



# Howell County Soil and Water Conservation District Fall Newsletter

USDA Service Center—Contact at 417-256-7117 Ext. 3  
3210 Hoover Drive- West Plains, MO

**District Manager**  
Amber Comstock

**Resource Conservationist**  
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**District Technician**  
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**District Conservationist**  
April Wilson

**Howell County Soil and Water Conservation Board of Supervisors**

Mary Scott, Chair  
Vicki Proffitt, Vice-Chair  
Sarah Kenyon, Secretary

Todd Wilbanks, Treasurer  
George Kramer, Member

## Upcoming Board Elections

The Howell County Soil and Water Conservation District is under the control of a local Board of Supervisors. There are four elected positions and one appointed position through the University of Missouri Extension. The terms are four year terms and they are unpaid. Every two years there is an election and two positions go up for election. By having two positions filled at a time, at least half of the board stays and is familiar with the process of the district. The board is responsible for developing a yearly plan of operations designed to address the most pressing local natural resource concerns. As well as, hiring, firing, and setting salaries and benefits of district employees.

There is a board member that represents each area of Howell County. The two sections that are up for election this year are: the western part of Howell County, north of Hwy 160 and the candidates for this area are John Roberts, Scott Riley, and Jane Rogers. The other section is the central part of Howell County surrounding the city of West Plains and the candidates are Jake Wooderson, Mary Scott, and Randy Pace. A nominating committee is set by the board and they came up with nominations for candidates to run in each area. If someone wishes to run, he or she must bring a petition to the district at least 10 days before the election with 10 people's signatures nominating that person for the position.

All landowners in the county are eligible to vote. There is only one vote per farm unless the husband and wife are listed as owning the farm, then each of them can vote.

If you or someone you know are interested in running please contact the office at 256-7117 Ext. 3 to find out more information. **We encourage all landowners to join us for a customer appreciation day and to vote on June 4, 2010 at the USDA Service Center. Voting will be open from 8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. and lunch will be provided from 11:30 A.M. to 1:30 P.M.**

## Cost Share Assistance Available for Fall Seedings

The Howell County SWCD will have Cost-Share money available in the fall for seedings. If you are interested in overseeding legumes next winter please be in touch with the office soon. Our program requirements may require you to put the lime on 6 months prior to seeding. Therefore, it is important to be in touch with the district, as well as getting a current soil test.



### **No-Till Drills for Rent**

**The Howell County Soil and Water Conservation District has a 10 ft Haybuster Drill, which is good for putting in cool season grasses and legumes without tearing up the field. The district also has a 6 ft Great Plains Drill, which is perfect for warm season grasses, food plots, and small areas. The cost to rent the drills is \$8 an acre, with a \$50 minimum and deposit to ensure that the drills come back in good condition. The drills can be picked up at the USDA Office Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Please call 417-256-7117 ext. 3 with any questions or to schedule a time to rent the drill.**

### **Rotational Grazing Systems**

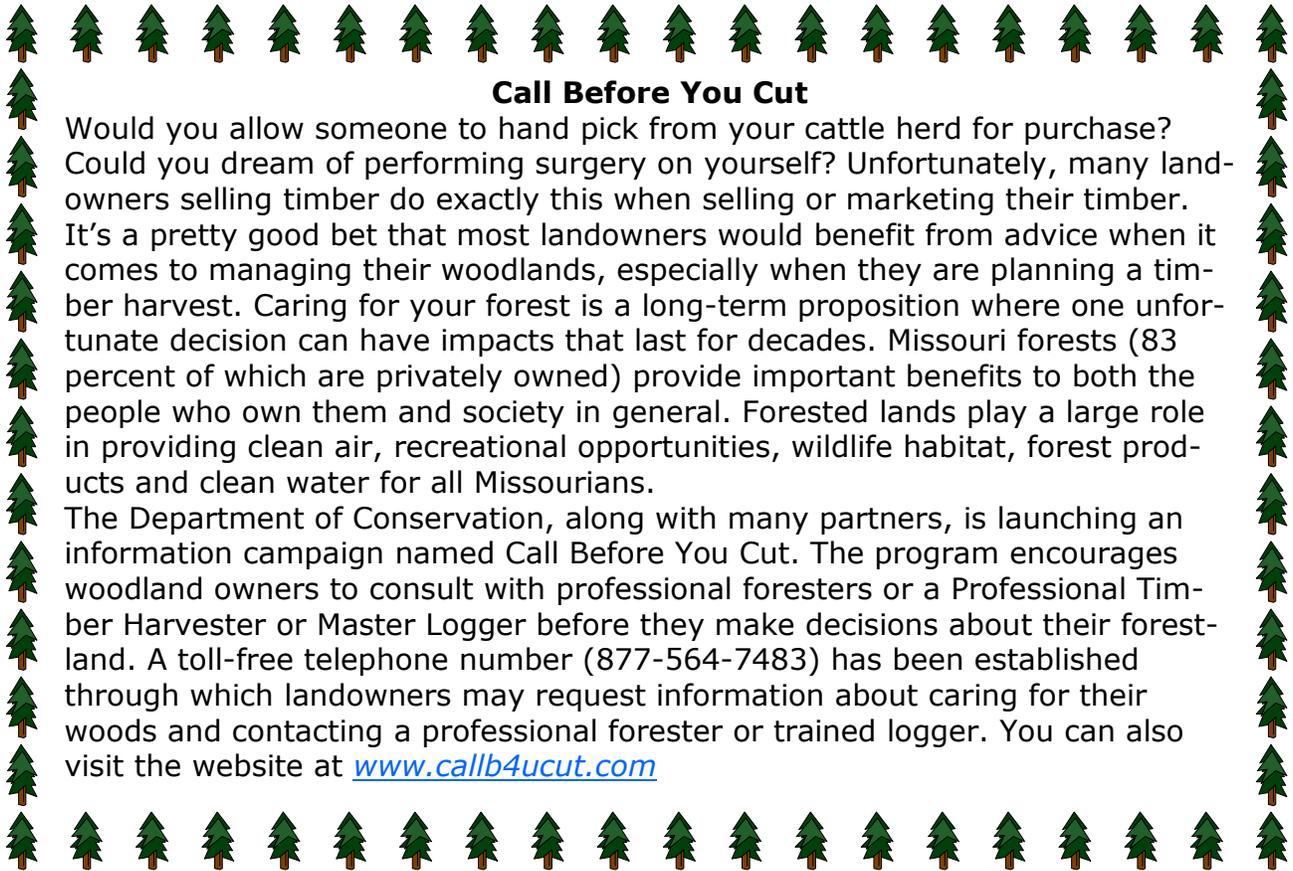
By: Scott Cline, District Technician

This is a good time of the year to be thinking about splitting your pastures up into smaller paddocks. With smaller paddocks, you can manage your grass and control some of your invasive species with the amount and timing of grazing that you do. This practice will also help to keep the quality of your grass higher as you rotate your stock instead of keeping them in one area where there may be some more desirable plants. One of the best qualities of a rotational grazing system, is that you can build your system around your needs and what best suits your schedule. This can be done by moving cattle on a daily basis or by spreading the time out and maybe moving one day a week. When designing a system to meet your needs, always remember that these systems are flexible and there to help you and your pastures do better.

These systems help you to minimize your time in moving cattle and they can also help ease costs in the winter months. With a rotational grazing system, you can set aside some of your paddocks in the summer and fall to use for stockpiling. Having these stockpiled grasses available in the winter months, can ease the cost of feeding hay. Depending on the weather in the late summer and fall, you could head into winter with a few pastures that you haven't had to graze in a few months. This can be a great help and cut down on the expenses of buying hay or even putting up your own hay.

The Howell County SWCD has programs available to help with the cost of fence and a water system that you may need to complete your grazing system. The fencing program can pay up to \$60 an open acre for the cross fencing. The water program can pay up to \$85 an open acre to install waterers, waterline, and the trenching and backfilling. There is also a program for drilling wells to be used in a grazing system. To be eligible for the cost share associated with the grazing system, you must attend a grazing school. These schools are being held around the area this spring and summer for anyone that is interested. The dates and locations for these schools are listed at the bottom of page 3 of the newsletter.

If you have any questions about any of our programs please feel free to contact us at 417-256-7117 Ext 3.



### Call Before You Cut

Would you allow someone to hand pick from your cattle herd for purchase? Could you dream of performing surgery on yourself? Unfortunately, many landowners selling timber do exactly this when selling or marketing their timber. It's a pretty good bet that most landowners would benefit from advice when it comes to managing their woodlands, especially when they are planning a timber harvest. Caring for your forest is a long-term proposition where one unfortunate decision can have impacts that last for decades. Missouri forests (83 percent of which are privately owned) provide important benefits to both the people who own them and society in general. Forested lands play a large role in providing clean air, recreational opportunities, wildlife habitat, forest products and clean water for all Missourians.

The Department of Conservation, along with many partners, is launching an information campaign named Call Before You Cut. The program encourages woodland owners to consult with professional foresters or a Professional Timber Harvester or Master Logger before they make decisions about their forestland. A toll-free telephone number (877-564-7483) has been established through which landowners may request information about caring for their woods and contacting a professional forester or trained logger. You can also visit the website at [www.callb4ucut.com](http://www.callb4ucut.com)

### Upcoming Grazing School Dates:

Location	Dates	Contact
Mountain Grove Fruit Experiment Station	May 11-13	Missy Wollard 417-741-7343 x 3 missy.wollard@swcd.mo.gov
Squires Sale Barn	Aug 2-4	Stacy Hamblton 417-679-3525 HambltonS@missouri.edu
Houston	July 28-30	Sandy Wooten 417-967-2028 x 4 sandra.wooten@swcd.mo.gov
Willow Springs	Sept 1-3	Amber Comstock 417-256-7117 x 3 amber.comstock@swcd.mo.gov
Alton	July 19-21	Sarah Kenyon 417-778-7490 KenyonS@missouri.edu
West Plains	May 25-27	Howell County Extension 417-256-2391 HambltonS@missouri.edu

Grazing Schools are a required course for landowners who want to receive cost share assistance from the Howell County SWCD to install a rotational grazing system. However, anyone can attend the school to learn more about installing and managing a rotational grazing system. If you are interested in attending a school, please call the contact person for the school you are interested in attending.

## ***Buffers for Wildlife***

Conservation buffers are strips of grass, trees or shrubs, or a combination of them along a change in habitat types. As the name implies, a buffer provides a cushion, or buffer, between intensive farming operations and other lands or waterways. There are a number of practices that are called buffers. Most common are grass, shrub and tree plantings along a stream, sinkhole, or woodland edge.

A primary reason many landowners establish a buffer is to improve water quality. The grass or other vegetation slows runoff waters, allowing sediment and farm chemicals to settle out into the buffer rather than shoot full speed into streams or sinkholes.

In addition to water quality, the new vegetation established in a buffer is an opportunity for new sources of food and cover for wildlife. Native plants, forbs and legumes recommended provide the foods many wildlife species need. The recommendations also consider the winter cover that can be provided. A buffer may be ideal as habitat, because it often borders a food source on one side and water on the other.



While there isn't much question that new strips of vegetation can attract wildlife, there is a question of whether wildlife can survive in a buffer. Since most buffers are long, narrow strips, they are more easily combed by predators. Bird nesting success generally drops off in buffers compared to larger habitat blocks. Buffers greater than 60 feet in width can offset this ease for predators.

As a rule, more plant diversity means more wildlife diversity. Researchers from Iowa State University found five times as many species of birds in a riparian buffer of grasses, shrubs and trees as had existed in a non-buffered pasture before buffer establishment.

Several programs exist to help cost-share on establishment of buffers and fencing to exclude livestock. Some of these pay annual rental payments or one time incentives for establishment. In addition, if fencing out water sources such as streams there are funds to provide alternative water.

For more information, contact us here at the USDA Office at 417-256-7117 ext. 3.

### **Food Plot Seed Available**

The Heart of the Ozarks Chapter of Quail Forever is offering annual grain food plot seed to area landowners. Available seed will be soybeans, milo, and corn. The seed is offered at a much reduced cost which is usually shipping and bagging. It will be available April 17th from 10 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Ozark Regional Stockyard. If you have questions please contact Brad McKee at 417-256-7117 ext.114 or [brad.mckee@mdc.mo.gov](mailto:brad.mckee@mdc.mo.gov).

### **When Should I Fertilize?**

This is the age old question that seems to be asked by many this time of year. “It seems like everyone is fertilizing, I guess that I should be too”. That tends to be the simple answer when this topic gets discussed. But is that always the right answer? Often times it isn’t. So when is the right time to fertilize? Well...it depends on your situation and what your goals are for the given acres.

For cool season grass, you need to figure out what you want to do with the field in question. Is it going to be harvested as hay or pasture? If hay is what you have in mind, spring fertilization is probably your best bet. You will be able to get as much growth as you can prior to harvesting. If pasture is what you want, you are probably better off to apply your fertilizer in the fall. Why? Most of the time when spring arrives, we have more pasture than we know what to do with anyways. Why would we want to promote more grass when we don’t need it? In the fall, however, we generally run a little short. By applying your fertilizer in the fall, you are promoting that fall growth that will take you into the winter months a little later thus reducing your hay feeding. A good time to start your fall fertilization is usually around the middle of August. This will get the fertilizer on the ground in time for the “normal” fall rains.

There is one exception to this rule for pasture. If you are either planting legumes, or trying to feed the legumes, you may want to apply some of your fertility in the spring, and some again in the fall. We usually recommend applying your phosphorus and potassium in the spring and all of your nitrogen in the fall. This will feed the legumes without encouraging too much grass growth that may overtake the legumes. The nitrogen will then be available for the grasses later in the year to assist in your stockpiling efforts for winter grazing. As always, we strongly recommend taking a soil test prior to spreading any fertilizer or lime. You may be surprised on what your results are.

In summary, just because your neighbor is fertilizing, doesn’t mean that it is the right time for you to be fertilizing. As much as fertilizer costs, you want to make sure that you get the most bang for your buck. Feel free to contact us if you have any questions. We can be reached at (417) 265-7117.

### **Conservation Stewardship Program**

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) is a voluntary conservation program with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) designed to encourage agricultural and forestry producers to adopt additional conservation practices and improve, maintain and manage existing ones.

“This is not a land-retirement program,” JR Flores NRCS State Conservationist says. “CSP encourages additional conservation activities on working, agricultural land.”

The last CSP sign-up saw the majority of landowner’s applications being accepted into contracts. Typical contracts have payments between \$7 and \$14 per acre for the next 5 years.

Landowners may sign up for it on a continuous basis. For more information about CSP, contact the local NRCS office or visit [http://www.mo.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/CSP/stewardship/csp\\_general.html](http://www.mo.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/CSP/stewardship/csp_general.html)

# Field Day

With the Howell County Soil and Water Conservation District and  
Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Come join us for a Field Day at Dan Corman's Farm, where we will look at his grazing system and find out how and why it works for him. We will be looking at and discussing cross-fencing, watering systems, and forages.

**When: Friday May 7th at 5:00 p.m.**

**Where: Dan Corman's Farm off of CR 2320 North of  
West Plains**

Please call to register and get directions to the farm by 4:30 p.m. on May 5th at 417-256-7117 ext. 3. The Howell County Soil and Water Conservation District will be serving sandwiches afterwards and would like to have a headcount to turn into the caterer.

\*\*\* There is no cost to attend this event. \*\*\*



Or Current Address

Howell County Soil and  
Water Conservation District  
3210 Hoover Dr  
West Plains, MO 65775