United States Department of Agriculture

NRCS Natural Resources Conservation Service

Soil Quality Institute

# Soil Quality

## A foundation for cropland health and productivity

### The soil works for you...

Soil quality affects:

- Organic matter
- Soil tilth
- Crop productivity
- CEC
- pH
- Erosion potential
- Infiltration
- Compaction
- Available water
- Short-term drought tolerance
- Wildlife habitat
- Air quality
- Water quality

For more information
See the SQI Web site http://soils.usda.gov/sqi

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### ...if you work for the soil

To improve soil function and cropland health:

- Plant high residue crops
- Double crop or use cover crops
- Add legumes and grasses to your rotation
- Practice rotational grazing
- Adopt no-till or strip tillage
- Keep the ground covered with residue
- Manage nutrients efficiently
- Avoid driving on wet soil
- Monitor soil quality and vegetation

About this photo:
Cotton was planted directly into a rye cover crop in Georgia.