

SOIL AND PLANT SCIENCE DIVISION

Technical Soil Services

North Central Soil Survey Region

MLRA 74

Salina Soil Survey Staff Educate Future Conservationists

Purpose

In the fall of 2023, Salina Soil Survey Office staff worked closely with the Bennington School System in Bennington, Kansas, to provide educational soils presentations to students.

Background

The SSO participated in three educational events. The first event was a presentation to the high school Horticulture class. The presentation focused on the five soil forming factors, major soil properties, and basic soil conservation. How soils affect our everyday lives was also covered. The students were introduced to the texture by feel method for estimating soil texture and provided an opportunity to practice this technique with some known soil samples.

The second event was a fun version of a career day called Bennington's Big Truck Day. Many different disciplines were invited to bring their "big" work trucks to the school parking lot, where the students toured the various vehicles. Each participant gave a short talk about their profession and answered questions from the students. Along with our Giddings soil probe truck, the students saw a boom truck, road grader, septic pump truck, and an ambulance, along with many other trucks. This event was focused on grade school students, but many high school students helping at the event were asking questions about the different careers.

The third event was a presentation to the Introduction to Agriculture class. This event was very similar to the Horticulture class presentation but was delivered to middle school students.

Key Outcomes

- Improved the soil and conservation knowledge of Bennington School System students.
- Informed students on the career options with NRCS and soil conservation in general.
- Expanded the profile of NRCS and SPSD by providing services to the local community.



Figure 1. —Salina Soil Survey Office staff assist students with estimating soil texture.



Figure 2. —A Salina Soil Survey Office staff member talks with a third-grade class about the work the Soil and Plant Science Division performs.