

May 2013

Camden Soil & Water Conservation

Growing Popularity of High Tunnels

A USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service program is becoming popular with agricultural producers in Camden, Laclede, and Pulaski Counties. Local markets could soon see a dramatic increase in both the variety and quantity of vegetables available.

NRCS' High Tunnel Initiative provides producers with financial and technical assistance to build high tunnels, which extend the growing season into the cold months. High tunnels have a metal frame wrapped in plastic and are easy and fairly cheap to build. These structures allow farmers to generate income as the temperature drops in the fall and winter, when the types of crops they grow outdoors are limited. These structures have the potential to offer a significant benefit to owners of small farms, limited-resource farmers and organic producers by providing a steady source of income during what would typically be lean months.

Over the last three years, nearly twenty producers have agreed to develop contracts for financial assistance in setting up High Tunnel structures in the Tri-County area. Last summer, a tour of two local high tunnels operations attracted nearly 40 producers who came to see how these systems were set up and operated. To date, six of these structures have been constructed in Camden and Laclede Counties.

As the number of high tunnels constructed in the area continues to grow, so too should the availability of a variety of locally produced fruit and vegetables. If you think you might be interested in the EQIP High Tunnel Initiative Program contact the USDA-NRCS office in Lebanon at 1-800-203-4467.

Micro Irrigation Workshop to Be Held

Mark your Calendars!

The Camden County Soil and Water Conservation District, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and University of Missouri Extension will be hosting an evening workshop on ***“Micro Irrigation under High Tunnels”*** on ***Tuesday, May 21, 2013 at 7:00 pm***. The workshop will be held at the Laclede County Electric building in Camdenton.

Bob Schulthesis, Natural Resource Engineering Specialist with the University of Mo Extension will be presenting the program. Jeff Apperson, a local producer, will be talking about his own experience with his high tunnel irrigation.

The Laclede Electric Building is on Old South 5 in Camdenton near the High Brothers Lumber Company. For more info, call 346-5125.

“Too many people have lost sight that productive soil is essential to the production of food”
Hugh Hammond Bennett. *Soil Conservation Service*

Annual Meeting Hi-lights

The Camden County Soil & Water Conservation District held their annual Appreciation Dinner on Tuesday, March 12th, at the Knights of Columbus Bauer Hall. One hundred seventy-five people turned out for an evening which included a catered meal, photo contest, poster contest, and an interesting and educational program.

This year's entertainment was provided by Carolyn Miller, vintage clothing collector and owner of the Nostalgia Vintage Apparel in Sedalia, MO. Mrs. Miller and her husband modeled authentic clothing from eight decades, tying in the fashion to that period in history. According to Mrs. Miller, "Fashion is very influenced by life."



Grand Prize-Lalia Sousley,
Camden Christian

This year's poster contest theme was "Where Does Your Water Shed?" and was open to all 4th, 5th, and 6th graders in the county. The grand prize winner of this year's Poster Contest was Lalia Sousley, a student at Camden Christian in Camdenton. Lalia received \$50 for her winning poster. First place winners received \$25, second place received \$20, third place winners received \$15, and 4th place took home \$10. Along with their cash prizes, finalists received ribbons. All participants received a bag of goodies for their efforts.

4th Grade

HM – Randi Brandon, Macks Creek

3rd place – Amanda Ferguson, Hurricane Deck

2nd place- Cadence Callahan, Macks Creek

1st place – Emma Taylor, Macks Creek

5th Grade

3rd place – Akiah Rector, Camden Christian

2nd place – Alexis Justice, Camden Christian

1st place – Delaney Garner, Camden Christian

6th Grade

1st place– Destiny McClure



Camden Christian School Students

Photo contest winners were determined by popular vote by those attending the meeting.

Winners of the photo contest were:

4th place – Grant Jenkins, “Winter Cardinal”

3rd place –Dalton Dyer, "Cowboy Up”

2nd place – Wyatt Lauder, "Coopers Hawk on the Watch”

1st place – Wyatt Lauder, “Owl on a Post”

Grand Prize—Rebekah Hibler, “Butterfly Taking a Pollen Bath”

The evening concluded with drawings for door prizes.



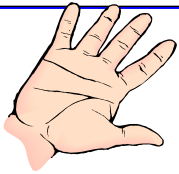
GRAZING SCHOOL TO BE HELD JUNE 4-5

The Camden, Laclede, and Pulaski SWCDs, in cooperation with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and University Extension, will be sponsoring a Management Intensive Grazing School in Lebanon on June 4 and 5.

An Intensive Grazing School is designed to educate livestock producers about management practices that will maximize returns from forages and livestock. This workshop will consist of both classroom and field work in planned grazing systems. The school is also a requirement for participation in the DSP-3 grazing system practices.

Topics to be covered at the school are: Soils and Soil Fertility, Forage Quality, Evaluation of Farm Resources, Layout & Design, Meeting Nutritional Needs of Livestock, Basic Graziers' Arithmetic, Water Requirements, Economics, and Fencing Materials.

The fee for the 2 day school is \$60. This includes resource books and materials, lunch, and refreshments. A couple sharing materials can attend for \$80. Space is limited so you need to sign up as soon as possible. The school will be held in the Laclede Electric Cooperative Public Meeting Room. To register for the school, contact the Laclede SWCD office at 1-800 203-4467, ext 101.



A Big “Pat on the Back” to Our Volunteers

By Connie Luttrell

Since April was the month to recognize volunteers, I want to publicly thank the volunteers who donate their time and energy for the Soil and Water District. During the last year several people have provided free labor in a variety of ways.

In coordinating and preparing for the district’s annual dinner appreciation meeting, there is always a group of people who move tables and chairs, haul equipment and supplies, decorate, and generally anything asked of them. This year’s group consisted of Matt Jackson, Mike Luttrell, Brandon Decker, Jenna Jackson, and Ryan Harris. Over the years, Jane Calvert has faithfully manned the registration table and counted attendance. Heather Luttrell has also been the official photographer for the contest winners.



Many of these same people have folded, labeled, and stamped newsletters and mailings in the past year. Our election judges for the supervisors’ elections are volunteers, graciously giving a day of their time to keep everything legal and running smooth. This year’s judges were Doris Murray, Sharon Book, and Sally Mueller. Jason Luttrell is one of those people who comes home for a visit and gets dragged into solving some of my computer problems and assisting me with the district web page.



Brandon Decker and Mike Luttrell have changed light bulbs and cleaned the light fixtures in the office. Mike never comes in the office but what he sweeps the floor or takes out the trash or unwraps the flag from around the flag pole. What would I do without him?

In looking at this list of people named and unnamed others who have helped in past years, I realize I not only call them volunteers, but also family and friends. A special thanks to all of you who make my life easier and assist the SWCD in so many different ways.



The world is hugged by the faithful arms of volunteers. ~Terri Guimet



- Tanya Apperson
- Jenny Fry
- Charlene Bruns
- Donna Short
- Cherie Wiater
- Shirley Henson
- Jason Luttrell

Brandon Decker, Mike Luttrell, Matt Jackson, Jenna Jackson, Ryan Harris, Jane Calvert, Heather Luttrell, Doris Murray, Sharon Book, Sally Mueller

Consider Warm Season Annuals For Summer Forage

By Dennis Bruns, District Technician

Hopefully, last summer's drought won't be repeated this summer and we can return to more normal conditions. Even if it is a "normal" year, you can still count on it being warm this summer and there will be periods of low rainfalls. This means that most of our cool-season grass pastures will go into a summer slump.

This slump will be a great time to rest those fields, allowing them to build root reserves to give you a great fall growth that will take you well into the winter with grazing, thus reducing the need for expensive hay. So what will your cattle eat in this summer decline, they still need food. Maybe this will be a good time to join me in an experiment in growing some summer annual grasses in about 1/3 of your pastures.

The four most common summer grasses are pearl millet, sudan, sorghum, and a sorghum X sudan hybrid. All put on lots of growth for cattle to eat during late June, July, August, and early September, producing 2 tons/acre or more of quality forage. Cattle can gain nearly 2 lbs/day eating these grasses during the dog days of summer. Sudan grass and pearl millet will re-grow quickly after a grazing so they are the best fit for a rotational grazing system. But one has to manage them properly or wrecks can happen.

Sudan, sorghum, and the sorghum X sudan hybrid can produce toxic prussic acid, or cyanide, under certain stress conditions which can kill livestock. In addition, the above grasses can cause bladder problems in horses and is not recommended to be used for equine grazing. Pearl millet does not produce prussic acid nor cause problems for horses so it can be safely used for equines. The key is to not graze during or just after stress conditions, such as drought, cold, or frost. If a rain occurs after a drought period, wait about 4-7 days before grazing. Also don't allow grazing after a frost until all of the leaves are brown and dry. You can put your livestock onto your cool-season grass pastures during this wait period.

Turn livestock in when the plants have reached about 18"-24" in height, or at least knee high. Allow them to graze it down to 10"-12", or about boot height. Allow the plants to grow back to knee height before grazing again. Prussic acid concentrations are greatest in new growth. The best way to do this is by strip grazing with polywire and step-in posts.

I plan to put 4-5 of my 12 paddocks into summer annuals, mixing pearl millet and sudan grass with forage soybeans for a legume. Since I have a couple of horses, I'll put them into 2 paddocks using only pearl millet/soybeans and my cattle will go into the paddocks seeded with sudan/soybeans. If a stress condition arises I can join the cows with the horses into the millet paddocks until the stress is over.

**Camden County
Soil & Water
Conservation
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Supervisors**



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Dan Silberberg, District Conservationist

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

Forage Calendar

June

- Cut warm season grasses for hay or graze as needed to fill the forage gap.
- Monitor rest periods on grazing systems as cool season grass growth is starting to slow down. Longer rest periods are needed to adequately feed the herd.
- Harvest fescue seed for a cash crop.

July

- Monitor the weather. Look for critical heat index days and provide some paddocks with shade.
- Watch grazing heights, as longer rest periods are needed to feed the herd. Grazing height and rest periods are critical for legume survival.
- Evaluate fields for brush and weed control needs. Make notes on invader species.
- Take soil samples for fall seedings

August

- At mid-month apply nitrogen fertilizer to fescue for stockpiled forage.
- Complete fall seedings as planned or needed in order to improve the forage base.

REMEMBER: Pastures are the cheapest place to feed livestock.

Footprints in the Grass

**Camden Soil & Water
Conservation District**

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