

Soil Health Update For February 14th Kentucky USDA State Technical Committee Meeting

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Soil Health (SH) Update:

-One Area Soil Health Contact (ASHC) was chosen for each area:

- Area 1- Rodney Bozarth
- Area 2- Matt Norfleet
- Area 3- Jimmy Lyons

-Approval for ASHCs to visit: Jay Fuhrer (DC Bismarck ND), Menokem SH Farm, and various ND landowners who are implementing SH. (Our ASHCs will leave Kentucky very interested in SH and come back SH evangelist.) Extremely good information source- best possible place to gain SH knowledge/Experience needed for position.

-Good SH Field Day Opportunity:

-Suggest sending all ASHCs and Central/Northern Kentucky Conservationist to David Brandt Field Day on April 10th. Great line up of presenters (Dr. Ray Weil, Ray Archuleta, Jay Fuhrer, Dr. Rick Haney, Jim Hoorman, David Brandt and Erdal Ozkan).

-David Brandt visit/presentation in Fulton County Kentucky February 6- 8th. Approximately 81 farmers attended meeting on Feb 8th. Approx. 10 landowners attended field visits. Very well received. Already have a request to come back to Fulton County this summer to help landowners prepare and implement SH on their farms. (First full week in March- conduct landowner follow up visits to develop SH rotations and assist with implementation of SH practices.)

-Numerous and varied SH information sent out to all field office employees for educational purposes (news articles, research papers, informational reading, etc.)

-Numerous SH presentations given:

- Jimmy Lyons- Jan. 28th- Madison County
- David Brandt/John Graham- Feb. 8th- Fulton County
- John Graham- Feb. 12th- TSP Meeting- Fayette County

-Scheduled SH presentations:

- Feb. 20th Harrison County Farmer Breakfast- 9:00AM
- March 14th Clay County Red Bird Mission- SH Garden Presentation- 6:30PM
- March 22nd Pulaski County Field Day- 8:00AM
- March 26th Nicholas County SH Presentation- 6:30PM
- Mid April (date to be determined)- Madison County SH Pasture Field Day

-Two ASHC Meetings:

- Request for ASHC to visit ND.
- Copy of basic SH presentation material given to ASHC

- Development of NRCS work unit SH meetings:

(Goal- enable NRCS employees to gain a level of competency, feel comfortable explaining, and confidently discuss SH issues/SH rotations/and SH plans with landowners to implement SH practices on the landscape.)

-ASHCs are to contact each LDC in individual work units within their area to determine what SH training is needed within that work unit to accomplish the above listed goal.

-develop example SH crop rotation "Job Sheets" (with pictures) that are designed for individual work unit situations. These example SH "Job Sheets" should be given to landowners to demonstrate how to implement a SH system on their farm.

-New photographs need to be taken across the state in locations where SH is being implemented so SH "Job Sheets" can be updated to include Kentucky pictures.

-Find locations and dates for work unit trainings:

-SH trainings will consist of 2 days of training with the first day being inside and the second being outside.

-It was decided that all inside trainings (first day trainings) would be given on an area wide basis (one training day per area).

Dates/Locations: Area 1-July 10th- UK Farm- Princeton, Ky.

Area 2-June 25th- KSU Farm- Frankfort, Ky.

Area 3-June 26th- CES Building- Richmond, Ky.

-All second day trainings will be given on farms within individual work unit boundaries. Dates and locations have not been obtained for these second day trainings at this time.

-SH meeting specifics:

-discuss pastureland SH

-show SH vimeo presentation of various landowners

-landowners will not be invited to these initial meetings (to encourage more open dialogue from employees)

-landowner/conservationist roll play will be used to demonstrate various points

-all conservationist will be challenged to work with at least one producer to implement a SH rotation.

Existing KSW9 Contracts w/7 Private Landowners/Murray State University/Western Kentucky University-ARS:

End of March, April, and early May- Collect SH data using the Soil Quality Test Kit

- Run soil samples using Soil Quality Test Kit

“Purchase” Soil Health Project:

Demonstrate the improvement of organic matter (OM) on an experimental plot that is being managed according to a SH system within the Purchase area of Kentucky over a 5 year time frame. It has been suggested that OM could be increased by 1% over a 5 year period when a SH system is implemented.

Needed Items:

- farm location in Purchase area of Kentucky
- farmer willing to implement a full SH system in a timely manner
- David Brandt to donate cover crop seed for plot
- Murray State University- assign a graduate student to the project.

Seed Company Agronomist Meetings:

Met with two Agronomist to discuss implementation of example SH rotations:

- Todd Ladd, Territory Agronomist with Dekalb/Monsanto in Madisonville on October 25th, 2012- interested.
- Bill Meacham, Pioneer Seed Product Agronomist-Dupont on November 27th, 2012. Mr. Meacham is willing to work with us on the Bobby James farm (Fayette Co.) to implement test plots.
 - while staying all night in Madisonville with David Brandt and 3 ASHC Mr. Meacham was also Present- hope to develop a good working relationship with both seed agronomist.

Menokem type farm for Kentucky:

With the retirement of Steve Coleman at DOC- not sure where we stand at this time. There would be many many details to work out for this to be feasible!

Kentucky State University (KSU):

Steve Blanford and I are working with KSU to implement a SH demonstration/experimental plot on the KSU farm. KSU is willing to assign graduate students to this project. Hope to receive final approval shortly (maybe today).

Morehead State University (MSU):

We are now working with Dr. Rogers at MSU to implement SH on one of their silage fields. Not much room to rotate- basically a wet natured continuous silage field. Hope to show soil improvements within a 5 year period.

Working with various landowners across Kentucky as the opportunity arise.