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"Iowa Natural Resources Conservation Service: Excellence in helping people conserve and improve our natural resources, communities and environment."

A Message from the: State Conservationist



Rich Sims,
State Conservationist

In my last column I talked about the amazing amount of recreational tillage I observed driving to South Dakota in October. And it's something I am still thinking about, in part because of a new project I am leading for Chief White and NRCS.

It seems there is contradicting agronomic philosophies in the minds of many Iowa farmers. On one hand they plant modern hybrids, producing up to 250 bushels per acre and providing genetically-enhanced protection from pests and herbicides. As budgets allow, they utilize the most recent farming technologies and equipment to increase their efficiency and profitability.

Yet at the same time, they revert back to the 1950's conservation ethic: Tilling soybean stubble into dust. Wasting time, fuel and priceless soil quality.

More tillage can only lead to more erosion. And more erosion results in more conservation compliance issues on highly erodible land. This creates more work for us. But hopefully that workload will be reduced in the future by the work of this committee which is looking at new ways to process compliance issues.

This committee was asked to make our conservation compliance work more efficient, leaving us more time for planning and other types of technical assistance. I will update you on our progress in future issues of Current Developments.

P.S. Wishing you a Happy Holiday and a safe New Year!

RC&D in Iowa: 100% Coverage

Sioux Rivers Resource Conservation and Development recently submitted an application to add Sioux and Lyon counties to its area. When that is approved all of Iowa's 99 counties will be included in an RC&D.

Iowa is one of about 20 states to be fully-served by RC&D councils.

Chariton Valley and Southern Iowa RC&D were the first RC&Ds approved in Iowa in 1970.

The USDA Secretary of Agriculture has designated 375 RC&D Areas, serving 85% of U.S. counties. The average RC&D Area covers seven counties.

Award Winning: Detra Dettman

In November, Pathfinders RC&D Coordinator Detra Dettman received the Partners in Conservation Award from the U.S. Office of Surface Mining (OSM). Detra and Todd Coffelt, Mines and Minerals Bureau Chief, IDALS, were honored for their mine reclamation work in Iowa. Only one other group received this prestigious award this year.

Pathfinders receives a federal \$100,000 grant from OSM for reclamation projects. The RC&D is involved with four active reclamation projects in Mahaska



County. To date, Pathfinders has helped reclaim 8 sites, totaling nearly 300 acres with an investment of \$5.26 million.

Iowa Wins: Chief's Cup

For the first time, Iowa has received the top Earth Team award: the Chief's Cup. This award recognizes a state for its outstanding incorporation and utilization of volunteers.

The Chief will present the award to Iowa at a future Leadership Team Meeting.

A few highlights from last year include:

- 333 Total Volunteers
- 19,400 Total Hours
- 3rd in Nation for total hours
- 100% Office Participation
- \$420,000 Total Salary Value

Iowa Learning Farms: 2011 Webinar Schedule

Iowa Learning Farms (ILF) is hosting a series of webinars the first Wednesday of each month, beginning in January.

Dial in coordinates were not available at press time. Check the ILF website for more info: www.extension.iastate.edu/ilf/.

Here is the topic schedule:

- **Jan. 19:** The Culture of Conservation, Jacqueline Comito.
- **Feb. 16:** ISU Climate Science Program, Speaker TBD
- **March 16:** Cover Crop Management, Jeremy Singer
- **April 20:** Nitrogen Management and Water Quality, Matt Helmers.
- **May 18:** Bioreactors-Benefits and potential challenges, Laura Christianson
- **June 15:** Impacts of Bacteria on Water Quality, Michelle Soupir



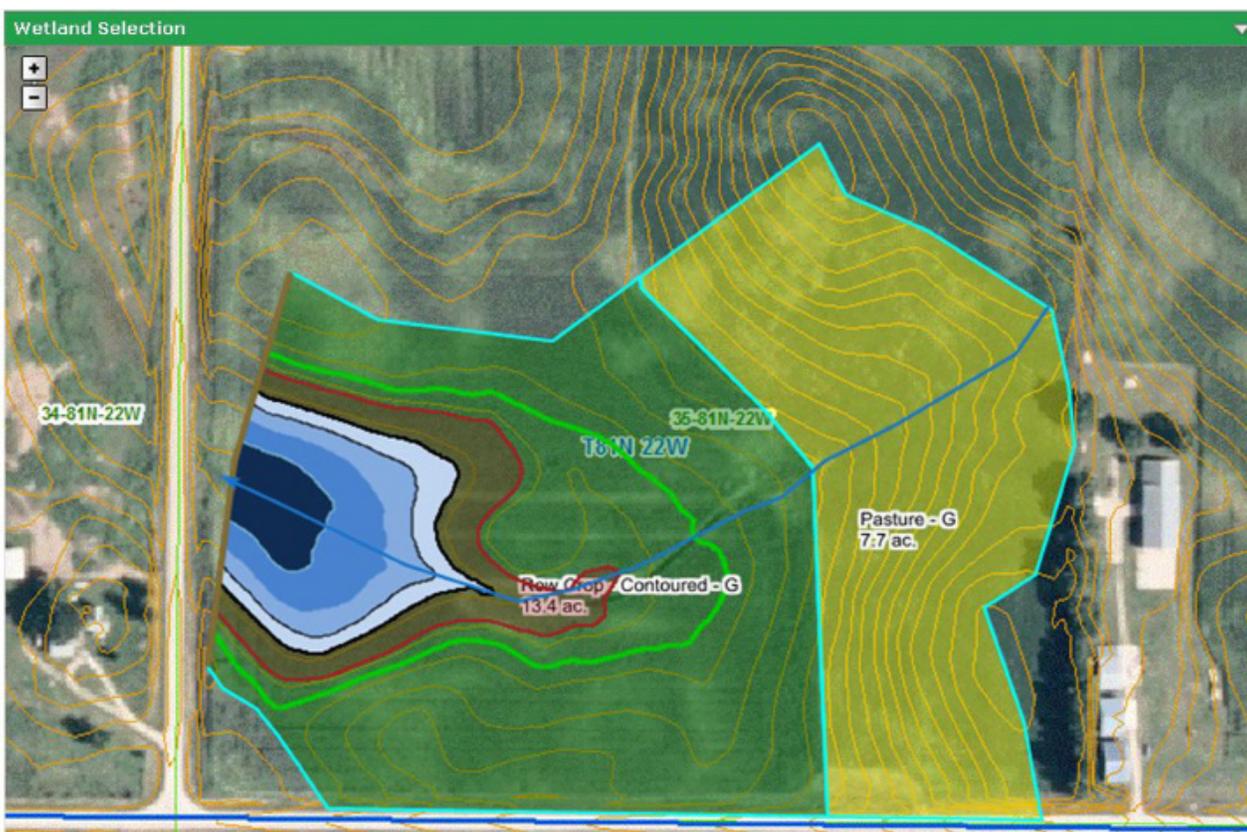
LiDAR in Action: Attend Planning Tool Webinar

Have you heard about the new time-saving, on-line computer planning tools for ponds, waterways, wetlands, basins and other conservation practices, but wondered just how they work? You can find out in January if you sign up for one of a series of hour-long webinars being held specifically for Iowa soil and water conservation district commissioners and office staff.

The webinar will be hosted by Stan Buman of Agren, Inc., the Iowa company from Carroll that developed the tools. He's encouraging commissioners and staff to get together in the office to watch the webinar together and then talk about what the SWCD wants to do about following up to use the tools.

The planning tools being demonstrated continue to get a big assist from NRCS and IDALS. An NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant was instrumental in development, early testing, and buydown of the cost of the tools for the first districts that purchase licenses. The Division of Soil Conservation, IDALS, has set aside money to make the licenses needed to use the programs more affordable for SWCDs. Jim Gillespie of IDALS says the investment was made because they are unfortunately working with fewer and fewer technicians. "The tools will help us make better use of LiDAR technology and the people we have in the field. Using them is good for all of us—the state and federal agencies, local districts, and landowners. As we get more of the pieces added, including terraces, they will be even better."

So far, 32 SWCDs in Iowa have purchased the \$500 license needed to use the tools through June 15, 2013. "What we hear they like about the programs that are in use now is that they offer fast and accurate planning, you get multiple planning options quickly, and you get a drawing that shows a landowner how the practice lays on his or her land," Buman says. Buman says he can demonstrate the PondBuilder, BasinBuilder, WetlandBuilder and/or WaterwayBuilder, and take questions after the online demonstrations. Each SWCD commissioner can expect to get a letter from Conservation Districts of Iowa inviting them to attend a webinar, and each SWCD secretary will get a series of reminder post cards listing the dates and times. To see the dates, learn more, or register for a webinar, go on the web at <http://agren-inc.com/conservation.php>.



The aerial photo with structure location and various water levels in shades of blue is part of the quick feedback given using WetlandBuilder for planning purposes.

New Faces: Stiegelmeier and Kinyon-Anderson



Adam Stiegelmeier

Adam Stiegelmeier joined Iowa NRCS in November as the Assistant State Conservationist for Management or State Administrative Officer (SAO). He grew up on a farm in Selby, South Dakota. His family grew winter and spring wheat, corn, soybeans, field peas and flax. He still enjoys going home to help on the farm and staying up-to-date with the operation.

Professionally, Adam served in the United States Air Force (active duty) from 2001 until 2009. He held a variety of positions as an Aircraft Maintenance Officer. He began his career as a flight commander at Beale AFB in California where they flew U-2 aircraft (high altitude reconnaissance/intelligence). He was responsible for the maintenance, inspection, servicing and scheduling of the aircraft. He finished his active duty at Scott AFB in Illinois, where he worked as a staff officer for Air Mobility Command Headquarters in the Aircraft Maintenance Division. From 2009 until leaving for NRCS, Adam worked in the Requirements Division at Air Mobility Command as a civil service employee. His job was to identify and defend logistics requirements for new weapon systems.

He and his wife Jenna have four children: Kyla, 8, Micah, 6, Tyler, 4 and Ellie, 2.



Tara Kinyon-Anderson

Tara also joined Iowa NRCS in November as the Secretary serving Public Affairs, Ecological Sciences and Soils. She is the new contact person for ordering brochures and displays from the state office, and is quickly acquainting herself with our catalog of materials.

Tara is a native of Boone, where she lives today. She comes to NRCS from the Army National Guard, where she served in several roles at Camp Dodge. Some of her responsibilities included housing coordinator, administration and serving as the training NCO (noncommissioned officer). She first joined the Army in 1987, serving until 1991 out of Fort Bragg, North Carolina. NRCS is her first civilian job.

She has three boys, and will welcome her first grandchild this May. Tara enjoys camping, fishing and tubing on the Boone River.

Wanted: NRCS Mentors

There are many opportunities statewide to become a mentor in the Iowa NRCS Mentoring Program – to help a new employee develop goals, broaden their experience, and cultivate new opportunities.

Tricia Mootz, who coordinates the mentoring program in Iowa, says employees who want to be a mentor are matched with a protégé based on developmental goals, areas of expertise, and stated objectives for the relationship. “We want a mentor to share his or her experiences and feedback with the protégé regarding technical knowledge, organizational relationships, and tips for success,” she said. “The mentor and protégé can then work together over the course of a year to develop strategies for achieving mutually agreed upon goals.”

There are specific goals of the NRCS National Mentoring Program, including:

- Successful transfer of NRCS institutional knowledge
- Enhancement of employee skills
- Increased employee retention
- Attraction to top talent

Arnelis Crespo, soil conservationist in Fort Dodge, says she benefitted greatly from her mentoring relationship with veteran Taylor County District Conservationist Doug Davenport. “We discussed my goals within the organization and what I need to do to get where I want to be,” she said. “It was a very enriching experience to have a mentor who understood and identified my cultural differences since we both have worked in and out of the country.”

Davenport says he chose to become a mentor because he benefitted greatly from a mentor-protégé relationship early in his career. “When I had the opportunity to become a mentor, I jumped at the chance, and it has been a very good experience,” he said.

Davenport says he and Crespo met about monthly and spent a few hours together. “We had meetings devoted to the technical side of our work, but we also discussed career paths in NRCS and I helped her

with the system we use to apply for different positions,” he said. “I helped Arnelis get answers to questions that were beyond my scope and the scope of our mentoring relationship.”

Mootz said Iowa NRCS needs more mentors. Iowa Bulletin No. IA360-10-26 was issued to help recruit individuals into the mentoring program. If you have questions regarding the mentoring program or would like to be a mentor, contact Mootz at tricia.mootz@ia.usda.gov or 515-284-4587.



Arnelis Crespo, soil conservationist, in Fort Dodge.

Energy: Sixth Major Resource Concern

NRCS Chief Dave White recently announced he decided to add energy as a major resource concern for the agency. This means Energy will take its place of prominence among the other major resources addressed by our conservation programs.

This decision impacts agency policy, our Field Office Technical Guide, conservation planning, programs, resources management systems and more. There will be much to do to incorporate this decision into our agency's operation.

Chief White hopes to fully implement Energy as a major resource concern by Oct. 1, 2011.

Unlocking Efficiency: Partnership Meeting Update

Following are updates from items discussed by the Leadership Team.

Communication Update from Chuck and Rich

Our assignment after the Partnership meetings was to review your feedback provided during the communication work session. One item repeatedly shared was your need for regular staff meetings in your office.

We know that some offices are doing a great job of providing regularly scheduled staff meetings. But some were not, which is why so many of you expressed a need for these meetings to get updates from leadership, get direction on priorities and provide feedback on your workload.

Conducting regular staff meetings is a requirement in every District Conservationist's PAW. We have provided guidance helping define what is expected for regular staff meetings, both in timing and content. Hopefully your office is conducting regular staff meetings. If not, please let us know.

Other items of employee high concern included:

- Needing to know program announcements BEFORE the public learns about them
- Too many or too little emails
- Too many changes in program implementation information making it hard to manage and keep up to date

We are working to address all of these items. However it is important to note, that a solution for one group of people (i.e. Those who believe they don't get enough information) may add to the concerns of another. (Those who feel that get too many emails.)

When it comes to communication, it will be a balancing act. As we implement our changes, please provide us feedback. If we are missing the mark, we need to know. We can't improve, if you don't tell us there is still a problem.

Unlocking Efficiency



Teamwork Updates RUSLE2 and P Index

John Myers, NRCS State Resource Conservationist

The Issue:

Our partnership employees spend a lot of time utilizing the RUSLE II and Phosphorus Index (PI) technologies. These two "indexes" play an important role in the conservation planning we do. These technologies are computer based making them difficult to utilize in the field. We want you to discuss the idea of developing methods to use these indexes in the field.

Employee Input

Reactions were evenly split when employees were asked if having field tools for these indexes would be useful and assist you as you work with your customers in the field. The reasons were quite varied and a covered a wide cross section of views.

Staff said the only advantage would be the documentation would be done. Alternatives could be given to landowner in the field. Efficiency would be improved without having to follow-up later. Impact of showing alternatives on site would improve our credibility.

Other advantages suggested by staff include that it may make it easier to get producers to take ownership of the planning process. Producers might also be more willing to "open up" if they are in familiar surroundings and not an office setting.

Other employees saw no advantages.

The biggest disadvantages were concerns about equipment failure and disengaging the landowner in the planning process.

Durability was the biggest criteria of a new system.

John Myers Input

I initially thought that this concern dealt with the use of the two different ways to calculate soil loss for Planning and the PI. Planning uses the "dominate critical" soil and slope while PI uses the SMU of the most erosive soil consisting of at least 10 percent of the field.

Barb Stewart and Eric Hurley recently completed a series of web-based training to FO staff on the use of the PI.

Recent rule changes put forward by DNR will change the PI soil loss calculations to "dominant critical" which will result in one way of calculating soil loss for all conservation planning. Compliance planning will still use the predominant HEL map unit. This is so Iowa NRCS will be consistent with surrounding states.

The concern about taking equipment to the field, equipment failure and lack of tech support to run soil loss and other programs in the field is a legitimate concern.

Next Steps

It was brought out in the Leadership Team meeting that perhaps a non-computer based cheat sheet

using common rotations and soils could be used to get close to the actual soil loss. However the actual soil loss would later be determined by using the site conditions. Field staff are encouraged to use such a cheat sheet in the field.

SWCD Annual Plan/NRCS Field Office Business Plan

*Mike Sucik, NRCS State Soil Scientist
Paul Valin, DCS Field Representative (now retired)*

The committee polled a few field staff on whether SWCD Annual Plans and NRCS FO Business Plan be separate or combined. Following is the collected feedback.

IN FAVOR OF SEPARATE DOCUMENTS

Area One District Conservationist (Single County) – Keep plans separate. Originally in favor of one plan but after Spring Regionals which emphasized the importance of district work plans there has been a change of heart. Feels that a single plan would be dominated by NRCS.

Area Three State Secretary (shared with two offices) – Keep them separate. NRCS plan cascades from State and National, District plan is resource based. District would lose identity with joint plan.

Representative of Conservation Districts of Iowa - It is important to keep the documents separate. As far as I'm concerned, they can be the same, but the district needs to have the local goals and needs

identified by the elected officials who will remain in the county.

My take on the climate in Washington DC regarding funding is that our legislators hold dear and are more apt to take action based on voices of their constituents as compared to the reported needs of a department head. The annual work plan is one of the reflections of those local voices. The District Conservationist, even though most stay put for long periods of time, may be moved or new to an area.

Area Five State Secretary (shared with two offices) - After discussing with co-workers and the District Commissioners it was the consensus that the NRCS and SWCD annual business plans should be kept separate. Some of the main reasons that the commissioners felt that they should be kept separate were: The District would keep their individual identity in the locally led process. Not always are the district priorities the same as the agency priorities which would cause conflicting goals making it very difficult to have the same plan. Also, when offices combine it even more difficult to have one plan. The more agencies and priorities that need to be considered could cause the plan to become too generic and not specific enough to each County.

LET EACH OFFICE/DISTRICT DECIDE FOR THEIR SITUATION

Area Two State Secretary (One county)- Staff here cannot agree on which way would be better. Two say separate plans, two say

combine into one plan. The two who say combine it, don't work with the district commissioners. The District Conservationist and the Secretary say keep them separate. There are advantages and disadvantages either way. In my personal opinion, separate plans should have input from each other but each agency has a different hierarchy and separate overall goals. Some may be the same but others may be completely different. SWCDs as well as NRCS offices have many partners. That doesn't mean all their objectives and goals are the same. Nor are they the same for SWCDs and NRCS. For now I think it should be left up to the local office how they want to do it.

IN FAVOR OF A JOINT NRCS/ SWCD BUSINESS PLAN

Area Three District Conservationist— Combine. If we were to combine efforts, I think we could tailor a separate section for a 'partners' plan - maybe have the SWCD be the lead in the business plan, and have a component of it that would be specific to NRCS and any other local partners of the District (like in my case, the county soil conservationist). That way they would all have a stake in the development of the document and also be able to provide some input. I strongly feel that the District has to take the lead on this. Otherwise, it will just be the District Conservationist's plan with the District's stamp on it.

Area Two District Conservationist (Two County Unit) - After talking with our commissioners and staff, we feel that One work plan is enough. It seems as though many commissioners are not active enough to want to put together their own work plan which is unfortunate. In many cases, if the District Conservationist does not update the work plans, it does not get done. Therefore, putting in objectives of both the District and NRCS makes sense to us. We are all working for the same goals and have most of the same incentive programs. Right now our NRCS business plan covers both counties, but our goals from the Area Office are still all separate. That would still have to be discussed however I think most of the goals would be the same in both counties, but they may have different priority areas they want to focus on which could be addressed in the work plan.

Area One District Conservationist (Two County Unit)- After visiting with my co-workers, I feel that the development of one plan would make the most sense. As a District Conservationist, I would be involved with one plan and I could keep it up to date easier than working with two SWCD's and the NRCS Business plan. There would be quite a bit of overlap and commonality that would support the one plan idea, and differences could be listed independently. Initially SWCD's may feel like they are losing their identity, but I think it could be

formatted to be included in one document to their individual preference.

Next Steps

Paul Valin reported findings to the joint State Soil Conservation Committee and Conservation Districts of Iowa board on June 16. Paul asked the groups to consider the issues related to work plans and make recommendations and/or policy that could improve how this is handled in the future. It is anticipated the boards will assign to the CDI Education Committee and the SSCC District Operations Committee.

Encouraging Producers to Adopt Soil Quality Practices

Jim Gillespie, DSC Field Services Bureau Chief
Laura Greiner, NRCS State Public Affairs Specialist

Following is summary of employee feedback and committee recommendations.

Most effective messages: Economics (5 times), what is soil quality, what does it actually mean and how does it affect them personally, don't sacrifice soil productivity just for short term yields.

Most effective method: Field trials/demos (twice) one-on-one (5 times), farmer-to-farmer, visual demonstrations, actual results.

Committee Observations: There were fewer common themes

in the collection of employee feedback. Based on this further information gathering would be helpful from soil scientist, resource conservationist and others to determine which messages would have the strongest impact and which tools would be the most useful.

The most popular communication methods are also the most time-intensive: face-to-face, one-on-one, field trials etc. With time restraints facing staff, we need to tap into existing networks where possible to bring the soil quality message to our customers. One avenue is the Iowa Learning Farms—how do we tap into that resource? What information/opportunities are already available through that resource? Do we need to do a better job of promoting ILF to our field staff?

There are already a few soil quality materials in place—Is it Good Under the Hood? (Brochure and display) which will provide a good foundation for further efforts.

Recommended Action Items

1. Work with additional field staff to evaluate collected employee feedback to help narrow down most effective messages and tools.
2. Work with Iowa Learning Farms to identify existing soil quality farmer “spokespeople” to provide testimonials, learn what other opportunities exist.

Next Steps

1. Identify committee members and begin meeting.
- 2 Jim and Laura meeting with Iowa Learning Farm staff.

Timeline

Jim and Laura will suggest team members to LT. Once supervisors provide approval, committee will begin meeting once fourth quarter workload allows. (DUE TO ABC AND OTHER DEADLINE HEAVY WORKLOAD THIS WAS POSTPONED.)

Task Tracking System

Larry Beeler, NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Programs
Roberta Moltzen, NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Management (now retired)
Karen Fynaardt, DSC Administrative Assistant
Cathie Graves, DSC Field Services Representative (now retired)

The four-member committee met in April and agreed to the following:

Inform NRCS and partner employees about the programs calendar available to them on the NRCS website via NRCS instructions. These instructions will include a link to the programs website and information on the process for DSC to provide information on state-program related items for posting to the NRCS site. **Assigned to:** Larry Beeler. **Due date:** June 30.

This instruction will be sent to Karen Fynaardt for distribution to DSC/District staff. **Assigned to:** Kim Broders.

Committee will ask for partnership employee feedback on the calendar to determine if it helps staff manage field office workload. **Assigned to:** Karen Fynaardt. **Due Date:** Oct. 1

HEL Compliance Planning and Plans

John Myers, NRCS State Resource Conservationist
Tony Toigo, DSC Loan Program Coordinator

The Issue:

Some producers who come into our offices wanting our planning assistance related to highly erodible land (HEL) only what to know the minimums they have to do to comply with the law. They do not really want to know about other conservation alternatives that may be available to solve other resource concerns on their farm or have very little interest in trying to do more than the minimum expected by HEL regulations. The issue is should we develop a different way of providing the assistance and plan documents that these producers need versus what we would do for a producer who wants to go beyond the minimum and apply more conservation addressing more resource concerns.

Employee Feedback

Staff overwhelmingly agreed that if we had a simpler way to provide these customers the information they need that it would be advantageous to our offices and save time.

However this does not follow policy of offering a conservation system that addresses multiple resource concerns.

Biggest advantages are time savings for customers and employees. Giving the customer exactly what he wants may be a relationship building step for future conservation work. We can do planning outside of tool kit—give the producer a paper copy of a conservation system plan and keep a paper copy only in the files.

Disadvantages included a lack of encouragement for some producers to “raise the bar” by missing a real opportunity to promote resource management; planning acres will not be reported in tool kit; and FO will not meet planning goals.

If we moved forward, field staff asked for one page plans, better job sheets, avoiding tool kit and statewide templates. Staff said they needed county specific systems.

Committee Input

In 2009 all field offices were presented an optional method of “Compliance” planning for producers who wanted a compliance plan only. A statewide template

was developed which the FO staff would develop a few alternative systems that would work on the most common HEL soils in the county. So it was a statewide form to be modified by each FO to fit their needs and resources.

This would be a paper copy plan that address rotations, tillage, and other needed practices that we could fill out in the field and hand to the producer. This would not be entered into CST. A paper copy would be placed in a file in the office. This planning would not be reported in PRS because it was not planned in CST.

This could result in field offices not meeting planning goals. ***The committee does not believe that this alternative is being used in any county. If so, please email john.myers@ia.usda.gov.***

Any alternative system that is developed by the field office would have to be placed in the Field Office Technical Guide. This would save time and give the producer a compliance plan only.

With every revision of an agronomic and non-engineering standard, a new or revised job sheet is developed. They are posted on the web and the Field Offices are notified to comment on drafts. We consider every comment and take appropriate action. The job sheets are developed for Field Office use and the Eco Sci team welcome comments from the field staffs on improvements.

In addition to job sheets, we developed fact sheets on sustainable systems for cropping, and grassland systems. These tools are to help staff quickly review all resource concerns with landowners and check which practices could be installed to assist resource management. By using these sheets, the conservation planner could address all resources while only planning the compliance eligibility resources. These have been distributed to the field offices and are available on line at <ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/IA/technical/CroplandPractices.pdf> and <ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/IA/technical/GrasslandPractices.pdf>.

Water Quality Improvement Practices

Laura Greiner, NRCS State Public Affairs Specialist

John Myers, NRCS State Resource Conservationist

Mike Franklin, DSC Watershed and Water Quality Project Coordinator

Matt Lechtenberg, DSC CREP Specialist

Following is a summary of employee feedback and committee recommendations.

Messages: Economics of over application of nutrients (5 times); risk of legislative action if voluntary efforts don't succeed (twice); health and social benefits (twice); social perspectives from outside the state (twice)

Most effective messages: Economics (seven times)

Most effective method: Newspapers/newsletters/word of mouth (5 times); one on one (five times); need good understandable data, appreciation, good publicity, promotion of conservation activities, interest among peers, keeping conservation in the spotlight, and encouraging others to do likewise.

Recommended Action Items

1. Tap field staff to assist in the development of a campaign about the consequences of over application of nutrients and benefits of proper nutrient application.
2. Need to develop strategy to allow time for more one-on-one contact and education.
3. Work with Iowa Learning Farms to develop "good, understandable data" with help from field staff.

Next Steps

1. Assign committee members to lead three teams for (1) developing the campaign, (2) designing strategies for one-on-one contact and (3) working with Iowa Learning Farms.
2. Form the three teams and a method for coordinating their efforts.

Timeline

Committee will suggest team members to LT. Once supervisors provide approval, committee will begin meeting once fourth quarter workload allows. (DUE TO ABC AND OTHER DEADLINE HEAVY WORKLOAD THIS WAS POSTPONED.)

SWCD Award Winners

David Strom, DSC Field Services Representative

Laura Greiner, NRCS State Public Affairs Specialist

The consensus of the participants clearly suggests that as a general rule, recognition of a job well done appeals to the good side of human nature and is a technique of positive reinforcement. But it takes too much time, when time is already limited and forms are too complicated.

Advantages: appreciation, good publicity, promotion of conservation activities, interest among peers, keeping conservation in the spotlight, and encouraging others to do likewise.

Disadvantages: staff time demands, less support from district commissioners for much the same reasons: other time demands, day jobs, family, and a perception that this is a staff responsibility.

Why activity decreased? Staff time demands, concern that award nomination/selection process is controversial, changing farmer demographics (smaller pool of possible nominations); larger farms, fewer farmers.

How can we improve process?

Partner with other groups such as DU, PF, news media, Farm Bureau, on the local level to help organize and sponsor gatherings and events for presenting awards. Partner names could be joined with the agency for any recognition.

This would broaden interest across the district.

Many new programs cannot be recognized by the awards that exist. Some relatively recent programs are CREP, CRP, CSP, EQIP, & WHIP

Review all forms for simplicity. Is the information requested really necessary? Do the judges need to know everything? Are there words or phrases that are confusing or do not clearly spell out what is needed?

Recruit someone locally: commissioner, assistant commissioner, volunteer, retired agency employee, to take charge of District, NRCS, and DSC awards. The "Awards Chair" should be included in the NRCS/SWCD annual business work plan.

Instead of a plaque or framed certificate, present a Purple Martin bird house/feeder, gate sign, flag pole, or something visible for others to admire. Newspapers tire of pictures of two people handing over a plaque. Let's face it, it's boring.

Secure a sponsor to defray the cost

Committee Observations

Most award entries are prepared by the DC and the secretary. After July 1 there will be 21 secretary vacancies, and another 21 secretaries covering those offices. That means 42 offices will have part-time secretary coverage. Add to that mix 21 NRCS management units affecting another 42 offices

(some overlap) where DCs and RCs cover offices that previously were all DCs and in some cases they are overwhelmed.

QUESTIONS?

Recommended Action Items

1. Simply form/nomination process to save time.
2. Evaluate current awards—are all of them needed?
3. Provide standard award item instead of certificate.
4. Consider open nomination process. Allow peer nominations and simplify the process.

Next Steps

Assign team to design simplified nomination.
 Develop budget for award items/find sponsor?
 Assign team to explore peer nomination process.

Timeline

Roll out new nomination form and process at Spring Regionals.

Have questions or feedback? Please contact any of issue team members listed below.

Larry Beeler	larry.beeler@ia.usda.gov
Mike Franklin	mike.franklin@iowaagriculture.gov
Karen Fynaardt	karen.fynaardt@iowaagriculture.gov
Jim Gillespie	jim.gillespie@iowaagriculture.gov
Laura Greiner	laura.greiner@ia.usda.gov
Matt Lechtenbert	matthew.lechtenbert@iowaagriculture.gov
John Myers	john.myers@ia.usda.gov
David Strom	david.strom@iowaagriculture.gov
Mike Sucik	michael.sucik@ia.usda.gov
Tony Toigo	tony.toigo@iowaagriculture.gov

Got Chills, Aches and a Headache? It's the Flu : (

Symptom	Cold	Seasonal Flu
Fever	Fever is rare with a cold	Fever is common with the flue in up to 80% of all cases. A temperature of 100 F or higher for 3 or 4 days is associated with the flu.
Aches	Body aches and pains are rarely associated with a cold.	Severe aches and pains are common with the flu.
Chills	Chills are uncommon with a cold.	Chills are common with influenza.
Tiredness	Tiredness is mid with a cold.	Tiredness is moderate to severe with the flu.
Headache	A headache is uncommon with a cold.	A headache is common with the flu (present in 80% of flu cases).
Sneezing	Sneezing is common with a cold.	Sneezing is uncommon with the flu.
Coughing	A productive (mucus-producing) cough is often present with a cold.	A non-productive (non-mucus producing) cough is usually present with the flu (sometimes referred to as dry cough).

Changes In: NRCS Personnel

Name	Official Title	Grade	Effective Date	Nature of Action	Location
Baxter, Nichole S.	Soil Conservationist	07	10/26/2010	Name Change	Greenfield FO
Blodgett, Richard M.	Soil Conservationist	07	11/7/2010	Promotion	Allison FO
Campbell, Roy R.	Resource Conservationist	12	11/7/2010	Reassignment	Operations Staff, SO
Cink, Stephen L.	Engineering Technician	08	11/7/2010	Reassignment	Knoxville FO
Dubendorf, Jennifer L.	Management Analyst	11	11/7/2010	Reassignment	Operations Staff, OS
Ehlers, Loren F.	Resource Conservationist	09	10/24/2010	Promotion	Estherville FO
Ehley, Alan M.	Soil Conservationist	12	11/7/010	Reassignment	Programs Staff, SO
Hollingsworth, Jeremy D.	Soil Conservation Technician	07	11/7/2010	Promotion	Fairfield FO
Kinyon-Anderson, Tara L.	Secretary	07	11/7/2010	Career Appointment	Public Affairs Staff, SO
Milliren, Julia J.	Soil Conservationist	07	11/21/2010	Promotion	Charles City FO
Offerman, Quenten A.	Engineering Technician	06	10/24/2010	Convert to Career Intern	Williamsburg EO
Stiegelmeier, Adam T.	ASTC Management	13	11/7/2010	Transfer from DOD	Management Staff, SO
Tappan, James R.	Soil Conservationist	07	11/21/2010	Career Intern Appointment	Decorah FO
Thilges, Jeremy D.	Resource Conservationist	09	10/24/2010	Promotion	Emmetsburg FO

Have a story idea for Current Developments?

Email your item to Laura Greiner, State Public Affairs Specialist, at laura.greiner@ia.usda.gov. Current Developments is published six times a year.