

Camden Soil & Water Conservation

Annual Dinner Meeting Planned for March 08

You are invited to attend the Camden County Soil & Water Conservation District's annual appreciation dinner. The event will be held Tuesday, March 08, at the Knights of Columbus Bauer Hall. The hall is located on west Hwy. 54 in Camdenton, approximately 1/2 mile from the intersection of highways 54 and 5. Registration will begin at 6:00 p.m. The buffet style meal will be served at 6:30 p.m.

This year's entertainment will be provided by the Camden Christian School students.

Students from the 4th, 5th, and 6th grades who participated in the poster contest will have their work displayed that evening. This contest is open to all public and private schools in the county. Poster contest finalists will be recognized and awarded their prizes. We invite you to come and recognize the young people in our community.

Photo contest entries will also be displayed. Voting for the photo contest will be held during the meeting and winners will be announced before the evening is over.

Instead of the usual return postcard that has been used in past years, we are asking you to call or email the SWCD office indicating your name and the number of persons in your family planning to attend. Please call 573-346-5125 or email connie.luttrell@swcd.mo.gov. **Deadline for response is March 1**. We have an answering machine so you may call at any time, day or evening.

Support Your Local FFA Chapter FFA Week-Feb. 19-26



The FFA Booster Club of the Lake Career & Technical Center chapter will be having a fundraiser dinner Tuesday, Feb. 22, 5:00 PM-8:00 PM. The dinner will be held at the Knights of Columbus building in Camdenton. Cost for the dinner is \$8.00 for adults and \$5.00 for children 10 and under. Help support our local youth.

FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education. The National FFA Organization motto is: **Learning to Do; Doing to Learn; Earning to Live; Living to Serve**. The FFA membership of 523,309 and 7,487 chapters represents all 50 states, as well as Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

Agriculture is the nation's largest employer, with more than 21 million Americans (20% of the total U.S. workforce) working in some area of the industry. FFA prepares members for more than 300 careers in the science, business and technology of agriculture.

Soil Stewardship Observance



The Soil and Water Stewardship Observance is celebrated in the United States to remind all people of their individual responsibilities to care for our soil and water resources. By its very nature, the observance is one to be joined in by everyone (regardless of religious beliefs) who share a sense of personal responsibility to care for our valued natural resources.

The roots of this special observance are deep in history. More than 1550 years ago in the city of Vienne, France, bad weather and natural disasters had brought crop failures and widespread hunger. The bishop of Vienne called for three days of prayer and penance. Word of what happened in Vienne spread throughout France and then to other countries. As the years went by, the annual practice of setting aside these special days was widely established.

Stewardship Week was established by the National Association of Conservation Districts, an organization that was founded to direct programs that protect renewable natural resources after the devastation to agriculture in the United States as a result of the Dust Bowl. Stewardship Week has been celebrated annually since 1955.

The Dust Bowl refers to a decade of drought which began in 1933. The drought impacted 75% of the United States, but was most devastating to portions of Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Colorado and Kansas. These states lost the production of crops on approximately 100 million acres of land. Many believe had the farmers and landowners chosen to band together and implement proper agricultural practices, demonstrating good land stewardship, the devastation of the Dust Bowl could have been somewhat diminished. The good news is that Americans have learned from the past, and since the 30's there have been severe droughts, but the same devastation has not been repeated because good stewardship practices have been taught, learned and implemented on the land.

The observance, now known as Soil and Water Stewardship Week, is celebrated each year between the last Sunday in April and the first Sunday in May. However, congregations are encouraged to celebrate the observance at any convenient time.

The theme of this year's observance is "**Forests for People-More Than You Can Imagine.**" You might ask, "What's a tree got to do with me?" The answer is: a lot. In fact, we rely on trees every day, from the paper we write on, to the buildings we live and work in, to the food we eat. No matter where you live, you can find something that can be traced back to a tree.

*April 24
thru
May 01,
2011*

It's often easy to take trees and forests for granted. But not only do trees sustain life, they also provide a multitude of environmental benefits. Trees serve as habitat for birds and animals, prevent soil erosion and help keep our air and water clean.

Forests have multiple and diverse uses. For instance, one section of a forest could be managed for lumber and other building materials, while others could be used for pulpwood or for recreational purposes, such as fishing or camping. Our state and national forests belong to the public, and may be used to meet a diversity of needs. Forests are for people: take time to enjoy a forest near you.



2011 marks the 56th year of the National Association of Conservation Districts Stewardship Week. Help us celebrate Stewardship Week **APRIL 24 to May 1, 2011.**

If you would like for your church to receive any materials relating to Soil Stewardship, please call our office.

Amber Waves of Bromesedge

Many pastures in late winter and early spring have an amber wave, but it is not grain — it's bromesedge. Bromesedge, or broomsedge as it is commonly called, is not a sedge but is a member of the grass family. The vegetative portion grows close to the ground and produces curly, light green leaves. When the plant goes reproductive, it produces a golden stem that was often cut, bound and used as a broom. While it appears to have been productive in the reproductive stage, its actual forage quality is low. Nutritive value for grazing animals is practically zero.

Understanding the cause or causes of the encroachment of broomsedge will aid in the treatment and control of the broomsedge problem. A pasture is an ecosystem dominated by desirable grasses and legumes with a few trees and shrubs. The balance of this system is determined by abiotic and biotic factors. Abiotic factors include available water, light, nutrients, temperature and fire. Biotic factors include grazing pressure, disease, and insects.

Managing a pasture ecosystem requires balancing both abiotic and biotic factors. If these factors fall out of balance, desirable forage species are lost and replaced by less or undesirable ones such as broomsedge.

Invasion by broomsedge can mainly be attributed to two of the above factors: low nutrient levels in the soil (soil fertility), and excessive grazing pressure. Broomsedge tends to thrive in soils with a low pH (< 5.5) and low levels of phosphorus (< 30 lbs./acre). At these soil fertility levels, desirable forage species will not survive under grazing and haying pressure. As a desirable forage plant dies, it leaves a void in the canopy, allowing additional light to penetrate the canopy and setting up an environment suitable for the germination and propagation of broomsedge.

Close grazing adds to the problem. Grazing animals avoid eating broomsedge. This means desired grasses and legumes are being nipped off every seven or eight days. This shifts the environmental factors in favor of the broomsedge. Allow this scenario of intense grazing pressure and low soil fertility to go on for several years and we have the broomsedge explosion that we now see.

How do we fix the problem?

Don't go in search of a silver bullet — in this case chemical control. **Broomsedge is not competitive in a well-managed pasture.** Begin with a simple soil test.

Look at pH and phosphorus levels in particular, but do not ignore other nutrients. If lime and phosphorus are required and you have a limited soil fertility budget, begin with lime.

Work the phosphorus level up. Phosphorus is extremely important for maintaining legumes in the pasture. It is also used in making of the "energy currency" of plants (moving energy throughout the plant). Poultry litter is a good source of phosphorus as well as organic nitrogen. If it is available in your area, it might be worth exploring. Use caution when pricing poultry litter. Price it on a 'cost of nutrient' basis. What might appear to be cheap fertilizer may be high if the concentration of nutrients is low.

Evaluate your grazing strategy. If all your pasture grasses underneath that golden canopy of broomsedge are maintained at a height of less than 4 inches, seriously look at the reasons why and what can be done to enhance plant competition.

Does burning help? Fire does improve the forage quality of a pasture. Regrowth after a burn will be higher quality than what was burned. However, continued use of fire in cool season pastures will eventually reduce the desired grasses. Broomsedge is a warm season grass and is not damaged by early spring fires.

Does mowing help? Probably not, due to the growth habit of broomsedge. By the time it gets high enough to mow it has reached the reproductive stage. Hence mowing probably aids in seed distribution.

What about herbicides? Any herbicide that would have activity on broomsedge would also damage the desirable forages. A selective application (spot spraying, weed wiping) that targets the broomsedge, but is not applied to the desirable forages, may be possible.

Be patient. It will take some time to gain control of broomsedge. Over the long run, changes to your management program will be rewarded by increased forage productivity and grazing days.

Financial Assistance Available for High Tunnels, Organic Operations

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has \$1.5 million available to assist eligible Missouri producers interested in installing seasonal high tunnels, for organic producers and for those transitioning to organic production. Applications for high tunnels and organic operations must be received by March 4 at NRCS offices.

Both the Organic Initiative funding and the high tunnel funding is provided through NRCS' Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). NRCS State Conservationist J.R. Flores said the 2011 funding is nearly the same as last year. In 2010, the funds were used for 93 organic contracts covering 3,000 acres, and to construct 159 seasonal high tunnels.

"Missouri was second in the nation in 2010 in the number of high tunnels constructed," Flores said. "Missouri producers clearly see the benefit of incorporating high tunnels into their operations, and they seem pleased that we are able to offer this kind of assistance."

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NRCS Offers Headquarters Agricultural Energy Management Plan

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will offer the Headquarters Agricultural Energy Management Plan (Headquarters AgEMP) to Missouri farmers and ranchers to help them conduct energy audits and improve their overall energy efficiency. The initiative offers Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) participants a one-time payment to obtain an energy management plan for their headquarters operations.

"By offering this initiative, we are encouraging our producers to review how they use energy in their operations," NRCS State Conservationist J.R. Flores said. "We want to assist our farmers and ranchers in becoming more energy efficient, while also helping reduce their impact on the environment."

On-farm energy audits are tailored to each agricultural operation's primary energy uses. The audits help producers determine the amount of energy used by the entire operation and also identify short-and long-term measures producers can implement to conserve energy and achieve greater energy efficiencies. At a minimum, Headquarters AgEMP must identify baseline usage for non-residential structures and all stationary equipment used in farming operations. Vehicles and the farmstead are excluded.

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Where is MY Farmer's Market?

With springtime not that far off, many of our thoughts drift to planting time, flowers, and fresh produce. Believe it or not, there is a USDA website that can help you find a farmer's market in your local area. Use the address below to navigate to the website.

<http://apps.ams.usda.gov/FarmersMarkets/>

The website allows you to look at the entire map of Missouri that has pins indicating the locations or you can type in a specific town or location and it will give you the address. (It also has contact information, whether they take debit or credit, dates and times of operation, etc.) It even has a "map it" feature where you can find driving directions.

So, start thinking about fresh tomatoes and sunny skies; spring can't be far off now!

Bobwhite Quail Did You Know?

Did you know baby quail can fly at three weeks of age?

Did you know a quail fresh from the egg is about the same size as a bumblebee?

Did you know the average clutch size is 15 small white eggs?

Did you know normal incubation for quail eggs is 23 days?

Did you know the peak hatching is around June 15?

Did you know few quail live beyond 14 months?

Did you know over 80% of the annual quail population fail to carry over to the next year?

Did you know the ground level temperature of a native grass field will be 20 degree F. cooler and the humidity will be nearly 30% higher in June when compared to a corn field?

Did you know quail require from forty-seven to fifty-five days to complete their nesting cycle?

Did you know quail chicks one to four days of age are most vulnerable to the weather as they have only natal down for protection and chick mortality averages 2 to 4% per week until they reach adult size?

Did you know it takes a quail chick at least 120-140 days

to develop to adult size?

Bare ground and shrubby, brushy cover is an essential part of quail habitat.

Proper nesting and roosting areas for quail consist of 20% bare ground, free of plant material.

Ideal nesting habitat for quail, consist of 12"-36" height, native warm-season grass (such as little bluestem) and forbs (broad-leaved plants), such as legumes, flowers, etc.).

Like rabbits, bobwhites are an "early successional" species. That means you'll find them in places that are not densely overgrown and that have some disturbed ground with annual plants.

Want to improve your property for quail? You can start by putting away the mower.

You don't have to plant native warm season grasses to have quail on your property. Use an approved herbicide to remove unwanted grasses, such as fescue, and let natural plant succession occur.

Overgrown fencerows have been replaced with mature trees that provide poor escape cover. Manage your fence-rows and woods edges to create brushy habitat.

The daily water requirements of quail are usually met through moisture derived from green plants, food, insects, dew and snow

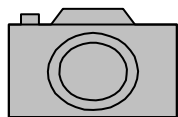


Photo Contest

Grab your camera or look through your file of pictures! You could be a winner in the SWCD's photo contest. The pictures could depict any natural resource related subject (trees, plants, landscapes, wildlife, education) or even a conservation problem. There is no size requirement and black-and-white and color prints will be judged together. Photos should be taken in Missouri. All ages will be judged in the same contest. Photos may be dropped off at the SWCD office before March 03. Each participant may enter three photos.

Grazing School Planned for Fall

A regional grazing school is being planned for September 21-22, 2011 in St. Robert, MO. If you are interested in setting up an intensive grazing system on your farm, you'll want to attend this two day event. It will also fulfill grazing school requirements if you are involved in a cost-share program that requires the school attendance and completion.

Cost for the school has not yet been finalized. If you would like to sign up for the workshop, contact Kassi at the Pulaski County Soil and Water Conservation at 573-774-4767.

This school is being sponsored by the Camden, Laclede, and Pulaski Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

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SWCD assistance is available without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, or marital status.

SWCD Election Held

On December 15, the Camden SWCD held the supervisors' election in conjunction with an open house. Forty people attended the open house.

The election for Areas 2 and 4 resulted in Earnest L. Calvert, Sr and Roberta Woodall retaining their positions.

Special thanks to Shirley Henson, Donna Short, and Cherie Wiater for volunteering their time to work as judges for the election. They did a great job!

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Dates to Remember

- March 01**-Deadline Annual Mtg RSVPs
- March 03**-Photo Contest Deadline
- March 08**-SWCD Annual Dinner Meeting

Funds for this publication are provided by Missouri's parks, soils, and water 1/10 of 1% sales tax.

**Camden Soil & Water
Conservation District**

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