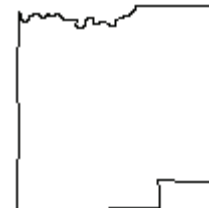




# Dubois County Conservation News



Dubois County Soil & Water Conservation District

January 2010

## Natalie Fowler Guest Speaker at SWCD Annual Meeting

The 64th Annual Meeting of the Dubois County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) will be on Tuesday, January 26, 2010 at the VFW Post 673 on Newton Street in Jasper. Join the SWCD Supervisors for food, fellowship, timely information about agriculture programs, and an update on SWCD activities. Dinner will begin at 6:30 PM, followed by highlights of the SWCD's 2009 programming.



Joining the SWCD as guest speaker is Natalie Fowler. Natalie serves as the Southeast District Director for Purdue Extension based in Aurora, IN. In that role she is responsible for the entire scope of leadership, human resources, and management functions for eighteen counties in the Southeast District. Prior to her role as the District Director she served as the Consumer and Family Sciences Educator and County Extension Director and going back even further, as the 4H Youth Development agent in several counties. Natalie currently serves as the lead agent for the National Extension Leadership Development Seminars for the North Central region whose function is to build Extension leaders for the future.

Items on the agenda also include the announcement of the 2009 Otto J. Bauer Conservation Farmer of the Year award recipient, and presentation of the Kimball Forest Stewardship Award and the Ken McWilliams Memorial Award for Soil Judging Excellence. An election will be held to fill a SWCD Supervisor position, and the SWCD financial report and 2009 accomplishments will be reviewed.

Tickets for the meal are \$7.50, and can be purchased from any SWCD Supervisor or at the SWCD office at 1486 Executive Blvd., Jasper. There is no charge to attend the annual meeting. In case of inclement weather on the 26<sup>th</sup>, the meeting will be held on Thursday, January 28.

## Forest Management for the Woodland Owner

A course entitled "Forest Management for the Private Woodland Owner" will be offered beginning on January 12 and running through March 2, 2010. The purpose of the course is to assist private woodland owners in becoming more knowledgeable managers of their woodlands. If you own woodland or are considering buying woodland, are considering selling timber, want to enhance the wildlife habitat on your land, or just plain enjoy the beauty of your woods, then this class is for you.

The course will be held on eight Tuesday evenings from 7:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. EST (Dubois County time) beginning January 12, 2010 and running through March 2. The class will meet at the Southern Indiana Purdue Agricultural Center (SIPAC) near Dubois on the north shore of Patoka Lake. There will also be two Saturday morning field trips scheduled to experience, first hand, various woodland management activities.

A fee of \$95.00 is required to cover the cost of the course and materials. To register or for more information, contact Ron Rathfon, Extension Forester, at SIPAC, 12000 Purdue Farm Rd., Dubois, Indiana 47527 (call 812-678-5049 or E-mail ronr@purdue.edu). Enrollment is limited, so please register early.

## SWCD Annual Meeting

**Tuesday, January 26, 2010  
6:30pm**

**VFW Post 673  
1907 Newton St., Jasper**

**\$7.50 per meal ticket**

**For more information  
or to register:  
812-482-1171, Ext. 3**

**Or stop by our office to pick  
up your tickets:  
1486 Executive Blvd. Suite A  
Jasper, IN 47546**

## Sharp AR 287 Copier for Sale



**The Dubois County SWCD has  
a Sharp AR 287 digital copy ma-  
chine for sale for \$800.00.**

**The copier was purchased new  
in 2002, and has 378,620 copies  
on it. It has been maintained,  
and is a very dependable  
machine.**

**Call the SWCD at  
812-482-1171, Ext. 3  
with any questions.**

## **Crop Producers Face Compaction from Wet Soils at Harvest**

Many corn and soybean growers are harvesting record crops, but they may face compaction issues because of saturated soils at harvest. "Many farmers will be unable to get back in the fields after harvest, because many fields have ruts and severe compaction issues," said Randall Reeder, an Ohio State University Extension agricultural engineer.

Farmers have limited options to break up soil and smooth out rough fields. "Farmers may face two types of compacted fields. One type is an isolated compacted area, in which case, I suggest farmers do whatever is necessary to get that area ready for planting and leave the rest of the field alone. The other type is compaction across the entire field, where whatever tillage operations are completed are applied to 100 percent of the field", Reeder said.

If compaction is deep, Reeder suggested doing nothing, especially if it turns out to be a wet spring. "Farmers don't want to make a bad situation worse by performing deep tillage on wet soils because it destroys the soil structure," he said. "If a farmer can get a no-till planter or drill across rutted ground reasonably well, it may be better to take a slight yield hit in 2010, then try to correct the deep compaction problem after harvest."

Another option, if soil is dry, is to perform light shallow tillage. "If ruts or tracks are more than 2 or 3 inches deep, a light tillage pass can smooth out the soil and create a surface ideal for planting," Reeder said. "Fill in ruts enough to eliminate standing water."

Research shows that compaction affects crop yields. OSU Extension research on Hoytville silty clay loam showed that through compaction, 10 percent to 15 percent of the potential crop yield was being left in the field. To counteract yield losses from compaction, researchers recommend no-till production. Recent research shows that continuous no-till soil resists compaction from heavy loads better than soil that is subsoiled every three years, which results in higher yields.

## **SWCD Provides Conservation Items**

### **No-Till Drill**

Great Plains No-Till drill has a seeding width of 10 feet, and can be used to plant soybeans, wheat, legumes, grasses, etc. It can also be used to plant native, or warm season, grasses. Rental fee is \$7/acre.

### **Stapler**

Installing erosion control blankets? This stapler makes completing the job easy! The plunger simply pushes the staples into the ground. No rental fee.

### **Spinning Jenny**

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. No rental fee.

### **Tile Flags**

Flags on 36" wire staff can be used to mark underground power lines, or surveying jobs. \$7.00/bundle of 100; various colors.

## *Grazing Bites*

*by Victor Shelton, NRCS Grazing Specialist*

In the early 90's, no-till farming was coined "Ugly Farming" by many as the untidiness trademark of this new farming practice. It took a number of years for some people to finally get used to seeing crop residue left on the crop fields and learning and respecting the benefits of doing so.

When it comes to pastureland, the majority of producers and especially suburbanites would have the image of a manicured lawn appearance in their mind...slightly rolling hills of green all tailored to a precise residual height of exactly three inches with exquisite, ready for the ring side, cattle grazing on them. This might be the image most think about, but that is usually not the reality; thus pastures are found overgrazed, especially this time of year as many try and delay feeding hay as long as possible. As mentioned in previous articles, this is best achieved with some reservation leaving adequate residue behind so you don't deplete carbohydrate reserves.

I have found myself on more than one occasion defending grazing livestock to wildlife lovers. Grazing livestock, and especially beef cows, are a great "working tool" that can actually really benefit wildlife habitat when managed to do so. The first thought that comes to my own mind when I hear "wildlife in the pasture" is deer tearing up my fences. I do swear, the old single wire somewhat temporary fences made with rod posts and yellow slide-on insulators must be deer magnets – because they never failed to tear them up.....many years after their use, those insulators keep surfacing. A deer's natural world is perceived as in black and white...so yellow insulators blend right in. I've found that white poly-wire for temporary fence with white step-in posts tend to get the least damage. Permanent high-tensile wires, even when only one is used, are soon learned and respected even by the deer.

**- Story Continues on Page 3**

# Grazing Bites

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I'm getting sidetracked. A planned grazing system with rotating animals during the growing season is already doing things that have some wildlife benefits, especially for ground nesting birds. Rotational grazing normally creates multiple growth stages and heights of the forages and therefore creates somewhat patchy habitat providing structural diversity for feeding, nesting and hiding.

Heavily used areas such as around watering facilities, lanes and lounging areas are usually disturbed more and create feeding sites for early to mid succession type wildlife such as bobwhite quail, meadow larks and mourning doves. This caught my attention, especially the possibility of increasing quail numbers. Cattle especially, help to open up the dense vegetation canopies of our cool-season pasture grasses and in the process help to create travel corridors and feeding areas for wildlife, especially quail.

In a preliminary study done in southern Indiana looking at bobwhite quail covey numbers, there were almost four times more coveys of quail on beef cattle rotated pasture than undisturbed like habitat. This surprised some wildlife biologists and certainly influenced their respect for "cows" as a wildlife habitat tool.

So if we are interested in enhancing wildlife benefits of our pastures, what else can we do with little effort? The use of more paddocks and/or longer rest periods is always a win-win for both the grazing livestock and wildlife creating multiple growth stages and vegetation heights. Maintaining forage diversity and avoiding monocultures is also beneficial with pastures having at a minimum a quality grass and legume present.

There are certainly "forage quality" benefits in keeping forages in a vegetative stage for most grazing livestock. To maintain that "quality", the entire system does not necessarily need to look like a manicured lawn though. We need to consider that economic threshold before getting out the brush-hog – remember those inputs that effect the bottom line...if the avoided "maturing" forages are less than one third of the sward, we might be better off waiting until the next grazing period for that paddock and grazing it a little harder the next time (smaller allocation, heavier stocking rate, shorter period of time) allowing for increased diversity in between grazing periods...again win-win for livestock and wildlife.

Though usually very hard to do, leaving even a small paddock or area fallow for one year has lots of benefits. It is even mentioned in Exodus about leaving every seventh year fallow. Fallow provides heavier cover for nesting and brooding and some really good, and probably needed additional rest for the forages. I'm told that ideally, this area should have links or corridors to woodlands, other undisturbed areas or longer rested fields...which usually should be and is the case in a rotated system...especially if the "rested" area is close to the middle of the system.

Certainly if you are willing, the addition of at least one paddock of a permanent warm season grass such as big bluestem, indiangrass, little bluestem and switchgrass or mixes of such can enhance the diversity of the whole system for both the livestock and wildlife. The warm-season grasses can provide quality forages for the livestock during our normal cool-season grass slump period and provide excellent habitat for quail and other wildlife looking for a slightly less dense sward.

Lastly, I think too many people get way too hung up on a few weeds being present. Now, there is a limit! The desired forages need to be the dominate species present in the field, but a few weeds, although sometimes not very attractive, can have multiple benefits too as long as they are not noxious or poisonous. A few milkweeds provide habitat for monarch butterflies. Several provide food for multiple species of song birds. Others can provide a natural source of micro-nutrients for grazing livestock. Unless they are noxious or invasive, a few around really don't hurt anything. Natural disturbances such as grazing from bison or cows, has always been an important management factor in maintaining wildlife habitat, we just need to take advantage of it. Consider a little more of an "ugly" approach to grazing, and keep on grazing!

## Mark your Calendar!

**Heart of America Grazing Conference**, Roberts Conference Centre,  
Wilmington, OH - January 20-21, 2010.

**Southern Indiana Grazing Conference**, Simon Graber Community Building,  
Odon, IN, February 11, 2010 – More details coming soon!



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For address corrections or to be taken off the mailing list, please contact the office at judi.brown@in.nacdnet.net or call 812-482-1171, Ext. 3

### ***7' No-till Drill for Sale***



**The Daviess & Martin County Soil & Water Conservation Districts** are currently accepting bids on their 7' Great Plains 705NT No Till Drill. The drill is equipped with three seed boxes and has approx. 500 acres on new no till cutters and new V-Opener blades. The unit has 5200 acres on the acre meter. It contains two new lift cylinders, new hydraulic hoses, and new tires.

This drill is field ready and operates as it is intended. Written bids will be accepted until January 15, 2010.

**For more details or any questions contact the Daviess County SWCD at 812-254-4780 ext. 110.**

#### **SWCD BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:**

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**Glenn Menke, Vice Chair**  
**Sam Oxley, Brenda Sermersheim, Jack Welp, Members**  
**Donovan Brunsman, Jim Hochgesang, Greg Hoffman, Duane Hopf, Lee Schnell, Associate Members**

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**Radius Weisman, SWCD Technical Specialist**  
**Michael Wilhite, SWCD Program Assistant**  
**Bart Pitstick, NRCS District Conservationist**

#### **SWCD BOARD MEETINGS:**

*The Dubois County SWCD Board of Supervisors meets on the first Thursday of each month. The meetings begin at 7:00 PM Nov. through March, and 7:30 PM April through October, and are located in the in the USDA Service Center in Jasper IN. Anyone interested in local soil and water conservation issues is encouraged to attend.*

*The Dubois County Soil and Water Conservation District promotes to all citizens - both agricultural and non-agricultural - the vital benefits of protecting and preserving natural resources, especially soil and water.*

*All programs and services of the Dubois County Soil and Water Conservation District are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, relation, sex, age, marital status, or handicap.*