



Newsletter

2011 Spring

The existence of man depends on six inches of topsoil & the water that falls on it.....Save them

Congressional Budget Update

Last Week, President Obama and Congressional leaders finally reached a fiscal year (FY) 2011 budget deal, averting a government shutdown. The agreement calls for a \$38 billion cut below FY 2010 levels—reducing agriculture funding by \$3 billion, including a \$118 million cut to the NRCS budget. The Conservation Operations account, which funds Conservation Technical Assistance, was funded at \$872 million, \$15 million below FY 2010. The Watershed Rehabilitation Program was funded at \$18 million, a \$22 million cut. Both the Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations account and the Resource Conservation and Development program were eliminated. Funding for mandatory Farm Bill conservation programs was also cut. The Wetlands Reserve Program was limited to 202,218 acres, a \$119 million reduction. The Conservation Stewardship Program was funded at \$649 million, a \$39 million cut. The Environmental Quality incentives program received \$1,238 billion, \$350 below the level authorized in the 2008 farm bill. None of these reductions included the 0.2 percent across the board cut to non-defense accounts. The agreement is expected to narrowly pass both chambers by Friday when the current short-term continuing resolution

Nutrient Management & Soil Health—Important Factors for you and your Operation

The SWCD held a workshop in Crane on March 8th with approximately 75 attendees. We thank each one of you who came out & supported our workshop and hopefully you came away with some information that you can use in your operation. By attending, you were given a free soil test coupon; please redeem that coupon by June 17th. With input costs growing, we need to think about how we manage the health of our soils on our farms. Healthy soils cycle nutrients more efficiently, maximizing productivity & profitability. We need to manage more by disturbing soil less, diversify with crop diversity, and grow living roots throughout the year to feed the soil organisms, your natural factory workers, while keeping the soil covered as much as possible. Soil cover conserves moisture, affects ground temperature, suppresses weed growth & provides the habitat needed for members of the soil food web. If improving the soil health is your goal, you should not see the soil very often. Check out Ray Archuleta's slake test on youtube.com for his video. Ray is a conservation agronomist in North Carolina who works with NRCS. His number is (336) 370-3332. If you Google Ray Archuleta, you will come up with many sites. A soil & water district in North Dakota has some good resource materials on their website referred to me, www.bcsd.com click on soil health in right side bar for PDF resources. You can always contact us for more info as well as NRCS in Christian County or the local University Extension office.

NRCS Assistance Supports Organic Growers

Columbia, MO—Missouri's organic farmers and those transitioning to organic production have until May 20 to apply for the next round of financial assistance available through the Natural Resources Conservation Service, State Conservationist J.R. Flores said.

Flores said about \$1.3 million is available through NRCS' Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). That is Missouri's share of the \$50 million nationwide initiative. Eligible producers include those certified through USDA's National Organic Program, those transitioning to certified organic production, and those who meet organic standards but are exempt from certification because their gross annual organic sales are less than \$5,000.

EQIP promotes agricultural production and environmental quality. Through EQIP, farmers and ranchers receive financial and technical assistance to help install structural conservation practices and to implement management systems that promote conservation.

Flores said conservation practices could include planting cover crops, establishing integrated pest management plans, constructing seasonal high tunnels, or implementing nutrient management systems consistent with organic certification standards.

Under EQIP Organic Initiative contracts, NRCS provides financial payments and technical assistance to help producers implement conservation measures in keeping with organic production. Beginning, limited resource, and socially disadvantaged producers may obtain additional assistance. The 2008 Farm Bill limits EQIP payments for organic operations to \$20,000 per year per person or legal entity, with a maximum total of \$80,000 over six years.

To apply for EQIP or to get more information about EQIP and other NRCS programs, contact the local NRCS office at (417) 581-2719 ext 3 or www.mo.nrcs.usda.gov/programs

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Meat Inflation Accelerates as Demand grows for U.S. Beef, Pork

Meat prices are rising in the U.S. at a faster annual rate than forecast a month ago, as increased demand for pork and beef exports erode inventories and high feed costs discourage livestock producers from expanding herds. The retail cost of meats will increase 4.5 percent to 5.5 percent this year, including a gain of as much as 7 percent for pork, the most of any major food group, the U.S. Department of Agriculture said today in a report. Beef prices will rise as much as 5.5 percent, or 1 percentage point more than the government forecast on Feb 24. "Demand just appears to be the driving force," said Dennis Smith, a senior account executive at Archer Financial Services Inc. in Chicago. "Domestic and export demand are both improving rather dramatically. U.S. exporters shipped 17 percent more pork to overseas buyers in Jan. compared with a year earlier, and beef sales were up 24 percent, according to the most-recent USDA data. As demand increases, cattle and hog producers have been reluctant to expand herds because the cost of corn, the primary livestock feed, has jumped 94 percent in the past year. Meat prices are rising faster than overall food costs at the supermarkets and restaurants, which the USDA said today will increase 3 percent to 4 percent, the fastest since a 5.8 percent jump in 2008 that was the most in 28 years. Global food prices rallied 25 percent in 2010 and set a record in February, according to the United Nations. The higher prices contributed to riots in North Africa and the Middle East that toppled leaders in Egypt and Tunisia.

Meat Inflation—"As commodity prices and input costs have risen over the past nine months, beef and pork prices are now significantly higher than in 2010," Ephraim Leibtag, a USDA economist, said in a note accompanying the report. "Increased inflation for beef and pork products is expected in the first half of 2011." Wholesale pork in the U.S. has climbed 28 percent in the past year and is the highest since August, while wholesale-choice beef jumped 14 percent, government data show. Hog futures rose today to the highest price since at least April 1986 on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, and cattle prices neared a record. The "outrageous" cost of corn is limiting gains in meat supply, Archer Financial's Smith said. "We are not really expanding red-meat production all that much, not like you would normally see when you have prices at such extremely high levels," said Dan Vaught, owner of Vaught Futures Insights in Altus, AR. "A lot of that simply goes back to the cost of feed." Retail-beef prices rose 1.9 percent last month and are 11 percent above Feb.2010, according to today's report. Pork rose 1 percent in Feb. and is 8.9 percent above year ago, the USDA said.
By: Elizabeth Campbell, Bloomberg Chicago IL

In the Spotlight



Andy Humble and Robert Hooten

The spotlight is on two young men; both are one of a kind in their commitment to protecting our natural resources in Stone County Missouri. Will Johnson, owner of Timber King portable sawmills, has contracted with the soil & water district to install a 2 acre Riparian Buffer spanning over 1400 feet of Crane Creek. The buffer is 120 feet wide and will be protected from livestock by a two wire high tensile electric fence. Farm manager, Robert Hooten is a cooperater in this project spending time in the installation of fence and the tree planting. On March 12th a crew of 6, including Will and Robert planted 800 trees in the planned buffer! The planting of trees is an important component in developing a strong buffer along the creek to protect from soil erosion during rain events. Established trees will develop large root systems to hold the soil. Also, the shade provided by the tree canopy will help keep water temperature in the stream cooler thus enhancing the habitat for the McCloud trout. This project was overseen by two Missouri Department of Conservation employees, Andy Humble and Shane Bush. Their involvement was crucial in the planning and implementing of such an important conservation footprint. The MDC tree planter (see photo) was used to plant the 800 trees which included such species as America Sycamore, Black Walnut, Bur Oak, Dogwood, Redbud and Paw Paw. We sure appreciate the expertise of these MDC employees and Robert Hooten for time spent on his tractor pulling the planter. Working on this project with landowner Will Johnson is very rewarding. This fly-fishing gentlemen truly has a heart for conservation, family and the Crane community.

SCHOOL NEWS



The soil demonstrations have begun in the Stone County schools. We educate the students on soil profiles and the need for conservation practices. They learn about erosion and pollution and the need to preserve our natural resources. They get to construct their own soil profile to take home and we always end our presentation with edible soil!!



Did you know?



- It takes 500-600 years for an aluminum can to break down.
- Taking a bath requires about 70 gallons of water, a 5 minute shower only uses about 20 to 25 gallons of water.
- A 1 drip per second faucet can leak 3,000 gallons of water a year.
- Water boils quicker in Denver Co than it does in New York City!

This year we added an outreach presentation to home schooled children in the surrounding area. Once a month the Shell Knob library hosts a class for home schooled students to focus on learning criteria. This month Stone County SWCD office presented the rain table and Enviroscape. Topics we discussed were soil erosion, point and non point pollution, and conservation practices. The ages of the students ranged from 5th grade thru 11th grade. Many thanks to the Shell Knob Library!!

To schedule a demonstration for your home school group contact us at Stone County SWCD at 417 723-8389.



National Stewardship Week is April 24 –May 1

This year the theme of National Stewardship week is Forests for People—More than you can Imagine!!

Education is a critical element of the conservation of our beloved forest land. Educating youth will help to ensure that the next generation will be wise stewards of America's natural resources.

FREE Trees—Going Green for Conservation in honor of Arbor Day!!

See Upcoming Events to find out when you can pickup your trees...

STONE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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Address Service Requested

Upcoming Events

Stone County SWCD is offering Free Trees in honor of Arbor Day—April 29th.

We will have approximately 360 trees including a conservation bundle, shortleaf pine, flowering dogwood, river birch, spicebush, golden currant, deciduous holly, false indigo and black chokeberry....First come first serve. Pick up your trees at 108-B Cortney Lane, Crane MO on April 28th and 29th. For more info, call us at (417) 723-8389.

2011 Grazing School Schedule

Halfway, MO—April 26, 29, May 3 6 (evenings, 6:30-9:30pm) and April 30 (Saturday, all day). Limited to 25 attendees. Contact Dallas Co SWCD, 417 345-2312, ext 3

Mt Vernon, MO—May 24, 25, 26 (daytime), MU Southwest Research Center. Limited to 40 attendees. Contact Lawrence County SWCD. 417 466-7682, ext 3

Neosho, MO—June 14, 15, 16 (daytime). Crowder College. Limited to 30 attendees. Contact McDonald/Newton Co SWCD, 417 451-1007, ext 3.

Marshfield, MO—September 13, 14, 15 (daytime). Limited to 30 attendees. Contact Webster Co SWCD. 417 468-4176, ext 3.

Forsyth, MO—September 19, 20, 21 (daytime), MDC Dalton Shooting Range, NW of Springfield . Limited to 40 attendees. Contact Greene Co SWCD, 417 831-5246, ext 3

If you would like information about other schools around the state visit the Missouri Forage and Grassland Council website at: <http://agebb.missouri.edu/mfgc>