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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

News Release

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**NRCS AND RHODE ISLAND ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS
HOLD INFORMATIONAL WORKSHOP “HEALTHY SOIL, CLEAN WATER:
TECHNIQUES TO IMPROVE YOUR FARM’S SOIL HEALTH AND WATER
RESOURCES” AT GREENVALE VINEYARDS IN PORTSMOUTH, RI**

WARWICK, RI (November 18, 2015) – On November 5, 2015, Rhode Island NRCS and the RI Association of Conservation Districts held an informational workshop “Healthy Soil, Clean Water: Techniques to Improve Your Farm’s Soil Health and Water Resources” at Greenvale Vineyard’s located in Portsmouth, RI. Agricultural producers in Newport County have a unique set of challenges in agricultural production which include distinctive soils, limited availability of farmland, and water resources that are threatened by a variety of factors in this dynamic region of Rhode Island.



Nancy Parker Wilson, owner/proprietor of Greenvale Vineyards, explains soil erosion issues which were resolved with the installation of diversions.

We were fortunate to have Nancy Parker Wilson, owner/proprietor of Greenvale Vineyards, provide an educational tour of the picturesque property located along the Sakonnet River where attendees learned about various conservation practices implemented on the property to prevent soil erosion. She and Hever Ortega, Vineyard Manager, discussed how they

cultivate grapes on 24 acres of land and then harvest them to produce several varieties of wine. Growing and harvesting techniques were highlighted including a discussion on machinery utilized to make the process more efficient. In addition to grape production, Greenvale Vineyards recently added hops production to its venue along with traditional hay production.



Eric Boettger, NRCS Resource Conservationist, explains how a penetrometer is used to measure soil compaction.

The workshop included an informational presentation from the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management's Office of Water Resources where Brian Zalewsky discussed the increased levels of nitrogen and other pollutants in the Aquidneck Island watersheds. Possible sources of pollutants were pinpointed along with some suggested remedies to improve the water quality on Aquidneck Island. In addition, Eric Boettger, Resource Conservationist at Rhode Island NRCS, explained the conservation pyramid for agricultural watersheds where generous financial and technical assistance are available from NRCS to improve soil health and water quality.



Greenville Vineyards, grows several varieties of grapes on 24 acres of historic farmland to produce about 3,500 cases of wine annually.

Jim Turenne, RI NRCS Assistant State Soil Scientist, completed a soil health demonstration where attendees learned about the various soil profiles at Greenvale Vineyards including Newport, Pittstown, and Stissing soils. Emphasis was placed on the attributes and benefits of each soil for agricultural production.

Lastly, Molly Allard of the Rhode Island Association of Conservation Districts explained the organization's role as the initial source contact for agricultural producers to obtain information on technical services and financial assistance available to the Rhode Island agricultural community. It should be emphasized that all the presenters at the workshop share a long-term commitment to the Federal/State/Local Government conservation delivery system to help private landowners, communities, and others conserve natural resources throughout Rhode Island.