



# DUBOIS COUNTY CONSERVATION NEWS

Dubois County  
Soil and Water Conservation District  
March 2007

## Tree Care Workshop

**8:30 AM-Noon, CDT Saturday, March 31, 2007**  
**Jasper Train Depot**

**Chainsaw Safety**  
**Tree Selection and Tree Planting**  
**Proper Tree Pruning**

**Hosted by the Four Rivers RC&D Forest Land Management Committee**

**Space is limited!**

**Call the SWCD at (812) 482-1171 Ext. 3 for a reservation!**

## Supervisors Sworn in at Annual Meeting

Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) are legal subdivisions of state government. In Indiana, SWCD boundaries run along county lines, so Indiana has 92 Soil and Water Conservation Districts. The Dubois County SWCD is responsible for leadership in conservation of soil, water, and related natural resources within the county. To fulfill its role, the SWCD works with local government agencies, citizens' groups, and individuals to correct existing soil and water problems and to develop Dubois County's natural resources to proper and full use.

The SWCD's Board of Supervisors are Jack Welp, Chair; Alan Weyer, Vice Chair; Glenn Menke, Jason Small, and Sam Oxley. All serve a staggered 3-year term. Oxley and Menke were both appointed by the State Soil Conservation Board, based upon a recommendation by the Dubois County SWCD. Local citizens who attended the SWCD's annual meetings elected Weyer, Small, and Welp to their board seats.

SWCD Supervisors are government officials charged with properly conducting the affairs of their local district. Their major roles are to evaluate local soil and water conservation needs and opportunities, set priorities, and provide for the development of programs to meet those needs within the district. The many different uses of land across Indiana, and the land itself, determines what the local SWCD focuses on. SWCD operations are financed through state and county appropriations, money earned by SWCD projects, grants, and contributions from private sources.

The Dubois County SWCD Board of Supervisors meets monthly on the first Thursday. Meetings begin at 7:30 PM from April to October, and at 7:00 PM from November to March. Input from members of the public is welcome.



County Commissioner Larry Vollmer reads the oath of office to newly appointed and elected SWCD Supervisors Glenn Menke, Jack Welp, and Alan Weyer.

## Jack Nelson Named Forest Steward

Jack L. Nelson, of Jefferson Township, has been named the 2007 recipient of the Kimball Forest Stewardship Award. This award is presented annually by the Dubois County Soil and Water Conservation District and Kimball International to the landowner who best carries out a wise forest stewardship program on their land.



Jack Nelson (left) accepts the Forest Steward award from SWCD Chair Jack Welp

Jack Nelson has managed his 90 acres of woodland, a part of the family farm, for 40 years. Jack and his wife Eileen live on the farm, in a house made from yellow poplar that was cut from his forest over 100 years ago.

Jack works with consultant forester Joe Bruggenschmidt to actively manage his forest. In addition to growing merchantable trees, his management objectives include recreation and wildlife

management. Jack says, "I love the forest and spend much of my time there." Jack routinely cuts the dying trees for firewood, and due to the amount of time he spends in his forest, he is very aware of its health and vigor. Jack is preparing for a harvest of the over-mature trees. He said, "The forest has not been cut for 70 years. I hate to see some of the big, old trees go, but I know that opening up the stand will create regeneration and help sustain the forest for the future." Jack manages for wildlife by leaving the undergrowth, and creating piles of treetops to provide shelter.

Jack utilizes timber stand improvement as a management tool, and in 1977, planted 3,000 pine trees to fill in the unforested areas. The forest is composed of a variety of trees, including White, Red, and Black Oak, Beech, Hickory, and Cherry.

After the harvest, Jack plans to continue using common sense management strategies in his forest to preserve the quality of the trees and the soil for the future. The Nelsons have 13 children and 55 grandchildren, and Jack's goal is for them to keep the farm in the family and continue managing the forest for high quality trees.

The criteria for the Kimball Forest Stewardship Award includes managing the forestland with a forest management plan, including harvests and timber stand improvement, and protecting the forest from livestock, insects and invasive species. The award is presented each year in January at the annual meeting of the Dubois County Soil and Water Conservation District.

### THE SWCD

#### BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

Jack Welp, Chair

Glenn Menke, Vice Chair

Alan Weyer, Member

Jason Small, Member

Sam Oxley, Member

Duane Hopf, Stan Leinenbach

Bob Brunzman, Lee Schnell

Jim Hochgesang,

Associate Members

Contact one of these county officials with your conservation questions, comments, and concerns!

#### Service Center Staff:

**Judi Brown,**

SWCD Executive Director

**Amanda Bough**

SWCD Technical Specialist

**Radius Weisman**

SWCD Technical Specialist

**Colt VanNatta**

Livestock Management Specialist

**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.

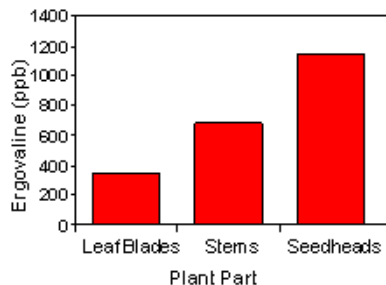
# Fescue Toxicity

Colt VanNatta, Livestock Specialist

What cultivar of tall fescue should I plant this spring? It's a common question with many different answers and any one could be right depending on your situation.

There are different varieties within each category but the main cultivars are endophyte infected, novel-endophyte friendly, and endophyte free. For the rest of this article I'm not going to tell you which one is the best for you but I hope to give you more insight about a disease caused by the endophyte infected version to help in your decision making process.

Endophyte infected tall fescue causes many complications. This article will focus on fescue toxicity, which reportedly cost livestock producers \$600 million annually in a study done by C.S. Hoveland (1993). Fescue toxicosis is caused by an alkaloid group called ergots. The alkaloids are produced by a fungus (the endophyte) that lives mainly within the leaf sheaths. As the stems and leaves elongate, the fungus also spreads until the plant reaches maturity. During the inflorescence stage (seed head development), which occurs during late spring, ergot alkaloid concentrations are the highest (See Figure 1, below) (Roberts C.A. and J.A. Andrae. 2004. *Crop Management*).



As livestock are grazing endophyte infected tall fescue they may not show symptoms at that time but they have the ability to store the toxins in fat deposits. In the following months these toxins are gradually released and livestock begin to show visible symptoms even if they are no

longer grazing the infected grasses. These symptoms include but are not limited to fescue foot, failure to shed winter coats, narrowing blood vessels that restrict blood flow, high core body temperature, increased respiration, low heart rate, fat necrosis, failure to produce milk, suppression of the immune system, reduced forage intake, lower average daily gains, lower pregnancy rates, thickened placenta, retained placenta, and birthing difficulty (Roberts C.A. and J.A. Andrae. 2004. *Crop Management*).

Research location	Gain		Forage fed
	High endophyte	Low endophyte	
Texas	0.99 pound per day	2.14 pounds per day	Pasture
Alabama	1.41 pounds per day	2.18 pounds per day	Pasture
Georgia	1.02 pounds per day	1.31 pounds per day	Pasture
Alabama	1.00 pounds per day	1.83 pounds per day	Pasture
Missouri	0.97 pound per day	1.41 pounds per day	Pasture
Alabama	0.44 pound per day	2.12 pounds per day	Seed
Alabama	0.62 pound per day	1.46 pounds per day	Hay

(Roberts C.A. 2000. Tall Fescue Toxicosis)

The second highest level of alkaloid accumulation is in the fall when the cool weather stimulates grass production again. As winter sets in and the slow release of the toxin takes effect, the toxins begin to constrict blood flow. This restricted blood flow affects extremities the most; primarily the legs and tail causing gangrene, also known as fescue foot. Applying this trend to the summer leads to heat stress when blood no longer reaches the body surface and adversely overheats the animal due to poor circulation (Price D. 1998. *Fescue Toxicity*). Visual signs of this occurring could be animals lounging in ponds or streams trying to cool themselves off. A commonly used term for this in

cattle is called the "summer slump". The summer slump is observed by the stereotypical shaggy haired, unthrifty looking cattle that fail to gain their potential weights. Although tall fescue isn't as palatable as some other cool season grasses, it's not the reason for lower average daily gains. This statistic is attributed to lower consumption rates rather than grass compositions (See Figure 2, below.)

All the questions concerning reproductive problems aren't understood as well as other compli-

cations. It is believed that it affects levels of the hormone prolactin. Prolactin is the primary hormone leading up to the final stages of pregnancy and birthing. Without prolactin the female's body doesn't realize that it is time to give birth or produce milk (Lawrence L. A. 1996. *Broodmares Grazing Tall Fescue Pastures*), leading to retained placentas, birthing difficulty, thickened placentas, and poor milk production.

In summary, endophyte infected tall fescue can benefit your operation due to its hardiness, resistance, and conservation efforts. But is it worth the risks associated with fescue toxicity compared to novel-endophyte friendly or endophyte free cultivars?

Dubois County SWCD  
1486 Executive Blvd. Suite A  
Jasper IN 47546  
(812) 482-1171 Ext. 3  
judi.brown@in.nacdn.net

PRESORTED  
STANDARD  
US POSTAGE PAID  
JASPER IN 47546  
PERMIT NO. 191

**OFFICE HOURS: MON-FRI 8 AM TO 4:30 PM**

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

NEWSLETTER

## **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. Cost is \$10/use.

- **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 charge.

- **Geotextile Fabric**

Black fabric can be used to keep rock from being pushed into the ground by cattle, or on driveways. Cost is \$1.40/running foot; 15' wide.

- **Tile Flags**

Flags on 36" wire staff can be used to mark underground power lines, or surveying jobs. \$6.00/bundle of 100.

## **Pasture Walk Scheduled This Spring, Date To Be Announced**

Colt VanNatta, Livestock Specialist is planning a pasture walk with Vic Shelton, NRCS Grazing Land Specialist for Southwest Indiana. The Pasture Walk will provide tips on how to manage pastures correctly. The date and location will be announced on local radio and newspapers as soon as it is available.

Topics to be discussed at the pasture walk include forage types and good management practices. Colt VanNatta is encouraging landowners to attend with plenty of questions ready, for answers to their pasture problems!

## **Forestry Field Day April 14; 9:30 AM to Noon**

Spend the morning with a host of forestry and natural resource experts. Topics to be addressed will include regeneration openings, understory release, invasive species, timber marketing, conservation easements and more. There will also be ample time for open discussion and questions. And to top it off, it's FREE!

The Field Day will be at the Eubank Demonstration Forest, southeast of Corydon. Lunch will be provided, so please call the Lincoln Hills R.C. & D. at 812-649-9136, Extension 5 to reserve your spot, and for directions.

# Randy and Brian Weisheit Named Conservation Farmers

Randy and Brian Weisheit, of Weisheit Bros. Farms, have been awarded the 2006 Otto J. Bauer Memorial Outstanding Conservation Farmer of the Year Award. This award is presented to a Dubois County farmer annually by the Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). "We are pleased to recognize the land owners who use good soil and water conservation practices on their farm, and put extra effort into conserving natural resources", said SWCD Chair Jack Welp.

Randy and Brian are the sixth generation of Weisheits to farm their land in Boone Township. The farm was established in 1888 and was designated as a Hoosier Homestead Farm in 1988. Bart Pitstick, District Conservationist for the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service commented, "The Weisheits have worked for many years to address the resource concerns on their farm, and are near to completing several ongoing projects. They operate a model family farm, with a strong stewardship ethic. They do their best to protect the resource base and the soil, which in turn improves water quality."

Brian works full time on the farm, but he quickly points out that, "any major decisions are jointly made by both Randy and I. We also rely on John Betz, our good employee that works full time to help keep the farm going." As on any family farm, all of the family members are involved in

the success of the operation. In addition to Randy and Brian, their spouses Pam and Becky, and Randy's son Preston and his wife Alyssa all do whatever is needed to keep the farm operating smoothly.

The Weisheits raise beef cattle, hogs, corn, soybeans, wheat, and forages on their 828 acre farm. They have participated in the USDA's Environmental Quality Incentive Program for several years, and their list of conservation practices includes water and sediment control basins, nutrient and pest management, waste storage facility, grassed waterways, grade stabilization structures, fencing, cattle stream crossing, and water line.

"Brian sets goals for each day, and accomplishes them with hard work and dedication," says Becky Weisheit. Brian's goals include doing his best to protect the land by applying nutrients properly, and not abusing the soil. He says, "I feel the ground will give to us what we put into it." Brian added, "Farming is self-rewarding work, and I'm very proud of our farm. It's stood the test of time."

The Weisheit Bros. Farm was recognized at the 2003 Indiana State Fair as a recipient of the River Friendly Farmer Award.



Randy Weisheit (left) speaks to the audience at the SWCD Annual Meeting as Kerry Newsom, Old National Bank, presents the award to Randy and Brian Weisheit.

Randy and Brian purchased the farm from their parents, Lewis and Violet Weisheit. Brian said "I am proud of my Dad, because he was not afraid to stick his neck out and invest in the future of the farm. Through the years, the farm has passed from father to son. Hopefully I'll stick my neck out on the line for my kids so they can keep going another generation. It will be up to them to carry the farm on into the future."

The Otto J. Bauer Outstanding Conservation Farmer of the Year award is named in memory of Otto J. Bauer. Bauer was a champion of soil and water conservation efforts in Dubois County, and was a member of the SWCD board from 1969 until 1986. Kerry Newsom, Vice President at Old National Bank, sponsor of the award, made the presentation at the Soil and Water Conservation District's annual meeting on January 30.

## Forest Park Students Assist with Water Testing

Teacher Doug Walker of Forest Park High School took his class to Hurricane Creek on October 3rd to conduct some water quality testing with the Upper Anderson River Project.

The project is being conducted by Indiana 15 Regional Planning Commission.

For further information, contact Tom Mosley at 367-8455; [tom@ind15rpc.org](mailto:tom@ind15rpc.org).



## Data Released at Anderson River Meeting

Perry, Spencer, Dubois and Crawford County Soil and Water Conservation Districts' joint project for the Anderson River Watershed Diagnostic Study is nearing completion. A final public meeting will be held Tuesday, April 17, 6:30 p.m. in Spencer County at the St. Meinrad Community Center, St. Meinrad. Data from the study will be presented by Edward Belmonte, Project Manager, V3 Companies. For more information contact the Perry County SWCD office at 812-547-4686.

# WHAT CAN USDA PROGRAMS DO FOR YOU?

2006 offered many new and exciting opportunities to producers. Farm efficiency levels peaked, mostly due to the use of no-till, strip till, or reduced tillage practices. We are seeing an introduction to bio-fuels and are hearing reports of carbon credit sales. In this time of purse string tightening we need to be aware of programs that can help us reach our farm goals. The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) has provided the technical and financial assistance needed to achieve these goals for over 70 years.

One program that is very beneficial to landowners is the **Environmental Quality Incentives Program**. EQIP offers landowners the opportunity to receive cost share funding to address resource concerns on their land. Whether the resource concern is erosion, soil quality, livestock waste, adequate livestock forage, water quality, or wildlife habitat, EQIP offers conservation practices that will improve the environmental conditions of your land.



Technically, EQIP practices are part of a conservation plan developed with you on your land that looks at the existing concerns and develops alternatives to address them. Financially, representatives from NRCS can help you apply for financial assistance to implement these practices.

A new practice this year is called the “Energy Conservation Bundle”, where you can receive an additional \$20/acre/year for three years to implement No till/Strip till, cover crops, nutrient management, and all needed buffers to protect water bodies. This is available for

up to 1000 acres/year. In addition to the bundle payment, you can receive the individual practice incentive payments. The use of this practice is a great way to reduce energy use, improve soil quality, improve water quality, and provide additional wildlife habitat.

Other opportunities that are available through EQIP are cost share on a rotational grazing system, or timber stand improvement. A producer can receive technical and financial assistance to improve their pasture by dividing it into paddocks with permanent interior fencing and installing watering systems for each paddock. Or if you have over ten acres of contiguous forest land that has a forest management plan, but still needs some timber stand improvement (TSI) to improve the long term quality of the forest, EQIP offers cost share to complete the TSI, as well as a one time incentive payment to complete the prescribed forestry plan.

These are just a sample of the practices available through EQIP. EQIP is designed to address a wide range of natural resource concerns. If you have concerns and problems on your farm, EQIP very well could be the avenue to take to correcting those issues. Since 1997, more than \$2.5 million has been obligated in Dubois County for EQIP projects, and more than \$1.3 million in conservation practices have been installed on private land.



The second most widely used program for Dubois County is the **Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)**. Through this program producers improve water quality by installing grassed water-

ways, grassed filter strips, riparian forest buffers, bottomland tree planting, and upland wildlife habitat establishments. This program offers cost share funds to install the practice as well as an annual rental rate on the acreage involved. In addition to the incentive payment offered through the CRP, the Dubois County Soil and Water Conservation District has received a grant to offer an additional incentive payment for landowners wishing to install conservation buffers and increase wildlife habitat.

The third program available is the **Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)**. This program provides funding for landowners to install ten acres of warm season grasses and one acre of shrubs, resulting in \$721 of cost share. Also, this year the WHIP program is offering cost share funds to help control invasive plant species. The eight targeted species are Autumn Olive, Asian Bush Honeysuckle, Glossy Buckthorn, Japanese Honeysuckle, Kudzu, Multiflora Rose, Periwinkle, and Tree of Heaven.



NRCS also provides assistance through the **Wetland Reserve Program (WRP)**. The WRP is a voluntary program offering landowners the opportunity to protect, restore, and enhance wetlands on their property. This program offers landowners an opportunity to establish long-term conservation and wildlife practices and protection. WRP provides an opportunity for land owners to convert marginal cropland back to wetlands through an easement purchase.

To learn more about the programs offered through the NRCS, contact the USDA Service Center at (812) 482-1171 Ext. 3.



