

# Reporter

ST. CHARLES COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

## Two Pests With Potential to Move into County

### Imported Fire Ant

Imported fire ants (IFA) pose a threat to people, animals, crops and equipment. These non-native pests often are found in hay bales, and can easily move into non-infected areas of the country through the transportation of bales from one area to another. Recent drought conditions created a demand for hay and hay bales from outside the county, and there is a high risk of IFA infestation with hay brought in from southern states.



USDA has created an industry alert titled: "Questions and Answers for Producers, Sellers, and Buyers of Baled Hay Moving from Areas under Quarantine for Imported Fire Ant". This publication contains useful information to help respond to questions from farmers, ranchers, hay growers, and suppliers as they work to respond to adverse weather conditions and find important feed sources for livestock. Its goal is to help support commerce and the movement of hay, while guarding against further spread of the imported fire ant. The Industry Alert can be found at:

<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/BaledHayIndustryAlert.pdf>

### Emerald Ash Borer

Several sightings of Emerald Ash Borer have been reported in Platte County near Kansas City, Mo., and in Reynolds County near Eminence, Mo., and various agencies have taken steps to reduce the further spread of this Ash tree pest.



These borers are not a danger to people or animals, but are fatal to native Ash trees, which were commonly planted in many urban settings.

On its own, the beetle will only fly a few miles, but it is easily and quickly transported to new areas when people inadvertently move EAB larvae inside infested fire wood and ash nursery stock.

To help avoid further spread, do not bring firewood from home to camping and picnicking sites. Use only local sources of wood once you arrive at your destination.

Learn more about the Emerald Ash Borer at [www.eab.missouri.edu](http://www.eab.missouri.edu)

## Dry Times - 2012 Drought is One for the Record Books

Most people in St. Charles County who have farmed for more than 10 years know something about dry times. They know that drought is another unpredictable weather event for which a farmer must plan, and for which he/she may take a hit to the pocketbook.

There are good years and bad years for the men and women who work the land and produce our grains and raise the livestock that become our sustenance. 2012 is proving to be a bad year for many — not all, but many.

Reports across the county are just as varied as the amounts of rainfall that fell in different areas. When we are talking about crops.....we say that corn was lost, and that "soybeans have a fighting chance if we get significant rain", as Alan Boschert intoned. His farm and that of the family, the Elizabeth Boschert Family Farm, are in the St. Paul area where many grain farmers are facing losses in their corn fields. As of this writing (pre-hurricane Irene's arrival in our area), the soybeans, too, are looking a little bleak. But with predictions of 3-5 inches of precipitation by Sept. 2, that may have changed by the time The Reporter reaches your mailbox.

Mark Scott, Flint Hill farmer and Chairman of the Board of Supervisors for the Soil and Water District, said that within his own fields there is large variation in corn production. He is reporting zero yield in some fields, and may see as much as



Flynn Drilling Co., deepening a well on the Elizabeth Boschert Family Farm.

40 bushels to the acre in others. Scott also is a board member with the Corn Growers Association in Missouri, and he reports that the organization is telling corn growers to wait until harvest to assess yields.

"Once we get the corn into the bins, we'll have an idea of the damage."

"It depends where you are in the county," he said. "Near Orchard Farm, where we have some of the best soil in the world, they're reporting 50 to 100 bushels per acre. South of Wentzville it's 7 to 10, and here in Flint Hill, I'm seeing 0 to 40."

He explained that the corn he planted May 31st was only knee high when the string of 100 plus days swept through, and those plants survived. The corn planted March 31st suffered 11 days of tortuously hot temperatures and the roots died.

"It wasn't just lack of rain," he said,

See **Dry Times**, pg. 3



## Conservation Program Funding Available

Now is the time to contact the NRCS office at 636-922-2833, ext. 3, if you are considering conservation practice installation in 2013. Funding for conservation practices may be available for eligible agricultural landowners/operators for the following programs:

**Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP):** Funding is available for Cover Crops, Grazing Systems, Pasture and Hayland Planting, Nutrient Management, Pest Management, Seasonal High Tunnels, Forest Stand Improvement, Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment, Tree/Shrub Establishment, Wildlife Habitat Practices, Residue Management (No-till), Irrigation Systems, Waste Storage Facilities, Waste Treatment Lagoons, Manure Transfer and more. EQIP, a popular program since 2005, has provided over \$626,300 in obligated funds for conservation practice implementation.

**Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP):** This voluntary program provides technical assistance to private agricultural landowners for the development of upland, wetland and aquatic, and other types of wildlife habitat.

**Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP):** If you have any conservation practices already in place in your farming operation such as residue management, nutrient management (according to a soil test taken at least once in 3 years), terraces, waterways, cropland flooding for wildlife, etc., this program may be for you. CSP is a voluntary conservation program designed to encourage agricultural and forestry producers to adopt additional conservation practices and improve, maintain and manage existing ones.



# Race for the Rivers 2012 Draws Big Crowd



The Annual Race for the Rivers event drew big crowds this year, with good weather and calm waters. Other than a little wind, the day was perfect. The Soil and Water Conservation District once again hosted a soil painting booth, and had over 60 visitors, including about 30 young painters. Some photos from the day feature a ride in the "Junebug" (above), a large canoe brought to the event by the Missouri Department of Conservation and navigated by experts from Big Muddy Adventures and Quapaw Canoes; a pirate (right) who strolled the grounds looking for young people who wanted to attend "Pirate School"; river racers arriving on the banks of the St. Charles Riverfront (bottom right); young ladies all geared up for a ride in the Junebug (bottom left), and a couple of soil painters (left).



Other booths included water play for kids, crafts such as sun painting; hand-made jewelry; the Missouri Department of Conservation stream table; canoe and kayak vendors; clean water displays and much more. Race for the Rivers is organized by Greenway Network, a grassroots, volunteer-based organization whose mission is to conserve natural resources, encourage sound management of the area's watersheds and protect the quality of life for all citizens.



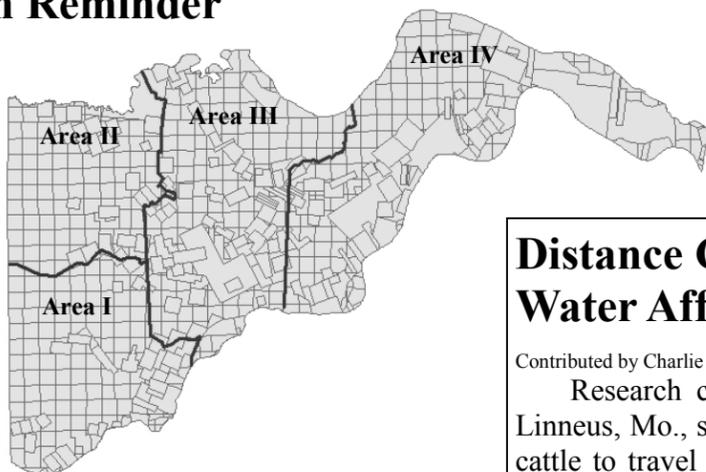
## SWCD Supervisor Election Reminder

Elections for supervisory positions on the Soil and Water Conservation District Board are planned for late November during the district's annual meeting.

In Area I (map at right), Paul Kamphoefner will be on the ballot again, and other candidates can be written in on the day of the election.

In Area III, Don Johnson will once again run for the board position, and other candidates can be written in on the day of the election.

The election will be held in conjunction with the SWCD Annual Meeting in November at the University of Missouri Extension office in St. Peters. For more information, call 636-922-2833, ext. 3



The map above shows the Areas of the county for purposes of the Soil and Water District. Each area has one agricultural landowner on the Board of Supervisors for the SWCD. This year's elections are for Areas I and III.

### Food Cost Prediction:

The USDA Economic Research Service is predicting that beef and veal prices will rise by 4% to 5% in 2013, and that cereals and bakery products will see above average inflation throughout 2013, and possibly into 2014, due in part to the 2012 drought.

The soil and water conservation district does not endorse nor recommend any of the vendors/contractors advertised in this newsletter, furthermore, any contractor/vendor that wishes to be added to the district's contractor/vendor list can be added upon request.

## Mark These Dates



### Workshop Teaches Deer Management Strategies

Call Today! 636-528-4877, ext. 3

Saturday, September 22, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., at the Powder Valley Nature Center in Kirkwood.

Do you ever wonder how many deer you should be harvesting off your property? Would you be interested in making your habitat more attractive to mature bucks? Are you curious about incentive programs available for habitat improvement?

If so, this event is for you! The Missouri Department of Conservation will hold this free workshop at the Powder Valley Nature Center in Kirkwood on September 22.

Topics to be covered include deer biology and behavior, herd and habitat management, data collection techniques and cost-share programs.

Registration is required and a complimentary lunch will be provided. Seating is limited to the first 200 people, so call today to save your seat. For more information or to register, call 636-528-4877, ext. 3

### Best of Missouri Market Set for October 5-7

The Missouri Botanical Garden, 4344 Shaw Blvd., St. Louis, will host the Best of Missouri Market event October 5-7. The three-day annual event draws nearly 25,000 visitors and features the products of more than 120 Missouri food producers and crafters. Among the items offered will be fresh produce, baked goods, fresh and dried flowers, herbs, hand-crafted items, baskets, wooden toys, custom jewelry and more. The outdoor event includes music and attendance prizes, and is open to the public. No registration is required. Visit the gardens and sample the best of Missouri's home-grown products.

### Soil and Water District Annual Meeting Date Set

Once again, the St. Charles County Soil and Water Conservation District will host a Thanksgiving Style Dinner for cooperators of the district during the Annual Meeting. The date has been set for November 15, 2012.

Postcards will be sent to all the landowners in early November. Attendees will learn more about cost-share programs with both the SWCD and the Natural Resource Conservation Service. Awards will be presented for the Cooperator of the Year and an Urban Conservationist. The districts Info/Ed Specialist is seeking out an entertaining speaker for the night. So mark your calendars and plan to join us for a night of food and fellowship.

### Distance Cattle Travel to Water Affects Pasture Utilization Rates

Contributed by Charlie Perkins, SWCD Technician

Research conducted at the Forage Systems Research Center at Linneus, Mo., shows that 600 to 800 feet is the maximum distance for cattle to travel to water to optimize pasture utilization. Uniform pasture utilization allows for even distribution of manure, providing uniform fertilization of pastures. Uniform pasture utilization allows plants to regrow at the same rate. Grasses farther from the water source are not harvested, allowing the plants to become rank. Grasses near the water source become over-grazed.

Funding through State Cost-Share or EQIP can assist with the cost of constructing water sources and fencing to achieve the goal of providing water to every field and improving pasture utilization. Contact SWCD or NRCS at 636-922-2833, ext. 3, for more information.



**Dry Times**, from pg. 1

“but heat that did them in.”

Alan Poggamueller, farmer and SWCD board member, reported 100 to 110 bushels to the acre in some areas of the river bottoms. In this case, soil health made the difference.

Scott recalled that in 1988, he and his father logged a yield of 33 bushels to the acre, and that was before the 1989 Farm Bill which included a requirement for the purchase of crop insurance in order to receive federal emergency funds. There are more safety nets in place these days to help farmers survive the hot, dry years.

1954 was another serious drought year, but there was no disaster declared and no emergency funds. Scott's father and many other farmers drove trucks to Iowa twice a week to buy corn and haul it back to the MFA elevator.

So every 30 years or so, the county suffers a drought and as time has moved on, the farmers and the agencies that support their efforts have gotten better at dealing with the damage.

Livestock in the county has suffered as well. Not only has hay been harder to come by as the days got hotter and drier, but many watering wells ran dry. On the Boschert farm, the cattle would come to the tanks and a few would drink it dry before the rest of the herd had a sip. The district was able to cost-share on a deeper well with the Boschert family so they would no longer have to make daily trips hauling water.

The county has few cattle ranchers, but experts say those farmers face the some of the biggest losses and the current Farm Bill does not provide protection or compensation for them. Burnt pasture, dwindling hay supplies and possible toxic fescue fields have forced some cattle owners to sell parts of their herds.

Drought assistance dollars came from three sources: state cost-share through the release of emergency funds by the Department of Natural Resources, and federal cost-share through the Natural Resources Conservation Service and USDA's Farm Service Agency.

The funds through the district totaled \$68,495 in actual contracts which included 6 wells, one pump, and 2 pipelines. There were 5,000 applications statewide, with over 11.8 million in funds allocated to farmers across the state. The totals will be larger once the emergency assistance program comes to a halt, with a prediction of perhaps 28 to 30 million dollars in emergency assistance to farmers in Missouri.

NRCS drought assistance dollars in the county totaled about one million: \$325,000 in reseeding for pasture establishment on lands already under contract with NRCS, and \$675,000 for farmers establishing grazing systems due to inadequate water supply.

FSA may have funding available through the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP). Funding has been requested, but actual dollars have not been allocated at the time of this printing. Please call FSA at 636-922-2833, ext. 2, if you would like more information.

There is no doubt that 2012 is a difficult year for farmers and one that has made the record books, but there is also no doubt that farming is as strong as ever in St. Charles County. After-all those families who have worked the land year after year are a tough bunch; bred themselves on the Missouri soil, and tied to that soil in a way most people will never understand.

## Life After Drought is Theme of Grazing School at MU FSRC

David Davis and Craig Roberts

Linneus, Mo. — There is grass and there will be grazing at the Management-intensive Grazing School, October 2- 4, at the University of Missouri Forage Systems Research Center (FSRC) in Linn County. A panel will be discussing “Life After Drought”, according to Craig Roberts, MU Extension Forage Specialist. “As always, we will cover the basics, as this is a grazing school for first-timers.

A new addition will be demonstrations of making ammoniated forage. This technique, used in times of short feed supplies, converts low-quality forage into feed with higher protein content. The class will most likely ammoniate drought-damaged corn-stalks. Usually the process involves wrapping stacked baled hay with a plastic tarp, sealing the edges and injecting anhydrous ammonia. The gas, a form of nitrogen, turns high-fiber forage into a tasty treat for cattle.

The school has taught thousands of producers how to improve pastures and boost grazing efficiency through the use of moveable electric fences to control grazing. Moving cows through smaller paddocks boosts feeding efficiency because most of the available grass and legumes are eaten instead of trampled.

“During drought, it is more important than ever to not waste feed,” said Dave Davis, superintendent of the MU FSRC.

According to Davis, the school involves much more than classroom talks. Participants build fences and turn in cattle to graze. First they calculate how much area to fence off in the pasture to supply feed for a day.

“The exercise is an eye-opener for beginners,” Davis said.

Participants will learn to measure dry matter content per acre available in a paddock. Then they will learn to eyeball a paddock to estimate available forage. The basics cover everything from soil nutrients to forage varieties and water systems to building fences. Other topics include livestock nutrient needs and applied economics of grazing.

The school is taught by MU specialists and USDA NRCS staff. Some NRCS payments for grazing practices require attendance at a grazing school.

The fee for the three-day school is \$250 per person or \$375 per couple. The fee includes a Missouri Grazing Manual, teaching materials, three lunches and two dinners. Applications accepted on a first-come, first-served basis, with a limit of 50 people.

Call during morning hours, Joetta Roberts at 573-499-0886, or send an email: [mfgc@mchsi.com](mailto:mfgc@mchsi.com). A downloadable brochure is available at [agebb.missouri.edu/mfgc/](http://agebb.missouri.edu/mfgc/).

## The Dust Bowl “Never Again”

Lessons learned during the 1930s have changed the face of farming across the nation. Now 90 years later, farmers and the agencies that support their efforts, work together to protect the lifeblood of America: the family farm. Years like this one, 2012, help drive home the lesson: learn from history lest we repeat it.

The Dust Bowl encompassed a large area, over 300,000 square miles of the Great Plains in Kansas, Oklahoma, Colorado, Texas, and New Mexico. Swirls of dust blanketed homes and clogged the windpipes of people and animals, killing young and old alike with “dust pneumonia”. Livestock was slaughtered or died from starvation. Crops were only a memory as year after year, farmers plowed the ground, dropped in the seed and then watched plants shrivel with the heat and drought. “Black Sunday” is a term most old-timers understand, and a day of fear and uncertainty that made the pages of many diaries, newspapers and books that are being read with renewed interest today.

One such book is *The Worst Hard Time* by Timothy Egan, in which he compiles the stories of several Dust Bowl families and documents the hardships they faced; a real history with eyewitness accounts of some of the toughest days in American history. It is about the hopes and dreams of people who traveled long distances to own a piece of ground in the “promised land”. A land basically stolen from Native Americans and torn from beneath the feet of great herds of bison, and given at a pittance to pioneer farmers who, at first, had record crop yields and found great financial fortune. It tells the tale of poor, down and out travelers who staked their claims, dug a hole in the ground for their home and within 2-3 years had built a fine farm house and maybe even bought a new car or a fancy new tractor.

But then the dry years came. Drought that the plains had hosted periodically for all of time, but that had passed nearly unnoticed as the Native Americans and the great bison herds shifted with and adapted to the changing weather patterns. The prairie settlers didn't understand those patterns, or realize the value of the thousands of acres of luscious prairie: bountiful food for the animals and beautiful home for the nomads. Fields that had survived hail storms, tornadoes, fire, and drought...went under the farmer's plow. Plowing up the prairie changed, nearly eliminated, an ecosystem, and the consequences were deadly for all life on the plains.

The Dust Bowl era gave birth to conservation farming. It wasn't fast or easy, but the Great Plains did not become a desert as so many experts in the '30s predicted. And the survival of farming, and the ability to survive at all in the Dust Bowl fields, was made possible for the most part by one man: Hugh Bennett.

Egan's epilogue in the book includes this paragraph:

“During a three-year drought in the 1950s, dusts returned. There were big storms covering roads and spinning over towns but nothing like Black Sunday. Droughts in 1974-1976 and 2000-2003 made the soil drift. But overall, the earth held much better. Why no second Dust Bowl? In 2004, an extensive study of how farmers treated the land before and after the great dusts of the 1930s concluded that soil conservation districts kept the earth from blowing. There was also irrigation water from the Ogallala to compensate for drought, but it was not available in many parts of the dry farming belt. What saved the land, this study found, was what Hugh Bennett had started: getting farmers to enter contracts with a soil conservation district and manage the land as a single ecological unit. By 1939, about 20 million acres in the heart of the Dust Bowl belonged to one of these units. Hugh Bennett died in 1960 at the age of seventy-nine. He is buried in Arlington National Cemetery. His legacy, the soil conservation districts spread throughout America, is the only New Deal grassroots operation that survives to this day.”

Soil health, cover crops, careful planning with attention to all the players in the field: the weather, the organisms, the pests, the temperature, the moisture, the soil texture...and how all these things have a symbiotic relationship and nothing can be ignored: those are the lessons for today's farmer.



# Reporter

ST. CHARLES COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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## Missouri Team Places First at Canon Envirothon

PEMBROKE HIGH SCHOOL FROM KANSAS CITY, MO. WINS THE 2012 COMPETITION

A five-member team of high school students from Pembroke High School in Kansas City, Mo. has won the 2012 Envirothon, a weeklong environmental education competition sponsored by Canon U.S.A., Inc. The winning team was announced during the closing ceremonies at Susquehanna University in Selinsgrove, Pa. on Thursday, July 26th.

Fifty-four teams from across 44 states, nine Canadian provinces and one Canadian territory completed training and testing in natural resource categories such as soils and land use, aquatic ecology, forestry, and wildlife. Every year an additional topic is incorporated into the competition based upon a current environmental issue. This year's topic was Nonpoint Source Pollution/Low Impact Development.

"At a time when the conservation of natural resources is critically important to our planet, it is wonderful to see a large group of bright, dedicated students from across North America test their skills in a challenging environmental competition," said Bunji Yano, senior director and general manager, Corporate Communications, Canon U.S.A. "This year was a very close competition and all of the students should be extremely proud of themselves and their effort."

At stake for each team was a share of \$120,000 in scholarships and Canon products. Winning teams were selected based on points earned from hands-on field-testing, written tests and oral presentations. The Missouri team received a total of \$25,000 in Canon scholarships. West Hill Secondary School from Owen Sound, Ontario (\$20,000), and Enloe High School from Raleigh, N.C. (\$15,000), placed second and third, respectively. The fourth-place team, Chardon High School from Chardon, Ohio, received \$10,000 and the fifth-place team, The Mount Academy from Orange County, N.Y., received \$7,500.

Since 1997, Canon U.S.A. has been the title sponsor of this annual North American competition. The Envirothon is the culmination of a series of competitions that began during the past school year and included more than 500,000 high school students throughout North America.



## Mary S. Burt Envirothon Scholarship Winner

Kirsten Steiner, a graduate of Union Star R-II High School, is the recipient of the 2012 Mary S. Burt Envirothon Scholarship.

Kirsten received \$250 to be used for college-related expenses. She is attending the University of Missouri at Columbia and is enrolled in the Agriculture Department. Kirsten said she is particularly interested in horticulture. She is the daughter of Gary and Connie Steiner of Amity, Mo., and she participated in the Northwest Regional Envirothon.

The Mary S. Burt Envirothon Scholarship Fund was established by Mary Burt's family to memorialize the love and dedication Mary had for the natural world, and for the Envirothon Competitions. Mary, past district manager for the St. Charles County SWCD, was instrumental in establishing Envirothon in Missouri.



St. Charles County  
Soil & Water Conservation District  
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St. Peters, MO 63376-1695  
636-922-2833, ext. 3

#### Board of Supervisors

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Kervin Bryant, Soil Conservationist  
Deb Frazier, ACES

The mission of the Soil & Water Conservation District is to conserve the soil and water resources of the county; promote the wise use of these resources through education; protect residents from undue hardship caused by erosion, sedimentation and flooding; protect the agricultural soil base to ensure continued productivity; and preserve the quality of water and water courses within the county.