



# Virginia Forage and Grassland Council, Inc. Farm Demonstration Background Sheet

## Using Conservation Practices to Implement Improved Grazing Management While Conserving Soil and Water Resources

### Farm Demonstration Cooperator

Mr. and Mrs. Tim Tobin  
Owner-operator

### Farm Facts:

On Stonewall Jackson Road in Woodford Va. About nine miles north of Bowling Green and 10 miles south of Fredericksburg on Route 2.

Typical rolling piedmont landscape consisting mostly of highly weathered, well-drained, upland soils with good forage production potential.

Fenced, non-forested pastureland totals approximately 105 acres

### Enterprise:

Conception to consumer, commercial cow/calf production system, primarily Angus cross cattle. Pastured poultry and free range chicken eggs.

Stocked with 13 Cow-calf pairs, one registered Angus bull, 6 bred heifers and several steers finishing for spring sale. All managed with a spring-summer calving herd.

### Grant Recipient:

This farm demonstration project is partially funded through a USDA-NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant

### Key Project Partners:

USDA-NRCS  
Hanover—Caroline Soil and Water Conservation District  
Virginia Cooperative Extension  
Virginia Tech

### Tim Tobin

- Mr. Tobin owns and operates a beef cattle farm in Woodford, VA.
- He purchased this farm in 2009 after retiring from a career in hospital administration.
- The front half of the farm had been leased to a local cash grain producer and the back side occasionally had hay cut from it.
- The Tobins reintroduced cattle a couple of years ago and desire to have a sustainable conception to consumer meat business.

### Motivating Factors

- Tim began to attend local educational programs conducted by Extension and the Soil and Water Conservation District.
- He networked with a small group of experienced graziers and cattlemen then began to consider how he could improve his forage base and herd genetics.
- He attended regional pasture walks, forage conferences and forage research tours to learn more about forages and grazing.

### Implementing Conservation to Achieve Farm Production Goals

- After developing basic goals for improvement with his peers, Tim sought technical and financial assistance to help accomplish his goals.
- Tim worked with his local Soil and Water Conservation District to exclude livestock from surface waters, to develop a livestock water system with cross fencing to support basic rotational grazing and the use of cover/forage crops.



### Benefits

- Over 9,000 linear feet of stream exclusion fencing was installed to protect water quality from livestock impacts on this farm.
- The water system and cross fencing allow for improved forage utilization by the grazing livestock, making up for the excluded pasture acreage.
- The managed grazing system allows for good forage recovery after grazing and makes it easy to control the movement of livestock.
- The ability to stockpile fescue in the fall and strip-graze this forage into the winter extended the grazing season.

### Plans for the Future

- The next major priority is to increase grazing management and continue using annual forages to provide fresh forage for grazing during summer, fall and early spring to build soil health and improve productivity.