



United States Department of Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service

RECURRING Group Earth Team Volunteer . . . Max Bade



Area 3

Recurring volunteers assist with a variety of projects and their service hours are recorded as part of a group.

Earth Team Volunteer Categories

- Individual
- Recurring Group
- Friends of Conservation
- One-time Group
- Hosted

Celebrate Volunteers

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Second in a series featuring. . .

Earth Team Volunteers in Missouri

Contributing author, Stacey Williams, Earth Team volunteer

Max Bade has farmed for 42 years with his main income drawn from grass and alfalfa hay. He also grows corn, wheat and soybeans and raises cows. Bade's love of the outdoors, experience in farming and interest in improving his land led him to become a recurring Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Earth Team volunteer.

A couple of years ago, Bade took an interest in cover crops. He and his son, Mark, began researching the use of cover crops to enrich soil.

"They had really done their homework and had a good handle on what varieties they wanted to try," NRCS Resource Conservationist Shawn Keller said. "Their willingness to participate with the Plant Materials Center (PMC) cover crop program was a reflection of their excitement and interest in improving the soil and their crop fields."

Currently, Bade and his son, along with the NRCS and the St. Charles/ St. Louis County Soil and Water Conservation District, are testing three different blends of cover crops on two-and-a-half acre plots to see which blend best increases the soil quality.

"While it takes three-to-five years for cover crops to really impact the soil, my son could already notice a difference in in the soil and amount of grain produced after one year," Bade says. Cover crops, when used with no-till farming practices, add organic matter to the soil; reduce soil erosion and flooding; improve water quality; increase yields; and lessen the demand for fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides. They can also provide forage for livestock.

In addition to using cover crops, Bade has worked with NRCS on terracing, drain tiling in wet fields and no-till crops. He has utilized the Environmental Quality Incentives Program to help him complete the improvements to his farm.

Earth Team volunteers are caretakers of natural resources in their community. Bade encourages others that share his love of farming and the outdoors to do work on their own land with NRCS in order to enhance it and help future generations.

