

## SOIL AND PLANT SCIENCE DIVISION

# Technical Soil Services

## South Central Region



### **Nacogdoches, Texas, Major Land Resource Area Soil Survey Office**

### **Red River County Future Farmers of America Land Judging Contest**

#### **Purpose**

On March 20, 2023, members of the Nacogdoches Major Land Resource Area (MLRA) Soil Survey Office traveled to Clarksville, Texas, to set up the annual Red River County Land Judging Contest. Every spring, Future Farmers of America (FFA) students from surrounding schools vie for first place, and the vertic soils of Red River County always promise an interesting contest. The deep, heavy clays and variable terrain offer a multitude of choices for contest set up. The soil scientists established contest sites on steeply sloping soils with heavy clay subsurface textures (see figure 1 and 2).

#### **Background Information**

In decades past, landowners farmed cotton on the fertile clay soils of Northeastern Texas, taking advantage of their high potential for retaining nutrients, organic matter, and water. Cotton farming has all but disappeared from the landscape being replaced by soybeans, wheat, tame pasture, and grazing. Conservation terraces, relics from past conservation assistance when the land was in row crop production agriculture, adorn the edges of the pasture.

#### **Key Outcomes**

Students gained experience in evaluating soil properties and determining interpretations for land use. Development of these skills fosters sound management of natural resources in future generations. The positive relationship between the Natural Resources Conservation Service and landowners will pave the way for future generations of farmers and conservationists.



*Figure 1. Flagging tape marks the horizons for the Red River Land Judging Contest.*



*Figure 2. Surface and subsoil texturing bags for the FFA students.*