Dubois County Soil & Water Conservation District

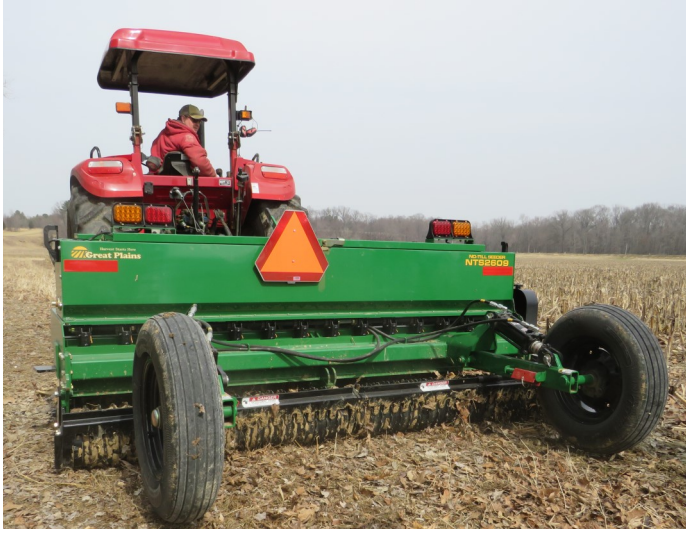
1486 Executive Blvd. Suite A • Jasper, IN 47546
812-482-1171 x3 • www.duboisswcd.org

Winter, 2022

The Conservation Conversation

SWCD Offers No Till Drill & Seeder For Rental

Since 2011 the Dubois County SWCD has rented a 7' Great Plains No Till Drill, now in 2022 we have added a 9'Great Plains Seeder to our offering.

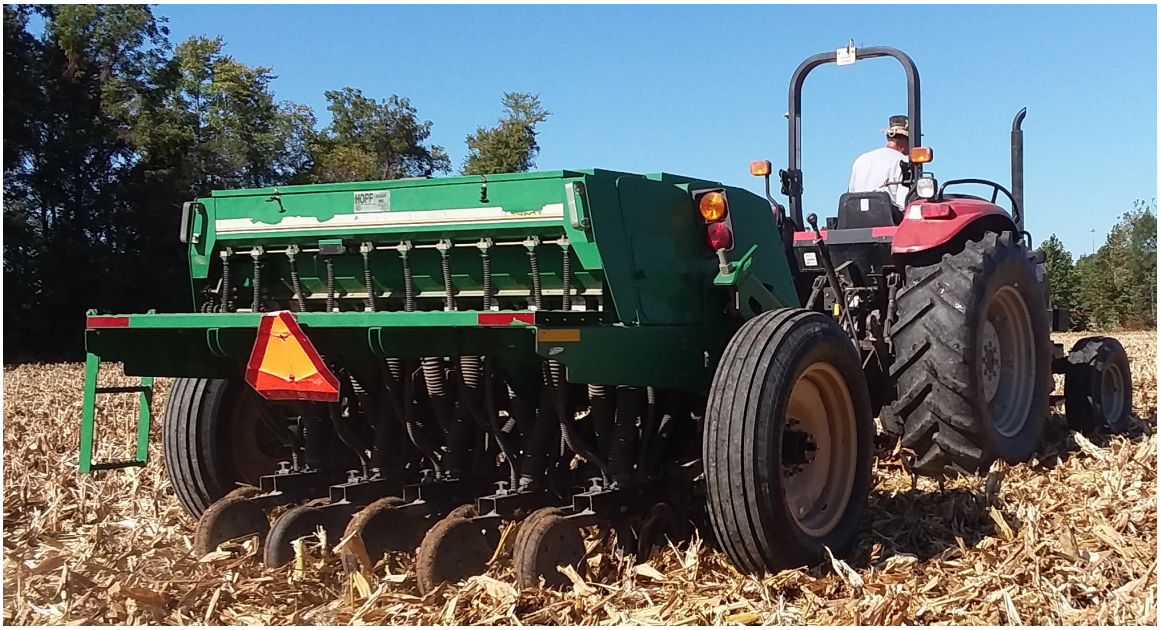


The NTS26 Series No-Till Seeder is equipped with a main and small seed box, making quick work of renovating pastures, reclaiming rights-of-way, and planting food plots.

Metering is ground-driven by the rear packer-roller. The NTS's till-age aggressiveness is controlled by angling the front spiked rollers. Protected by a metal wind shield, seed is directed to the ground be-low and gently pressed into the soil with the rear cast packer.

7′ Great Plains No Till Native Grass Conservation Drill can be used to plant soybeans, wheat and legumes as well as native/warm season grasses.

The rental cost is $10.00 per acre with a minimum charge of $100.
Go to duboisswcd.org/equipment to check our rental calendar then call our office to be added to the schedule. 812-482-1171, ext #3 or e-mail duboisswcd@gmail.com



Contents

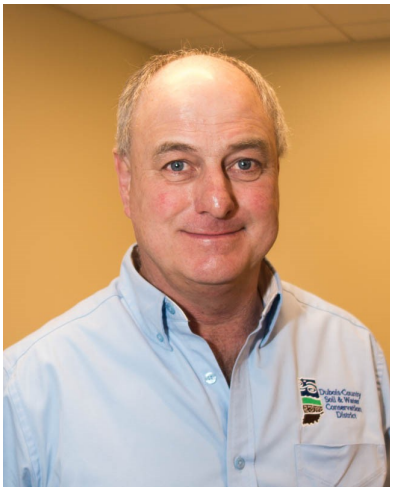
76th Annual Meeting & Supervisor Election

On Tuesday, February 1st 2022 our 76th Annual Meeting was held at the Ferdinand Community Center Mobel Room. 41 individuals attended in person and 6 virtually. SWCD staff presented reports on 2021 activities. If you were unable to attend and are interested in seeing these reports you can view their recording on our YouTube Channel.

It was great to be in person again. Cookies were eaten, SWCD Board elections were held, awards were presented and Alan Smock spoke about the 10 year history of LSI.

2022 Award Recipients	
Otto J Bauer Memorial Outstanding Conservation Farmer of the Year	Sam & Sandy Neukam
OFS Forest Stewardship	Jim Johanneman
Friend of Conservation	Duane Hopf
Ken McWilliams Memorial Award for Soil Judging Excellence	Jasper High School FFA Gold Team
River Friendly Farmer	Mark & Nancy Welp Kevin Mundy

Congratulation to our award recipients and thank you to everybody who made 2021 such agreat year for conservation efforts in Dubois County and beyond!



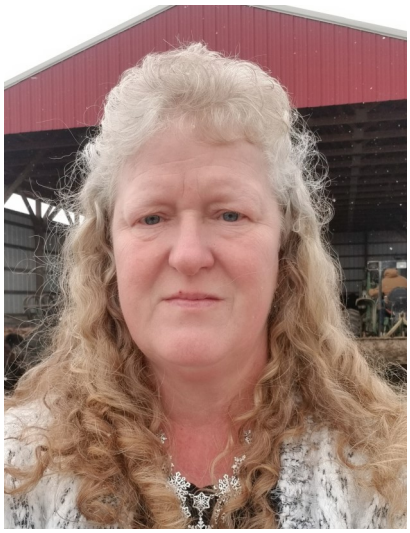
Goeppner Appointed For 3 Year Term

Glenn Goeppner's re-appointment to the Dubois SWCD board was approved by the State Soil Conservation Board. He was first elected to the board in 2013 and the new term will last three years.

Goeppner is a third generation farmer who was raised growing small grain and hogs. Today he farms 550 acres of corn, soybeans, wheat and straw for landscaping. He has implemented WASCOBs, grass waterways, no-till planting and cover crops. In addition to farming, he has worked at Jasper Engines & Transmissions for 37 years as a Fleet Maintenance Technician.

He married Karmin Erny in 1995 and they have three children; Trevor, Ella and Wyatt who is a partner in the farming operation as a 4th generation farmer.

Fleck Elected To SWCD Board



At the Dubois SWCD Annual meeting, Arlene Hopf Fleck was elected to serve a three year term on the board.

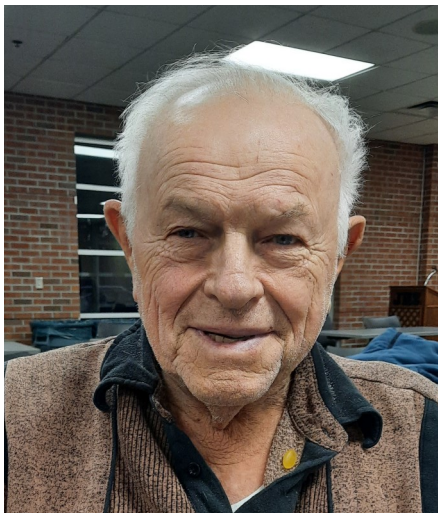
Fleck is the daughter of Frances & the late Edwin Hopf. She is married to Phil Fleck. They have three boys; Jonah, Reece and Brock and reside on part of the family farm near Duff which was established in 1959.

She is employed in Accounting at Ackerman Oil where she has been for the past 30 years.

With the help of her brother and family; they operate a cow/calf and crop operation as well as a large produce garden.

Fleck was born and raised on the farm and enjoys riding four wheelers, taking care of the animals and baking. She loves being outside watching the crops and garden grow.

Menke Retires After 21 Years



2022 marks the end of an era as Glenn Menke retires from the Dubois County SWCD Board after 21 years of service. Coming from a farming family, conservation practices and the function which a SWCD serves to the community were not new concepts to Menke when he joined the board in 2001.

In addition to being a farmer and active in Dubois County conservation efforts, Menke is a retired school teacher. He taught for three years in Owensville before spending 40 years teaching physics, chemistry, advanced chemistry, calculus and aerospace at Huntingburg and Southridge. He brought his passion for outreach and education to his role on the board and hopes that future board members continue to champion it as he has.

At 83 Menke might be retiring from the SWCD Board but he's not stopping. You can still catch him calling local square dances and in 2022 his family will celebrate their Hoosier Homestead Sesquicentennial, celebrating 150 of farming.

Thank you to Glenn for your hard work and dedication to the conservation of Dubois County land.

NOXIOUS WEED ALERT

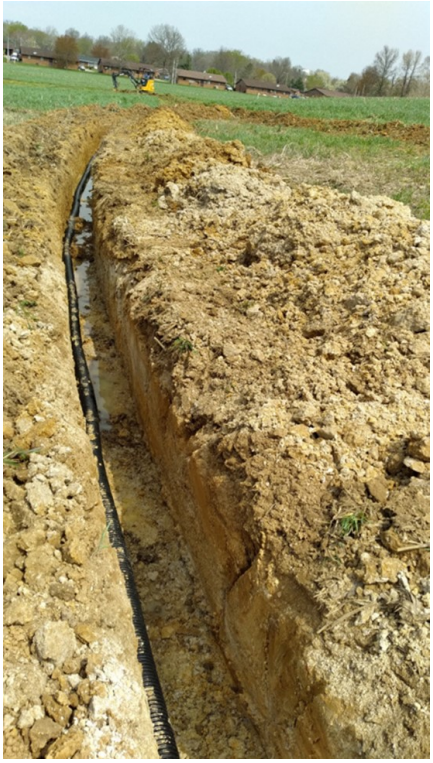
Do You Have Poison Hemlock?

Hemlock must be controlled BEFORE flowering

- Look for **fern-like leaves,** white flower clusters & **purple splotches on stem**
- Learn how to **identify & control** Poison Hemlock at **www.duboisswcd.org** or call 812-482-1171 x3
- *Free site visits available in Dubois, Daviess, & Martin counties*

LSI Notes From The Field

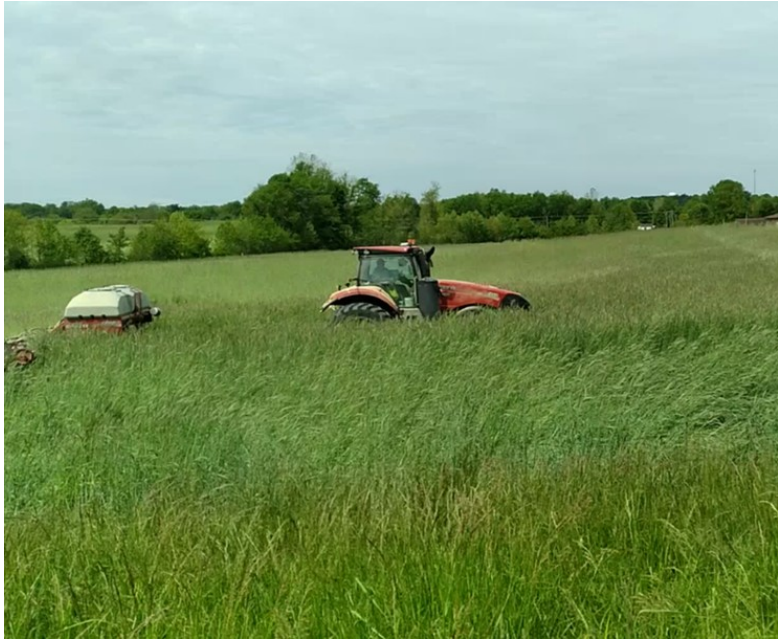
In the spring, the entire property received lime and potash. Tile line was added in field 7 near Meridian Road to alleviate a wet spot. Also, the width of the tilled strip in Field 2 was expanded. A 40 foot strip was established at the beginning of the LSI project to be able to compare soil health and crop yields under two different management practices (no till with cover crops and continuous till) The farmer who plants our cash crops upgraded his equipment recently, as a result, an additional 10 feet was added to each side of the strip increasing its width to 60 feet.



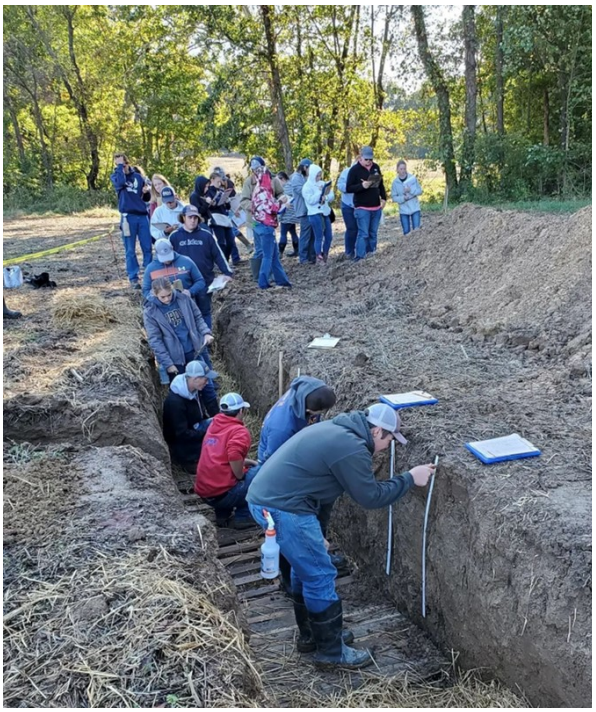
Tile Line in Field 7

The larger planter allowed us to evaluate the turns in field 7, reincorporate land into the cash crop rotation, and allow new ground to remain fallow. In 2012 VU built a state of the art classroom building on campus- some of the top soil from the farm fields was removed to amend the soil for the construction site. An acre and a half portion of the disturbed ground was removed from production and planted with stands of species to rebuild soil health and soil organic matter. Half an acre of this 10 year 'set aside' land was returned to production this year and the results were a success. Manure was applied to the remaining acre as well as a small amount of land that was removed from production. This will increase organic matter in the area and improve biological diversity.

2021 also saw LSI moving to planting ALL of the acres "green". This means that soybean seeds were planted into live, standing, growing cover crops which were terminated after the cash crop was in the ground. The ag committee experimented with planting green and roller crimping one field in 2019. In 2020, they attempted the same planting green practice in the same field. With 16 acres having been planted successfully over two years, the committee felt confident enough to apply the technique to ALL 46 acres. With the extra residue, the emerging bean crop did experience a small amount of slug damage. The soybean crop bounced back from this and overall yield was consistent with past year's results.

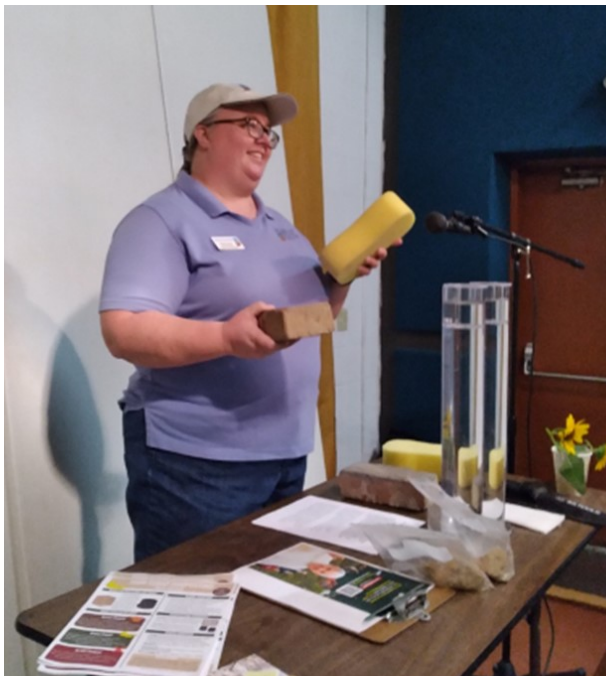


In October, the State Soil judging contest was held in the fields at VUJC. Eight soil pits were dug and over 300 4-H and FFA students came to the LSI farm to evaluate the soil. This was an exciting and successful day.



Education & Outreach

COVID and all of the in-person restrictions that were in place at the beginning of the year allowed our outreach and education efforts to expand in new directions. We created a virtual lunch and learn series and held four sessions during the month of February. Participants from Dubois County and around the state learned how to assess soil health, heard from local farmers implementing these practices, learned the changes that have been seen in soil health from the last 10 years on the LSI farm, discovered resources (both technical and financial) available to implement these practices on their own land. Recording of the entire series can be found on the Dubois SWCD Youtube Channel.



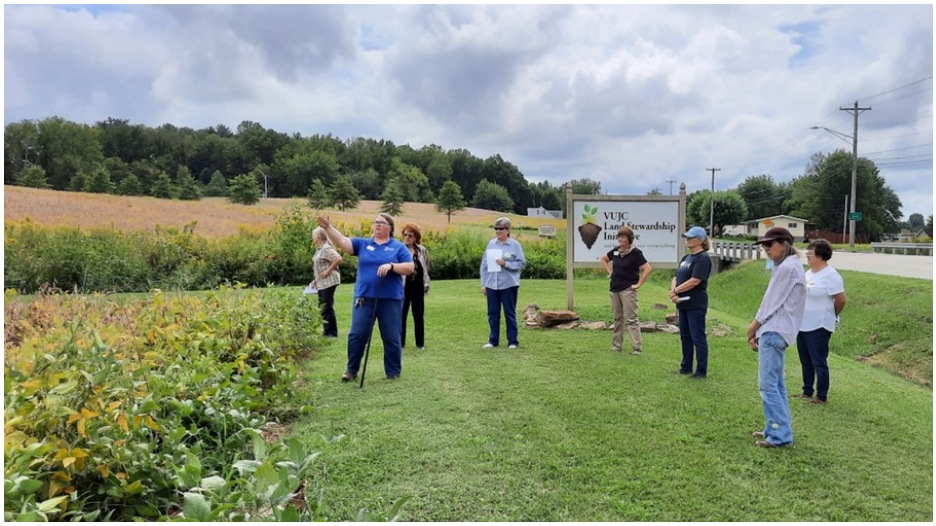
Resource Specialist, Melissa Ruschau had the opportunity to speak with over 125 people about soil health prior to watching "Kiss the Ground". The film explains regenerative ag and is available on Netflix or a copy can be borrowed from the SWCD office. Ruschau demonstrated the slake test and spoke about the carbon cycle and soil needs to function more like a sponge than a brick. After watching the film, participants shared ideas and perspectives sparked by what they learned.

A dozen local women attended a Women4theLand learning circle. The ladies discussed the valuable resource which is their land and the importance of soil health. Following lunch, the group toured the LSI farm fields, saw practices that have been implemented to promote soil health, and got to experience firsthand how a healthy soil feels.

The SWCD now owns a soil health testing kit, which was funded through a grant from Clean Water Indiana. County residents can request an on site soil health assessments for their farmland or garden plot. Melissa Ruschau is available to come to your property and help you evaluate your soil health. This testing includes: water infiltration rates, compaction areas, soil pH, aggregate stability and cation exchange capacity. She will give you some recommendations on practices that can be implemented to alleviate zones of concern.

Please contact the SWCD office 812-482-1171 ext 3 if you would like to schedule an assessment in 2022.

VUJC
Land Stewardship
Initiative
soil health...the root of everything



It might not seem like it much yet, but every day we are starting to get a bit more daylight. I like heading this direction again, but we are still a long way from spring. I like to use cold January days to catch up on reading and planning for the upcoming season.

This might be a good year to only apply fertilizer if you really need it.

One of the bigger challenges for this season is going to be fertilizer costs. If you have "stockpiled" some soil fertility in your pastures and hay fields, then you certainly look pretty smart right now.
Banking some fertility is easier to do on pastures than it is on hay fields. The majority of nutrients on pastures are returned to the soil for new plant growth with good grazing management. If hay is removed from a site, those nutrients in the forage leave the field – mechanical harvest of forages does deplete nutrients over time if not replaced.

Dr. Chris Teutsch of UK Research and Education Center recently released a short YouTube video with John Grove - "Ten Tips to Help Livestock Producers Weather High Fertilizer Prices." Chris had ten really good points on the topic. I'll provide a quick synopsis of those bullets and a few of my own thoughts. Ironically, I had already been thinking about concerns with increased fertilizer prices before I saw the video and, after watching it, decided to not to completely reinvent the wheel but just run with it.

1. There are no silver bullets: There are a lot of products out there now that promise a lot of things, and some allude to no fertilizer required. It is certainly possible to improve soil health with the microbic life of the soil to where some unobtainable nutrients are made more available, but it doesn't happen overnight, and it isn't a given. Good management of the forages is always key.

2 Soil sample pasture and hay fields: Though some may argue that soil tests are not that beneficial, I disagree. A soil test provides a baseline to work from. If you don't know where you are presently, then it is harder to figure out what direction you need to go!

3. Add lime first: The first priority item to address from your soil test is the pH. The pH indicates how sweet or sour the soil is. Most grasses prefer to be in the range of 6.0 to 6.4. A few legumes, like alfalfa for example, prefer a sweeter soil between 6.5 to 7.0. Lime is usually the best money first spent because if the pH is off too much, critical macro nutrients like phosphorus won't be as available. If the pH is below 5.8, I'd recommend correcting the pH first and retesting after at least six months to assess everything else.

4. Don't apply P & K if in medium soil test range: At moderate levels, you can maintain sufficient levels for a long time if only grazing. If you are taking hay off, especially multiple harvests during the growing season, then levels will reflect that and decline accordingly. If phosphorus and potassium are below the medium test range, then additional nutrients are beneficial for nutrition and yield.

5. Rotate stocking: The more livestock are rotated, or more precisely managed in such a way to get even distribution of manure and urine across the entire pasture, the better the redistribution of nutrients back into the soil and plants from where they came. Livestock that are allowed to roam bigger areas are much more likely to move nutrients from one part of the field to another. This is particularly true if water and mineral are a long walking distance. When this is the case, animals will tend to graze those distant locations for shorter periods and will then tend to ruminate and return nutrients closer to the water source, thus moving nutrients and creating low and hot spots in the process.

6. Capitalize on nutrients in hay: There are a lot of nutrients in a bale of hay, especially good quality hay. If we can feed some of this hay where nutrients are needed, then we can save on replacement nutrients. Feeding it where it is needed also reduces the amount of manure that needs to be hauled, saving time and fuel. Manure can be a very good source of nutrients for both pastures and hay fields. If using manure from confinement buildings or lagoons, treat it like you are putting on commercial fertilizer, get the manure tested and apply according to soil tests and yield goals. If you are buying hay, then you are not only buying feed for the livestock, but you are also buying nutrients for the farm that should be taken advantage of.

7. Add legumes: The addition of legumes to both pastures and hay fields has several economic benefits. They add additional digestible protein and nutrients, and when mixed with grasses, provide valuable nitrogen to the system that boosts both yield and overall quality. The addition of legumes is usually the second-best dollar spent after lime. Legumes fix nitrogen in root nodules. Rhizobia bacteria in the soil enter the root. The correct rhizobium bacteria must be present for the species, thus the reason for making sure that you inoculate seed prior to planting legumes. Most legumes are fairly pH sensitive, therefore, the pH needs to be corrected prior to planting for best results.

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9. Manage Nitrogen applications: When nitrogen fertilizer prices are high, we need to be as efficient as possible with applications. Early applications of nitrogen can boost the yield of the first cutting of hay, but with long wet springs, it can also throw fuel on the fire and create stands of forages that are not only hard to dry if you are wanting dry hay, but also may be too competitive with legumes we want to maintain. Nitrogen applications are sometimes better utilized for secondary cuttings to boost yield and quality and or for stockpiled forage for fall and winter grazing. Apply any nitrogen when it can be utilized the most efficiently. If you have high amounts of legumes in the sward, then you may not need much or any additional nitrogen depending on your goals.

10. Monitor Hayfields Closely: Like mentioned already, hay removes a lot of nutrients that will have to be replaced eventually to maintain future yields. When nutrients fall into the low category, forage yield and quality both suffer and there can also be a shift in the sward to plants that are more adaptable to low levels of some nutrients. Broomsedge, yellow bluestem, is a good example of a low nutrient soil increaser. Fields used only for hay should be treated like a regular crop field and fertilized as needed to maintain at least a moderate fertility level.

May the rains sweep gently across your fields, may the sun warm the land, may every good seed you have planted grow abundantly and by late summer find you standing in fields of plenty – Happy New Year!

Remember, it's not about maximizing a grazing event, but maximizing a grazing season! Keep on grazing!

Reminders & Opportunities More pasture information and past issues of Grazing Bites are available at https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/in/technical/landuse/pasture/

"Ten Tips to Help Livestock Producers Weather High Fertilizer Prices" can be found at https://youtu.be/sgIS2IBew0M by Chris Teutsch and John Grove Grazing Bites has changed.

Please send comments or questions to grazingbites@gmail.com.

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Rental Equipment Available
Dubois County SWCD

No-Till Drill—*$10 Per Acre, $100 Minimum*
Great Plains No-Till drill has a seeding width of 7 feet, and can be used to plant soybeans, wheat, legumes, grasses, etc. It can also be used to plant native or warm season grasses.

No-Till Seeder—*$10 Per Acre, $100 Minimum*
Great Plains 9' No-Till Seeder

Stapler/Staples—*$10/Rental fee, $50/box of 1,000 staples.*
This stapler is for erosion control blankets The plunger simply pushes the staples into the ground. Buy staples and the stapler rental fee is waived.

Spinning Jenny—*No Rental Fees.*
Use to install high-tensile wire fences. Load with wire and set on the ground. Walk away pulling the end of the wire and it will spin, preventing your wire from tangling. Slow down gradually before stopping to prevent over-spinning and tangling. Can also be used to rewind wire in the field.

Tile Flags—*$7.00/bundle of 100.*
Flags on 36" wire staff can be used to mark underground power lines or surveying jobs.