

CARES Recipient Profile



THIS FARM
CARES

Farm: Lonesome Ranch

Location: Lake Wales, Polk County

Date of Origination: 2004

Commodities: Beef cattle and citrus



Jeff and Ginger Crawford own and operate Lonesome Ranch in Lake Wales, Florida. The family began cattle ranching land in 1986 in Indian River County under the name of Mary A Cattle. In 2004, their ranch operations were renamed - Lonesome Ranch. They currently proudly produce beef cattle and citrus in Polk County.

Lonesome Ranch has been implementing Best Management Practices (BMPs) on the Polk County ranch since their purchase in 2011. 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. The Crawford's use a disciplined rotational grazing system for the cattle to improve pasture longevity, to allow for more timely utilization of forage and to increase the stocking rates. Appropriate cross fencing has been constructed to facilitate rotation objectives. Soil samples are regularly taken to ensure the proper amount of fertilizer and lime is applied to each pasture. Energy free artesian wells are used on the ranch to supply fresh water via underground pipeline and stock tanks to the cattle. Riser culverts have been installed to hold back surface water during dry weather. Micro irrigation is also used in the groves to provide the trees with the precise amount of water needed for fruit growth and fertigation.

Mr. Crawford is actively involved in his local community. He is a member of the Polk County Cattlemen's Association, a Florida Farm Bureau member and a past board member for the Indian River County Cattlemen's Association.

When asked why he is a farmer who CARES, Mr. Crawford responded, "I think of land stewardship seriously and consider sustainable agriculture an important way of life. As a practical matter, we do not really own our land, rather, we are simply entrusted with it for a short period of time and it is our solemn duty to leave it in a better condition than we acquired it."