**News Release**

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AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AGENCY

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Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission

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**State targets voluntary improvements to agricultural**

**water quality for farmers in Altamaha River Basin**

***Goal is to reduce water pollutants in Appling, Glynn, Jeff Davis, Long,***

***McIntosh, Montgomery, Tattnall, Toombs, and Wayne counties***

**ATHENS, Ga. –** The Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission is providing technical and financial help to livestock and poultry operations in the Altamaha River Basin to complete and update their Nutrient Management Plans.

GSWCC will conduct a free on-farm assessment, offer free soil testing, develop an updated Nutrient Management Plan, and provide an incentive payment for participation in the program. GSWCC will assist in identifying potential funding sources to complete improvements based on the farm assessment. There is no cost to farmers for this service.

Nutrient Management Plans are recommended for all animal feeding operations, including poultry farms. An assessment and updated NMP saves costs while improving soil health and water quality by avoiding the over application of fertilizers to fields, preventing runoff of nutrients into creeks and streams, and improving the disposal of dead animals.

The Altamaha River Basin is located within the boundaries of the Altamaha Soil and Water Conservation District (Appling and Jeff Davis counties), Coastal Soil and Water Conservation District (Long and McIntosh counties), Ogeechee River Soil and Water Conservation District (Tattnall County), Ohoopee River Soil and Water Conservation District (Montgomery and Toombs counties), and Satilla River Soil and Water Conservation District (Glynn and Wayne counties).

Farmers wishing to take advantage of this free service to update their plans should contact GSWCC Region III office in Statesboro to set up a time to complete an on-farm assessment by calling 912-681-5241 or emailing region3@gaswcc.org.

GSWCC has produced a free manual, *Best Management Practices for Georgia Agriculture*, listing agricultural water quality improvements, which is available online at <http://gaswcc.georgia.gov/best-management-practices-georgia-agriculture>. The Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission is a non-regulatory state agency that supports Georgia’s 40 Soil and Water Conservation Districts in assisting landowners in protecting and developing their soil and water resources. Additional information is available at on the GSWCC website at <http://gaswcc.georgia.gov> or by calling 706-552-4470. # # #