



# Agriculture: We're Half Way There

## Jimmy Powell

Keeping livestock out of streams has proven herd health benefits. It is also a clear sign to downstream neighbors and other community members of your ethics and environmental stewardship.

Try these options to keep cattle healthy by keeping them out of streams:

- Off-stream watering systems
- Stream fencing
- Stream crossings
- Buffer strips
- Rotational Grazing

Both the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the state agricultural best management cost-share programs can help cover expenses for certain livestock stream exclusion projects that are built to specification.

*This is one in a series of articles about farmers in the Chesapeake Bay watershed who have implemented conservation practices to improve farm operations and water quality in nearby streams, demonstrating how agriculture has achieved half of the nutrient reductions necessary to clean up local streams and the Chesapeake Bay.*

*The author, Robert Whitescarver, lives in Swoope, Virginia, and can be contacted at [bobby.whitescarver@gettingmoreontheground.com](mailto:bobby.whitescarver@gettingmoreontheground.com).*

NORTH GARDEN, VA – Jimmy Powell and his family have been farming for three generations. He owns 420 acres of pasture and hayland in the Hardware River watershed, a James River tributary that flows through Albemarle and Fluvanna counties.

Powell is on the Farm Bureau Board of Directors for Albemarle County, and he serves on the county

committee of the Farm Service Agency. He also was the first farmer to participate in Albemarle County's purchase of development rights program. Powell received cash from the county to extinguish most of the development rights on the farm. His land is now protected from development forever.

"I love this farm, and I don't want to see it developed," he says.

Ches Goodall, Albemarle County's director of open-space protection said, "Jimmy's farm was the perfect fit for our farmland protection program. It's a productive family farm. We created these incentives because we don't want development in our rural areas. It's too expensive, and keeping [open space] in farm and forest land protects our rural character—the scenic beauty...and water resources."

Said Powell, "Now that I know the farm is going to stay farmland, I am going to work even harder to improve the soil and water resources. I've fenced off some of my streams, and it has been a good thing. My cows are healthier, and I can rotate my pastures easier...These volunteer programs have helped. I could not have done it without them, and they need to keep going."

Powell has a current CREP contract with the Farm Service Agency and has applied for assistance through the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative to fence off another stream on his farm.

"We've got a ways to go, but I know it's good for my cows, my farm, and the streams where I live," he says. "I want to leave this farm in better shape than when I took over."



*Hardware River watershed farmer Jimmy Powell with one of his Angus bulls.*