm-A-Syst - U.S. Dept. of Agriculture ARS, FSA, NRCS
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency - YMD Joint Water Management District

DELTA F.A.R.M. Sponsors



Best Management Practices



Grass Filter Strips reduce non-point source runoff from agricultural fields and can be effectively placed on the lower end on nearly every production Ag field. The grass buffer traps pollutants like sediment, nutrients and pesticides and prevents them from reaching wetlands, lakes, and rivers. Plant materials used for filter strips vary, but some can be extremely beneficial to wildlife, including quail, grassland songbirds and butterflies. Buffers as narrow as 30' can provide significant environmental benefits.



Water Control Structures are simply pipes or culverts fitted with one of many types of risers that function to better control water leaving a field. At a minimum, water drainage is slowed, allowing for sediments, phosphorus, pesticides and organic matter to fall out in the field before being conveyed into adjacent waters. Water control structure may also be used to stop drainage and impound water during parts of the year. This practice can be used to conserve water, control weeds without pesticides, and provide waterfowl habitat.



Conservation Tillage is the practice of reducing soil disturbance in a field. No-till is the most extreme variation of this practice. All variations protect crop residue in the field. Residue serves as much to conserve water and reduce weed pressure, pressure that would otherwise be treated with pesticides. The crop residues also act as a soil binding agent, reducing erosion potential. Soil fertility improves as a result of added organic matter and crop residues, reducing the need to use synthetic fertilizer to improve production.



Riparian Forest Buffers are strips of trees and/or shrubs that are established on the perimeter of a field. When forest buffers are established on the lower end of a field, it reduces agricultural related non-point source runoff and provide shading for aquatic organisms. Regardless of position in the field, forest buffers provide quality wildlife habitat for many species. They also can be used as wildlife corridors to link larger wooded habitats to benefit species.

Environmental Stewardship



The A.C.E. Pilot Program or Applicators Conserving the Environment is a program administered by Delta F.A.R.M. in conjunction with the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce. The Program incentivizes aerial applicators to become better environmental stewards and encourages pilots to take additional voluntary steps to further reduce the potential for pesticide drift. Pilots submit to an annual evaluation. Top pilots receive an award that includes a sign, media recognition and a cash prize for their voluntary efforts to conserve our environment. The program is sponsored by Monsanto, Syngenta, CropLife America and Delta F.A.R.M.



The Delta F.A.R.M. Environmental Stewardship Report provides an annual summary of the voluntary conservation efforts of the organization's membership. This is developed through an annual environmental evaluation conducted by all Delta F.A.R.M. members. The evaluation quantifies the use of 51 Best Management Practices listed in the Program Manual. This enables the organization to track and publicize the positive things farmers are doing for the environment and identifies areas where improvements can be made on the farm.



The Delta F.A.R.M. Program Manual provides a one-stop-source for Best Management Practices (BMP) information and regulatory laws that are relevant to producers in the region. Over fifty BMPs are included, each identifying technical resources and potential cost-sharing opportunities. Information on regulatory laws like FIFRA, FACT ACT, Mississippi Pesticide Application Act and the Federal Endangered Species Act are listed. Even an Emergency Response Plan to address oil and chemical spills is included. The compilation of this material serves as the foundation of Delta F.A.R.M. as developed by 21 private, state and federal natural resource and regulatory agencies. Each member of Delta F.A.R.M. receives a copy when they join and a new copy when the document is periodically updated.



The Delta Steward is a quarterly newsletter published by Delta F.A.R.M. to keep its membership informed on conservation, environmental, natural resource and regulatory issues. It is another timely method of providing up-to-date information to the producers and allied ag interests in the region. The publication serves as a supplement to the Program Manual and works in conjunction with current news listed on the organization's website.

"Delta Moon" Commissioned by Syngenta



Syngenta is a world-leading agribusiness committed to sustainable agriculture through innovative research and technology. The company works to develop and promote programs, like Delta F.A.R.M., that focus on several key areas: soil conservation, soil health, water protection and biodiversity enhancement. Syngenta has been a proud partner of Delta F.A.R.M. since its inception, because we understand the importance of natural resource management for the future of farming.

"Delta Moon" by Matthew Hasty was commissioned by Syngenta to celebrate the enrollment of 1,000,000 acres into the Delta F.A.R.M. Program in only 10-years of service. The work is an agricultural landscape from the Mississippi Delta region and illustrates the balance between nature and agricultural production. The original 30" x 40" oil on canvas hangs at the Syngenta headquarters in Greensboro, NC. There are only 10 canvas reproductions and 1000 of these posters in circulation. No more will be printed. To see more Matthew Hasty works, visit his website at www.matthewhasty.com. The Brick Gallery in Clarksdale, MS worked with the artist and managed the project. Visit The Brick Gallery at www.thebrickgallery.com.

Regional Water Quality



The Bee Lake Watershed Restoration Project has become the model for water quality improvement projects in southern agricultural watershed lakes. TMDLs for sediment, nutrients, organic enrichment and legacy pesticides were developed for the lake. The project address each of these environmental impairments with the most significant impacts being measured by a 67% reduction in sediment and nutrient loading. Landowners and farm operators embraced the project and may now lay full claim upon the results of the project due to their role in implementing more than 120 new BMPs in the watershed.



Steele Bayou Watershed Restoration Project is the final phase of a larger project that will hopefully produce the region's first benchmark stream for water quality in the Yazoo-Mississippi Alluvial Valley. Nearly every inlet into the stream has been surveyed and addressed through the installation of engineered Best Management Practices. The end result is a stream where all water is treated by some type of BMP before it enters the system. Preliminary monitoring data suggest that the stream has responded well to the BMPs and it is hopeful that the overall project can serve as a model for stream water quality improvements in agricultural landscapes.



Nutrient Management has been a major issue in the Mid-West for years. However, producers in Lower Mississippi Valley are just now beginning to realize that they too must begin looking for ways to reduce nutrient loading. Delta F.A.R.M. has begun to work with landowners and farmers to identify ways to reduce the amount of nitrogen and phosphorus leaving our region. New BMPs, technologies, and information are being developed and disseminated as rapidly as possible. New projects and cost-sharing programs are also being developed.



Noxious Aquatic Weeds represent the new and greatest threat to water quality in the region. Delta F.A.R.M. has been involved in developing a noxious aquatic task force to address the problem. Plants such as Alligator Weed, Water Hyacinth, Burr Marigold, and Pennywort are choking drainage systems, reducing DO levels, and inhibiting recreation. The reduction in DO levels creates new challenges in obtaining TMDL's for DO in the region. Furthermore, it significantly reduces fisheries production and sustainability.