

CARES Recipient Profile



Farm: Johnny and Margie Stephenson Farm

Location: Old Town, Dixie County

Date of Origination: 1930's

Commodities: Field corn and watermelons

Mr. Johnny Stephenson and his family own and operate Johnny and Margie Stephenson Farm in Old Town, Florida. The farm was established by Mr. Stephenson's father, Welmer Stephenson, in the mid 1930's. Mr. Stephenson has worked on the farm since he was a young boy and they proudly produce field corn and watermelons.

Mr. Stephenson has been implementing Best Management Practices (BMPs) on the farm since the late 1990's. BMPs are a set of guidelines that advise producers on how to manage the water, nutrient, and pesticides they are using to reduce agriculture's impact on the state's natural resources. Johnny and Margie Stephenson Farm use a nutrient and irrigation management program to protect water quality and minimize the loss of nutrients to the environment. Mr. Stephenson practices a conservation crop rotation to reduce erosion, improve the soil's organic matter and minimize crop disease build-up. He also uses cover crops during off seasons to protect the land from erosion until the main crop is planted. Cover crops improve the soil structure and composition by adding organic matter and enhancing soil fertility.

Mr. Stephenson is actively involved in his local community, serving as a county commissioner for the Dixie County Board of County Commissioner for 32 years and a member of the Florida Farm Bureau. He also has a "you pick" garden that is open to the local community.

When asked why he is a farmer who CARES, Stephenson responded, "to allow future generations to enjoy the land."