



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

Cost Share Assistance Available

By: Melissa White

Stone County Soil & Water Conservation District has cost share funding available for landowners. It is our hopes to provide this financial assistance to eligible landowners for conservation practices.

If you have a need for seeding fields and would like to plan a spring planting on land where vegetative improvement or establishment is necessary to resolve any soil erosion concerns, call us now for planning. If you are interested in further intensifying any pastures for livestock by adding cross fencing and distributing water, we can provide financial and technical assistance. You must have attended a grazing school. The schools will start again in spring of 2011. Funding is available for woodland erosion, by excluding woods from livestock. This protects the soil and plant resources from grazing.

We are planning now and will continue in early spring with landowners who are interested in following a nutrient management plan for applying only necessary lime, N,P,K components per soil test results. The pest management plan provides an incentive per acre as well for following a plan to assist in determining whether, when and how an application of pesticides should occur; typically where pesticides have been inappropriately managed. Fields must meet the prescribed grazing standard on pastureland; the ability to rotate livestock between four paddocks.

We have conservation practices designated for the protection of water quality. For stream protection, practice may be applied on areas immediately adjacent to permanent or intermittent streams where livestock have uncontrolled access for watering purposes. The excluded areas would be fenced on both sides of the stream. These excluded areas may be flash grazed; there can be limited access to the stream. Cost share would be available for developing another water source for livestock. There is an incentive of \$500 per acre that is excluded, in addition to cost share to install practice. Funding is available for buffering streams by excluding livestock and planting trees; funding for water replacement and incentives are tied to this practice as well. If you have a need for a spring development or to decommission a well, these are also eligible practices.

Land eligible must have an assigned farm number from Farm Service Agency (FSA). A cooperater must have agricultural activity on 3 acres or more, or may own land of any size if \$1,000 or more of agricultural products are normally produced and sold in a year. When a farm changes ownership during the construction or implementation of a practice, the new landowner must become a cooperater and have a conservation plan approved to receive payment and/or follow through on maintenance agreement.

For more information, call us at the Soil & Water Conservation office at 723-8389 or check us out online at www.swcd.mo.gov/stone

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Extension Specialist Recommends Annually Testing Well Water for Bacterial Safety

Rural residents who get their water from private wells need to make sure their water supply is safe according to Bob Schultesis, a natural resources engineering specialist with University of Missouri Extension. The best way to make sure water is safe is with an inexpensive water test that monitors for bacteria and other contaminants that can make well water unhealthy. Test kits can be obtained through your local county's health department and can provide peace of mind for rural homeowners and can alert you to a serious problem that needs correcting." said Schultheis. For more information on water testing and treatment procedures, contact the nearest University of Missouri Extension Center. These helpful MU Extension publications are available: WQ101 "Understanding Your water Test Report," WQ102 "Bacteria in Drinking Water," WQ103 "Nitrate in Drinking Water" or WQ104 "Understanding Home Water Treatment Systems." These guides are also available online at extension.missouri.edu/webster. For your convenience test kits are available at the Stone County SWCD office.

OPEN COWS EVERYWHERE

By Eldon Cole, Livestock Specialist, University of Missouri Extension

I've heard veterinarian and cow-calf folks talk a lot this fall about amazingly high percentages of open cows. No known singular cause seems to be identified. It's not just in southwest Missouri as I've heard similar reports from extension specialists in other states. I hope your preg rates have not been as bad as I've heard. Open cows don't have a chance to make you much money in 2011 when the feeder market holds so much promise. If you have cows, don't be thinking you should get rid of them and switch to a stocker program. The next 2-4 years do hold promise of profitability in well-managed beef cow-calf operations.

I mentioned last month that trichomonas could be implicated in some open-cow situations. High temperatures, especially if your cows were on really "hot" fescue, is always a possibility for lost pregnancies. In checking our Show-Me-Select heifers the past fall, we didn't notice an unusual number of open heifers. Of course it takes two to tango so don't forget your bull power could be factor in open cows. One thing for sure if the open-cow problem is widespread, the 2011 calf crop will be lower than this year's thus giving more aid to the rising calf price.

In This Issue

<i>Hay School</i>	3
<i>Spotlight</i>	4
<i>School News</i>	5
<i>Stewardship conservation</i>	6

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IN THE NEWS

Gov. Nixon Selects New Director of Missouri Department of Natural Resources

Jefferson City, MO—Gov. Jay Nixon selected Sara Parker Pauley as the new director of the Missouri Department of Natural Resources. In her new position, Ms. Pauley, 45, will lead the Governor's efforts to grow the state economy by accelerating the development of renewable sources of energy, creating next-generation "green" jobs, and promoting energy independence in the state. Pauley also will manage agencies and programs focused on managing Missouri's state parks and historic sites and preserving and improving the state's natural and cultural resources. "We were looking for a leader prepared to meet the challenges of environmental stewardship and sustainable economic development in the 21st Century," Gov. Nixon said. "Sara Parker Pauley has a breadth of experience—and a proven track record of success—helping government, business, and non-profit groups find common ground and build consensus. That is the kind of problem-solving we need to promote new opportunities for "green" business practices across the economic spectrum—including within state government—and to accelerate the state's development of renewable sources of energy, including wind, solar and biofuels. "Advancing Gov. Nixon's agenda by developing new sources of clean, abundant energy is essential to growing our economy, promoting Missouri's energy independence and creating a greener, healthier, more prosperous state," Ms Pauley said. "I look forward to working with the business community, members of the legislature, the public and the environmental community to make Missouri a leader in renewable energy, in resource conservation, and in protecting our outdoor heritage for generations to come."

Lame Duck Brings Opportunities to Advance, or Impede, Conservation

After the long break for the elections, Congress will returned to work on Nov. 15th for a "lame duck" session. It's likely the session will only last a few days before an additional recess until after Thanksgiving. During the upcoming lame duck session of Congress, our representatives in Washington will be forced to make some tough decisions when it comes to allocating budgetary resources. These choices will have major impacts on our nation's natural resources and ability to produce food and fiber for the growing population. It's extremely important we make our conservation priorities known. Conservation districts will be particularly paying close attention to the debate on pending rural funding for Farm Bill conservation programs – and you should too. No matter where you live or what you do for a living, these issues impact everyone. After all, we all eat and we all rely on clean water and air.

Successful conservation efforts begin at the local level with technical assistance and funding from federal, state and local governments and the private sector. As Congress considers appropriations for fiscal year 2011, they'll have the opportunity to stand up for these locally-led efforts by ensuring farmers, landowners and communities in Missouri have the resources necessary to get the work done on the ground, where it counts for the benefit of entire communities. Or they could choose to sacrifice valuable conservation programs as an offset for other Congressional "priorities."

One of these critical, locally-led programs is USDA's Conservation Technical Assistance, which provides technical capabilities and expertise to help landowners adopt conservation practices on their property. Another highly successful program, 319 Nonpoint Source Grants under EPA, helps states and local communities leverage cost-share funding to address water quality issues resulting from agriculture, residential properties, storm water runoff and other sources for the benefit of entire communities. USDA's State and Private Forestry program is another important tool providing vital assistance to forest landowners and communities to manage, maintain and improve their forests and green spaces.

While we certainly understand and appreciate the need to remain fiscally conservative in the current budgetary climate, the health of our land, water and soil are too important to be put on the back-burner. Neglect now will lead to permanent losses for future generations.

Getting resources directly into the hands of states, local communities and conservation districts is the best way to maximize the value of our investment from the national level.

The Time Is Now For Estate Tax Reform

The lame duck session gives Congress yet another opportunity to address a critical question that it successfully managed to avoid during campaign season: what to do with the estate tax. Failure to enact reform will have major impacts on our nation's natural resources and our ability to produce food and fiber for the growing population.

The estate tax, as currently written, promotes the break-up, sale and development of family-owned farms, ranches, and green spaces. Without relief, we'll see many of these lands sold for development. Despite the fact that it expired last year, and is set to revert to its staggering pre-2001 tax levels starting on January 1, 2011, Congress is no closer to a resolution today than it was when this debate began more than 15 years ago. Every day Congress fails to act puts our nation's family farms and treasured green spaces at further risk of breakup and development, compromising the health of our water, soil and wildlife habitat.

Congress' failure to act will impact everyone. After all, we all eat, we all need clean water, and I would bet most of us would prefer to see rural and green spaces in favor of strip malls and condo complexes.

Several commonsense legislative proposals have been offered to exempt family farms and ranches from the estate tax and update existing estate tax incentives for voluntary, permanent protection of lands with conservation values. It's just a matter of overcoming partisan bickering and bringing it up for debate. Time is running out.

2010 Regional Hay School A Success

By: Melissa White

The University of Missouri Extension hosted a Hay School on Dec. 16th in Crane at the Fundamental Methodist Church with 45 registered attendees from various locations. The focus was on "Hay that Pays". The presenters did a wonderful job in helping landowners to understand the importance of forage testing, understanding the test results, the nutrient requirements of livestock, managing hay fertility, the economics of hay production, comparing raised and purchased hay systems, along with hay and balage management and hay storage.

For those up to the challenge, a hay quality quiz was presented for eight species of hay. You were to determine the species, % protein, ADF, NDF, TDN and RFV; which was reviewed prior to the challenge. When you sample test your hay, the analysis will give you the amount of moisture, dry matter, crude protein, ADF (acid detergent fiber), NDF (neutral detergent fiber), TDN (total digestible nutrients). Knowing the quality of your hay and the nutrient requirements of your livestock in their varying growth stages will help you in your overall feeding management program.

ADF is closely related to the digestibility of the forage. The higher the ADF, the lower the energy value. Good quality legumes will run ADF values in the 20's to mid 30% range. Grasses will range from low 30's to mid 40's; a good reason to support legumes in your pastures. NDF gives the best estimate of the total fiber in the forage and is closely related to animal intake. The more NDF a forage has, the less the animal will eat. Grasses again contain more NDF than legumes at the same stage of maturity. You want a forage with a low NDF and ADF. The TDN is used to measure energy and represents the total of digestible crude protein, carbohydrates and fat. Leafy, immature legumes run the highest on energy with levels going into the mid 60's whereas mature grasses can drop nearly 20 percentage points below that to mid 40's. Decent hay for lactating beef cows needs to be in the upper 50's or supplemental feed may need to be fed. RFV (relative feed value) is an index that ranks hay on a calculation of digestible dry matter and dry matter intake. As a guide, a 100 RFV would be seen in mature alfalfa hay. Most grass hays will fall below 100 while the legumes and legume-grass mixes will run over 100, even over 200 when forage is very immature and low in both ADF and NDF. RFV's below 80 normally will not meet many animal requirements for energy.

Tim Schnakenberg, agronomy specialist with Extension, talked about the effect of Stage of Harvest on Fescue Hay Quality and Animal Gain. If you were to cut fescue in the late boot to head around May 3rd, versus early milk stage and seed forming at around May 25th, you would have the following: DM (dry matter) intake lb. /day of 13.0 vs. 8.6, % digestibility of 68 vs. 56, % protein 13.8 vs. 7.6, lb. of hay fed per lb. of gain 10.1 vs. 22.5, lb. of hay per acre 1st cutting at 1334 vs. 2823 and ADG (avg. daily gain) 1.39 vs. .42. The analysis shows the goal would be for return not so much the yield; quality over quantity. You would have to feed twice as much of the late stage hay to get the nutrition values of feeding the early cut hay and more than double to get the same amount of gain on cattle. (Eval. based on 500 lb. Holstein heifer). It is better to cut early, even should it get wet, than to cut late May, June or July when aiming for quality and return. A bumper hay crop doesn't always mean a successful hay crop. The lower yield has a higher quality on 1st cutting and improves 2nd cutting. Looking at the Springfield precipitation records, for 5yr, 10yr, 30yr averages, we receive more rainfall in May and June than any other time. Cutting ahead of these rains, could offer great opportunity for 2nd cutting, good yield and quality after receiving spring showers. On alfalfa, the digestibility at standing is 70%, at 1/10 bloom (harvest) 67%, rained on is 57% and 3-week cutting delay is 52%. Three factors to remember when harvesting hay are: Stage of growth, plant species, and conditions at harvest. For trash in, is trash out.

Brie Menjoulet, regional agronomy specialist out of Hermitage, MO, talked on hay fertility management. Very good presentation and here were some discussion points: Get to know your soil, soil testing and nutrient buildup, soil properties and nutrient retention, nutrient removal rates, legumes as nitrogen source, fertilizer sources and application, liming. Through best management practices, you can improve some nutrient retention factors. Understanding nutrient removal rates, fertilizer value and meeting the removal needs are so important to soil health. If you are harvesting hay and removing nutrients, what are you doing to replace those nutrients. Are you putting back on through litter or commercial fertilizer, per soil test, are you feeding back on the land where forage was harvested, are you considering the timing of your application as well as consequences of forgoing fertilizer. Don't forget the importance of liming if needed for efficient use of your fertilizer. An example, if you have a PH of 6.5, you'll have 100% available nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium, if you have a PH of 5, N=77, P=48, K=77; a PH of 4, N=30, P=23, K=33, percentages. So, get to know your soil, take those tests, nitrogen is not easily retained in the soil and should be added just before times of greatest need, P and K levels can be built up in the soil, nutrients must be replaced, legumes can save you N fertilizer costs. Manures are a good source of fertilizer and organic matter, but be cautious of excessive Phosphorus levels, nutrient levels vary with different sources, and it will help improve overall soil health.

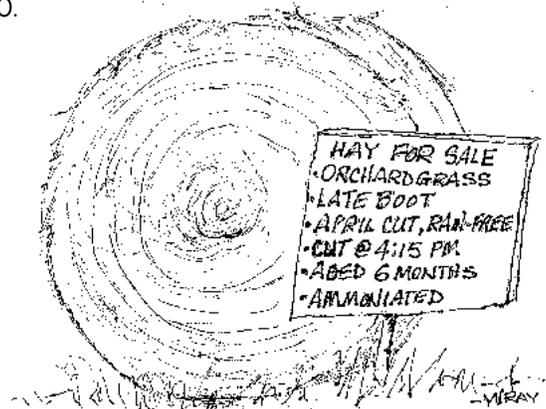
A wealth of information was presented, more than what can be spoken of here. I would encourage anyone with an interest to look to your extension office for information and guidance as you look to "Hay that Pays".

Presenters were: Tim Schnakenberg, Galena, Mo and Brie Menjoulet, Hermitage, Mo, both Regional Agronomy Specialists, Gordon Carriker, Reg. Ag. Business Spec., Ozark, Mo, Rob Kallenbach, State Forage Specialist, Columbia, MO, Bob Schultheis, Regional Natural Resources Engineer, Marshfield, MO, Dona Funk Goede, Regional Livestock Specialist, Stockton, MO.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Feb 22nd—27th Annual Southwest MO Spring Forage Conference University Plaza, Springfield MO. For more details and registration info contact Greene County SWCD at 417 831-5246

Be watching for the upcoming Stone County Forage Conference to be held in February 2011.



MASWCD 2010 Distinguished Service Award

Kathryn Braden, Taney County



“I volunteer eight days a week” is a statement many have heard our Distinguished Service winner say. She says “I look at my calendar every night to see where I am supposed to go the next morning. With my cell phone and addresses my car is my office on the road.” Always on the go, Kathryn Braden is active in several organizations that are related to soil and water conservation. She is a member of the Taney County SWCD Board, a member of the South Missouri Water Quality Project Board, on the Southwest Missouri RC&D Executive Board, and is a Commissioner on the Soil and Water Districts Commission. Kathryn also served 4 years as an Area Director on the Missouri Association SWCD Board which represents all MO districts at the national level and advocates for districts with MO government officials. In addition to her soil and water conservation work, Kathryn is also involved in several community activities. Kathryn and her husband Richard operate a 1700 acre ranch in Taney County. They have installed alternative watering systems and use a managed intensive grazing system on their land to decrease soil erosion. Her motto is “We all live downstream from someone and someone lives downstream from us. Remember to be a good neighbor to those downstream.”

In the Spotlight

The spot light this quarter is on Dale Burton who farms over 300 acres in northern Stone County with his wife Carol. They operated a dairy for about 35 years and now operate a cow calf operation. Dale has been a cooperater with the Stone County Soil & Water District since 1986 applying soil saving practices as needed since that time. Dale has looked to the district for technical assistance concerning weed control, nutrient management and grass land establishment to prevent eroding hillsides. A glance at Dale’s farm from atop the hill reveals a beautiful site of well managed rolling fields of pasture and hay land. This did not happen accidently but from Dale’s diligence and true caring about the land.

Dale has been a proponent of using a no-till drill to plant grass and legume seed thus allowing soil to remain covered. The science behind planting seed with a no-till continues to verify the importance of this practice not only to slow soil erosion but also to allow uninterrupted growth of important bacteria below the surface.

Dale is also a wealth of knowledge concerning the application of various herbicides for the control of weeds and insects on hay and pasture land. This comes with years of experience, trial and error. Though he looks to us for knowledge and information we have much to gain from Dale and his expertise.

This landowner spotlight would not be complete without acknowledging that anyone who meets Dale and Carol Burton will find after 45 years of farming together they have an optimistic attitude and sense of humor that is contagious. We appreciate Dale and Carol Burton for applying conservation practices on their farm for the benefit of the watershed and erosion control.

We must remember, if every landowner would practice good conservation, tons of top soil would be saved and our streams and rivers protected for our grandchildren and their children. Just ask Dale and Carol; they have 6 grandchildren and 1 great grandchild..



DaleBurton shown with son Dale ,and little Dale!



School News

2010 POSTER CONTEST WINNERS

The theme this year was **Conservation Habits=Healthy Habitats**. The Participating schools this year were Hurley, Crane, Blue Eye, Galena, and Reeds Spring. We estimate over 1700 posters this year with each school doing the preliminary judging then submitting their top three in each category. The winners at the county level went on to the Missouri State competition.

1ST PLACE WINNERS



Tucker Poole
Galena
K-1 grades



Mariah Aldrich
Crane
2-3 Grades



Kenzie Cockrell
Reeds Spring
4-6 grades



Rachael Elmore
Crane
7-9 grades



Taylor Cox-Hoffman
Crane
10-12 Grades

2ND PLACE WINNERS



Kenna Wise
Crane
K-2 grades



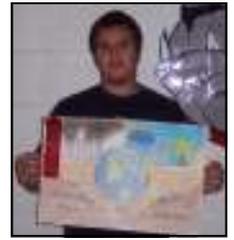
Jaylee Woodward
Crane
2-3 grades



Briana Hanebrink
Reeds Spring
4-6 grades



Tyler Horn
Blue Eye
7-9 grades



Steven Tillery
Blue Eye
10-12 grades

3RD PLACE WINNERS



Adam Murray
Crane
K-1st Grades



Mackynlee Ashcraft
Galena
2-3rd Grades



Madison Moreland
Crane
4-6th Grades



Darien Gideon
Blue Eye
7-9th Grades



Amanda Schnell
Crane
10-12th Grades

Congratulations Mariah!!



Mariah Aldrich along with her family and art teacher Stephanie Vaught were present to accept her award in winning first place at state level on Nov 30 at Tan-Tar-A resort in Lake Ozark MO. She stated "I wanted to thank everyone for this day. I like to thank the soil & water conservation district. It is an honor to be here. I want to thank Mrs. Vaught my wonderful art teacher." Congratulations Mariah!

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Missouri Leads Nation in Conservation Stewardship Program Contracts

Columbia, MO— The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will begin issuing Conservation Stewardship and Conservation Security Program (CSP) payments this month to thousands of farmers and ranchers in all 50 states to help maintain and improve the natural resources on their land. The yearly contract payments totaling \$500 million are authorized under the 2002 and 2008 Farm Bills. Missouri leads the nation with 1,939 Conservation Stewardship Program contracts which is the second most in the nation. In the coming weeks, Missouri NRCS will distribute more than \$38 million to Missouri landowners through the two programs. "I am very pleased with the response we received for CSP in Missouri," State Conservationist J.R. Flores said. "The money that has been obligated for farmers and ranchers will not only assist the individuals involved with the program to get conservation on the land, but will likely provide a stimulus to local economies." The 2008 Farm Bill replaced the Conservation Security Program with the Conservation Stewardship Program. In the next two months, Missouri NRCS will disburse \$21.7 million through the conservation Security Program and \$16.6 million through the Conservation Stewardship Program. The Conservation Stewardship and Conservation Security Programs encourage agricultural and forestry producers to address resource concerns by undertaking additional conservation activities and improving and maintaining existing conservation systems. Eligible lands include cropland, pastureland, rangeland and non-industrial forestland. More than 25 million acres have been enrolled in this innovative program that links conservation payments to environmental performance. USDA is accepting new applications from interested farmers, ranchers and non-industrial private forest landowners. State Conservationist J.R Flores says, "It rewards participants for conservation measures they have already implemented and for new measures they agree to add." The CSP has a continuous sign up, but only applications received by January 7, 2011 will be eligible for the next round of funding.

To Sign up, or re-apply for CSP, or to get more information about it and other NRCS programs, contact the NRCS office serving your county. Look in the phone book under "U.S. Government, Department of Agriculture," or access this website : <http://offices.usda.gov>