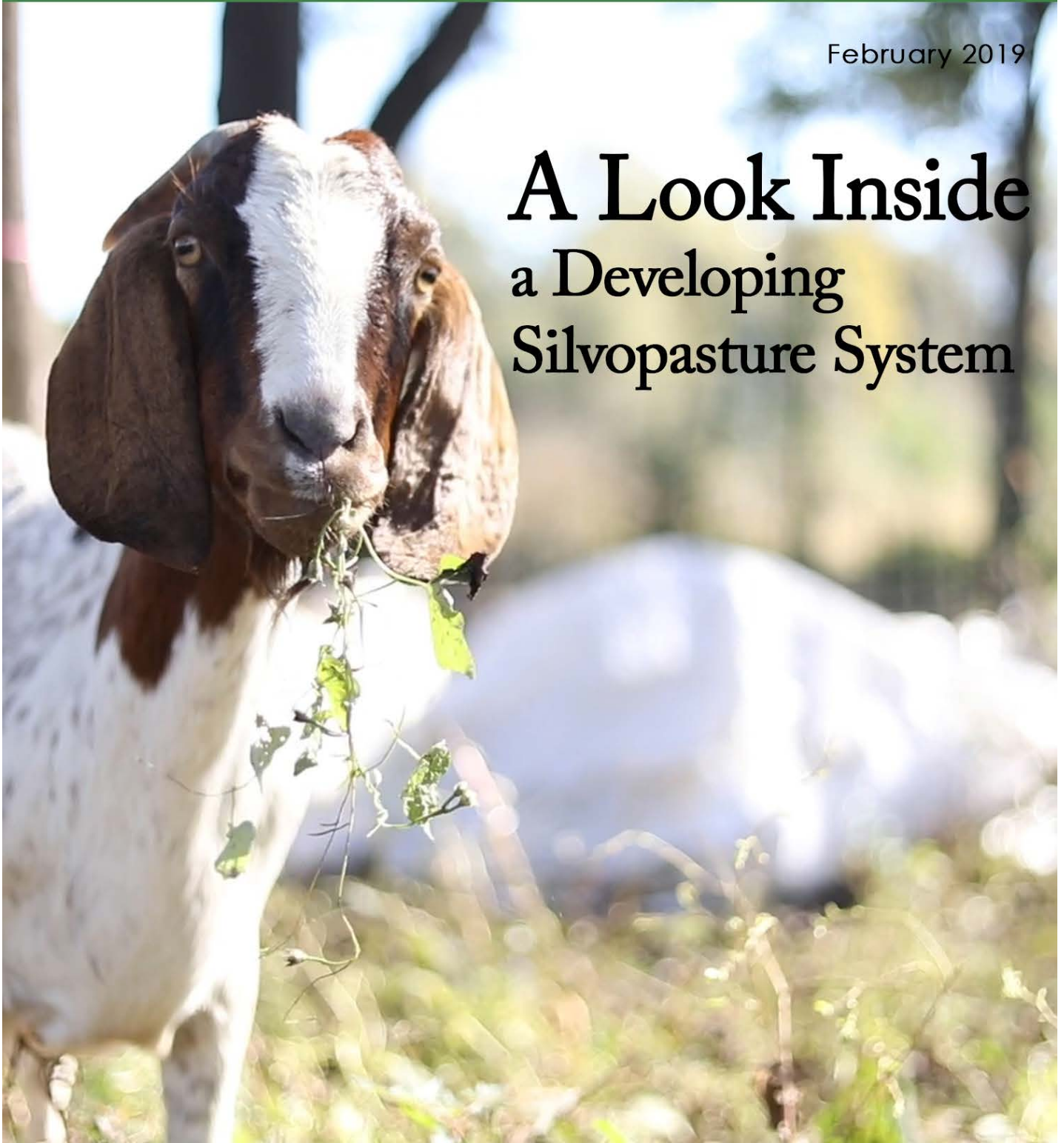




# NEWSLETTER

February 2019

## A Look Inside a Developing Silvopasture System



The Louisiana GLCI Newsletter is distributed quarterly by email.

If you would like to receive monthly issues of the LGLCI Newsletter, please send your email address to:

LGLCI

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Louisiana GLCI Members posing for a picture at the Nat GLCI Conference in Reno, NV. (See pg. 5)

## On the Cover



Grant & Kate Estrade, owners of Local Cooling Farms in Bogalusa, LA use multi-species grazing, silvopasture, planting cover crops, and bale grazing to improve soil health on their farm. They have transformed their once biologically dead piece of property to a now thriving 16 acres of land. See page 2 to read more.

# A Look Inside a Developing Silvopasture System

February 12, 2019  
Local Cooling Farms

**G**rant & Kate Estrade, owners and operators of Local Cooling Farms in Bogalusa, LA use multi-species grazing, silvopasture, planting cover crops, and bale grazing, on their farm to improve soil health. In the past four years, they have revived a once biologically "dead" piece of property to a now thriving 16 acres.

Dr. Michael Blazier with the LSU AgCenter defines silvopasture as, "Putting livestock and animals under tress to get the benefit of annual grazing for the animal herd, but also on a longer rotation, getting occasional timber revenue from the forest products."



Kate Estrade setting up electric fence for the chicken flock before rotating them to new pasture.



Grant explains when they bought the 16 acres, half of it was preexisting crop land while the rest of it was an over-grown wooded area. They decided the best way to improve the soil health was adopting a polyculture of livestock system. “The problem and the solution went hand and hand,” he said. He bought goats because they eat unwanted plant species in the woods. They bought pigs, because Estrade had prior experience with raising pigs, and they root up the soil. “We thought if they (the animals) followed one another in a managed pattern, the 16 acres would yield enough product to make a living here.” And they were right.

Before Grant became a farmer, he opened his business, Laughing Buddha Nursery in Metairie, LA, where he sells compost and garden supplies. While he and Kate still run Laughing Buddha Nursery, they now sell their farm products in the store as well. Kate also developed a delivery hub, where she drives to several locations in the New Orleans area, several times a week, and delivers groceries to customers.



Grant Estrade being interviewed for the mini-documentary.

NRCS State Rangeland Specialist, Stuart Gardner, has been out to their farm several times. He says, comparing the first time visiting their farm to the last, it is clear the soil health has improved. “I think the infiltration has really increased on their property. I think the water holding capacity is also increasing.” While it takes diligence and patience to see results, Kate knows the importance of it all. She says, “Soil is one of the few ways we have to sequester carbon and keep our planet able to grow food.” Grant adds, “Our animals are very much employees. Goats browse, cattle graze, pigs plow, ducks drill, and chickens scratch.” All of it building up the soil, one layer at a time.



Here you see Local Cooling Farms hogs rummaging around



Kate feeding their chickens compost.

You can watch their full story on the Louisiana GLCI YouTube channel. The LGLCI, the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the National GLC partnered to fund a 10-minute mini-documentary highlighting Local Cooling Farms. Seven more films will be produced in 2019 - 2020 dealing with soil health in Louisiana. Local Cooling Farms also has a Facebook and Instagram page where Kate posts some pretty interesting, funny, and beautiful pictures of their life on the farm.



## 2019 LGLCI Bus Tour April 23rd - 25th

Tentative stops include a tour of NOBLE Foundation, a cow calf operation in Sulphur Bluff, TX, several native grass operations in Gainesville, TX and Davis, OK and much more! Please visit our website to sign up and learn more.





## Knowledge is Knowing

By Don Ashford

All of us hold some concepts to be true long after it has been proven that this is not so. This will many times prevent us from making changes or trying new things simply because the different or new does not fit our concept of the right way. We have learned much since we started using Managed Intensive Grazing and are trying to become better managers by using holistic methods. The statement that we found to be the foundation of what we have come to believe without reservation is this one by Peter Drucker -THERE IS NOTHING SO USELESS AS DOING EFFICIENTLY THAT WHICH SHOULD NOT BE DONE AT ALL. This has led us to always ask this question when we starting to plan a new project or improve the methods that we use in our operation. WHY DO WE DO WHAT WE DO THE WAY WE DO IT?

As useful as this next thought is it may be the most difficult to put into practice, CHALLENGE YOUR ASSUMPTION. Ask yourself if we were not doing what we now do, would we want to start doing it? And if the answer is probably not then maybe it isn't the right thing to do any longer. This is called ORGANIZED ABANDONMENT. It is not very difficult. It is more habit than skill and one that we need to practice. Before you make a decision that will change the way you run your outfit be sure you have as much information as possible.

There is a little story that illustrates the need for information. It seems that Boudreaux and Thibodaux were going to start a building project and had driven to the building supply place. Boudreaux told Thibodaux to take the list of material and give it to the man behind the counter and that he would drive around the back to the loading dock. Thibodaux walked up to the counter and handed the list to the man and turned to go to the truck. Before he walked out the door the man behind the counter called to him, Hey, feller what length of 2x4's do you want? Thibodaux turned and asked what you say?

How long do you want those 2x4's? Thibodaux replied, I will have to ask Boudreaux. He walked to the truck parked at the loading dock and said to Boudreaux the man want to know how long you want them 2x4's? Boudreaux said, tell him we want them for a long time we going to build a house.

It is a fact that 8 out of 10 of the small business start-ups fail within 5 years. Why do you suppose this is true? It could be bad luck, or bad planning, or the poor economy, or lack of finances or the weather, or any number of reasons that we could name. Let's examine this for a few minutes to see how this applies to our cattle and grass operations.

For any business venture to be successful there are things that are required namely LAND, LABOR AND CAPITAL. There must be a place to operate, someone to do the work and the money to finance the operation. If all of these components are in place then we can assume that there is a better than average chance that the operation will be successful. If this assumption is correct then we can also assume that the reason for failure is the lack of another component that we have until now overlooked or not mentioned.

That component is KNOWLEDGE, if all of the physical needs are in place and there is a lack of knowledge the failure rate will be in that 80% range that was mentioned earlier. What this means in the simplest terms is that land, labor and capital without knowledge can and will in most cases lead to failure. On the other hand if these small business start-ups were franchised the success rate is about 80% for the first 5 years. Why the difference? Again, KNOWLEDGE, the folks in the parent company have written a business plan based on past experience and have developed a plan that will take most of the mistakes out of the operation of the business. If you have learned the operation of for example a McDonald's or a Subway or any of the thousands of other franchise businesses in the country you can be sure you will be able to do the job in any of their locations. The knowledge that has been learned over the years and has proven to be successful has been applied to the whole system.

But there is something that must be decided even before a business plan can be formulated and this is the PHILOSOPHY of the business or operation. What will be the philosophy of the operation? This will determine in no small part the things that must be done as well as the things that must not be done. If for example the philosophy is profit above all else then you can be sure that this operation will be run differently than one that is being run with a holistic philosophy that includes a profit motive as well. The philosophy of the operation will without question be a reflection of your personal philosophy. One of the things that we personally believe is that for any livestock operation to be sustainable it must be profitable. And there must come a time when the operation stands on its own without a subsidy from any other source. The place to start in your plan is to make a list of your philosophical concepts as they apply to the operation of your livestock outfit. In other words don't put in your plan things that you know you will never do. This need not be some deep discussion of the meaning of life or any such thing, just your thoughts of what you believe to be necessary to function effectively.





We are in the grass business first. This is the foundation on which we have built our operation and there are some truths that we have come to believe that we all must acknowledge before we really begin to understand how this grass business works in relation to our cattle operations. (1) Cattle add value to forage. (2) Grass without grazing animals is a cost to someone. (3) To be a low-cost producer you must build your system on things that are free, the sun, the rain, the growing seasons. (4) It is not cost effective to improve a pasture beyond what is needed for the class of animals grazing it. (5) To promote an increase in production is not the answer to increasing income. Our most lasting means as far as income is concerned is cost control. (6) The most for the least. An example would be the difference in feeding hay or grazing stockpile forage.

Much effort and costs went into the hay before the first bale was fed compared to turning cattle into a pasture of good fertilized grass. Our time and effort must be compared to that of the cattle and when this comparison is made it becomes evident where the load should fall. We must make it possible for the cattle to do most of the work. Those of us in the grass and livestock business can spend the large part of any year going to schools, workshops, seminars, and on field trips gathering all sorts of technical information. But none of it will make a dime's worth of difference until we go home and put it to use. We all must make our own mistakes and we must develop our own expertise, but the mistakes can be corrected with knowledge and the expertise cannot be developed without knowledge.

KNOWLEDGE IS KNOWING A TOMATO IS A FRUIT. WISDOM IS NOT PUTTING IT IN FRUIT SALAD.



### About the Author:

My name is Don Ashford and my wife is Betty and we live in Ethel, LA. It would be impossible for me to write a bio about myself without including Betty in it. We have been together since high school. I was in the senior class of 1955 and she was in the class of 1957. Do the math. We have raised cattle since 1959 except for a little time that I spent with Uncle Sam. We have grazed stockers, owned several cow-calf herds and custom grazed cattle for other folks. I worked as a pipefitter for more than 25 years. Until we went into the dairy business in 1977 we were as most people down here part-timers or week-end ranchers. Later after we had learned enough about MIG to talk about it so that it would be understood by others we put together a pasture-walk group to introduce it to our friends and neighbors. We belong to more farm groups than we probably should but we get great joy working with other people. What makes us most proud are our son and daughter, our 5 grandkids and our 7 great-grand kids. It has been a hell of a trip so far, but we are not done yet.

# HIGHLIGHTS

**Eight LGLCI Members Attended the National GLC Conference in Reno, NV –** Eight Louisiana GLCI's members took flight and landed in Reno, NV at the National GLC Convention. On December 2nd – 5th, all eight members had a part in the conference one way or another. Seven of the members gave presentations about their farms including Ted Miller, who serves on the National GLC Board, Grant and Kate Estrade, and Anna and Kaleb Stokes. Louisiana GLCI's Coordinator, Taylor Frey also attended and had the opportunity to MC one of the breakout sessions.



**LGLCI Soil Health Mini-Documentary –** Grant & Kate Estrade, owners and operators of Local Cooling Farms in Bogalusa, LA use techniques such as multi-species grazing, silvopasture, planting cover crops, and bale grazing, on their farm. They have revived a once biologically "dead" piece of property to a now thriving 16 acres. In a 10-minute video, Grant and Kate, along with other agricultural experts, explain how they revived their farms using these techniques. This mini-documentary is part of a series funded by the Louisiana Grazing Lands Coalition, National Grazing Lands Coalition, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. The LGLCI plans to produce eight documentaries between 2019 and 2020, which will all be posted on their social media pages and website, [Louisianaglci.org](http://Louisianaglci.org).



**February 8th, 2019 -** Southern University Ag Land Grant Campus visits McKowen Farms, a sheep and cattle ranch in Jackson, LA for their small farmer ag leadership institute class.



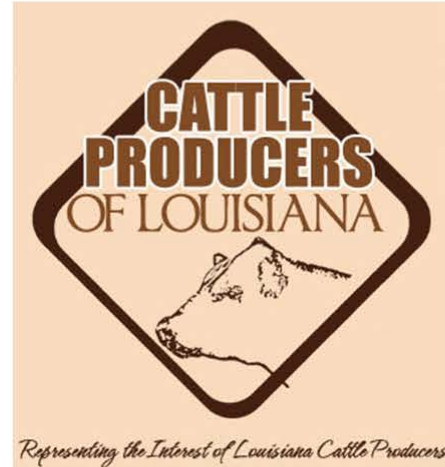
Soil Health Mini-Documentary | Local Cooling Farms  
499 views  
Louisiana GLCI  
Published on 01-29-19 2019  
This video features Grant & Kate Estrade, owners and operators of Local Cooling Farms in Bogalusa, LA. By using techniques like multi-species grazing, silvopasture, planting cover crops, and bale grazing, they have revived a once biologically "dead" piece of property to a now thriving 16 acres.  
SHOW MORE

LGLCI's soil health documentary is on YouTube. Visit our YouTube to watch!



# UPCOMING EVENTS:

**Cattle Producers of Louisiana Informational Seminar - February 13th, 2019** - CPL is hosting an informational seminar about grazing cover crops on row crop acreage. Several people presenting have experience with this technique and will be sharing their knowledge with attendees. There will also be a round table discussion at the end of program and lunch will be provided.



**LGLCI Hosting Grazing Seminar with Daniel Salatin – March 29th - March 30th, 2019** - For the second year in a row, LGLCI and Local Cooling Farms will host a two-day grazing seminar, one day in Bogalusa and the second day in Shreveport, Louisiana. Daniel Salatin with Polyface Farms will be teaching the classes. Check our website, [Louisianaglci.org](http://Louisianaglci.org) for more details.

**Acadiana Beef Cattle Producers Field Day - Saturday March 9th, 2019** – LSU AgCenter, LCA, and LFGC are hosting a beef cattle producers field day on Saturday March 9th, 2019 in Jeanerette, LA. Registration starts at 8:00 a.m.



**LGLCI Bus Tour to NOBLE Foundation – Ardmore, OK – April 23 – 25, 2019** – The LGLCI is hosting a Bus Tour to the NOBLE Foundation this year. Tentative stops include a tour of NOBLE Foundation, a cow calf operation in Sulphur Bluff, TX, several native grass operations in Gainesville, TX and Davis, OK and much more! Please check our website for more info.