



## Farm Loan Program



Johnny Thornton & work crew

### FSA Loan Assists Producer in Achieving Dream

The Mayfield Fish Farm was originally constructed in 1971 and when in full production was named by ***Time Magazine*** as one of the largest and most scientific catfish farms in the world!

After years of several non-productive owners, Johnny Thornton wants to bring that title back to this Hancock county farm.

With the support and assistance of the University of Georgia at Tifton and USDA's Farm Service Agency, Thornton is well on his way of doing just that.

Through FSA's Direct Farm Ownership loan program Thornton received \$300,000 to purchase 358.5 acres. According to Farm Loan Manager Lori -Ann Branch, Thornton also received an additional \$300,000 in FSA Direct Farm Operating Loan funds for equipment and annual operating costs.

"Mr. Thornton has the support and enthusiasm of the Mayfield community! He is also working with Dr. Gary Burtle at The University of Georgia at Tifton, who have obtained a research grant which will allow the University to grow fish in numerous raceways on Mr. Thornton's farm. Having Dr. Burtle there gives Mr. Thornton hands on assistance from an expert for his operation."

With this funding Mr. Thornton will be able not only to return this farm to production, but has goals of starting a processing plant to employ a large number of people in the area.

FSA District Director John Rudowske commented, "Getting this farm back into production full swing will be a real asset to the economy of Hancock County; not only from a fish production standpoint but from the potential jobs and leadership toward fish farming that it will create."

Another example of FSA helping meet the needs of our producers!





United States Department of Agriculture  
Farm Service Agency



## Fast Facts

**Program:** FSA Farm Loan Program  
**Quick Details:** Farm Ownership (FO)  
Farm Operating Loans (OL)

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) makes and guarantees loans to eligible socially disadvantaged farmers (SDA) to buy and operate family-size farms and ranches. Each fiscal year, the Agency targets a portion of its direct and guaranteed farm ownership (FO) and operating loan (OL) funds to SDA farmers. Non-reserved funds can also be used by SDA persons.

An SDA group is a group whose members have been subject to racial, ethnic or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities. These groups consist of American Indians or Alaskan Natives, Asians, Blacks or African Americans, Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders, Hispanics and women.

FO funds may be used to purchase or enlarge a farm or ranch, purchase easements or rights of way needed in the farm's operation, erect or improve buildings, implement soil and water conservation measures, and pay closing costs.

OL funds may be used to purchase livestock, poultry, farm equipment, feed, seed, fuel, fertilizer, chemicals, insurance, and other operating expenses. The funds also may be used for borrower training costs, closing costs, and to reorganize and refinance debt.

For more information on this and other FSA programs, contact your local USDA Farm Service Agency or visit us online at [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov)

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