

NEWSLETTER

**Cole County Soil and Water
Conservation District
1911 Boggs Creek Road
Jefferson City, MO 65101**

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ANNUAL MEETING

We would like to extend to each of you a special invitation to attend the 22nd Annual Meeting of the Cole County Soil and Water Conservation District. The meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 19, 2011, at Donita's Banquet Center, 5007 Buffalo Road in Jefferson City. The meal will be provided by the District. Registration begins at 6:00 p.m. with the dinner service to begin at 6:30 p.m. As always, families are invited.

The program will include a presentation on "Soil Health" given by Doug Peterson of the Natural Resources Conservation State Office in Columbia, Missouri. The more you know about soil, the better you can care for it. Beyond stopping erosion, you can significantly boost the productivity and quality of soil by improving its health. Learn more about the benefits of improving soil health on soil erosion, water quality, and the impacts on crop production.

There will be door prizes donated by local businesses to be given away at the end of the meeting

To make reservations to attend, please contact the Cole County SWCD office at the USDA Service Center in Jefferson City by April 10th. Call 573-893-5188 ext. 3.

Grazing School

Cole & Moniteau Counties are sponsoring a Grazing School in cooperation with the University of Missouri Extension and Natural Resources Conservation Service this fall. The workshop is designed for producers with the goal of managing their forage and livestock resources to the full potential. Producers will be provided with the skills to understand the essential components of a successful planned intensive grazing system, and management techniques to make the intensive grazing system work for them.

This is an approved school for individuals interested in the DSP-3 Planned Grazing System assistance program through the local Soil and Water Conservation District. This is a 2-day school that will be held at the Knights of Columbus Hall in St. Martins, MO on September 20-21, 2011. There will be a registration cost of \$75 for the school. For more information call our office at 573-893-5188 ext. 3.

There are also Grazing Schools planned for May 12-13, 2011 in Maries County (573-422-3342) and September 8-9, 2011 in Osage County (573-897-3797).



How Forage Plants Grow

This is probably one of the most important aspects of grazing management. It is also one of the least understood. A plant manufactures food in its leaves through a process called photosynthesis.

95% of plant food is taken from the air. Leaves are food factories. In the presence of sunshine, they combine carbon dioxide from the air and water, nitrates and minerals from the soil to make plant food. Short tops mean short roots.

5% of plant food is taken from the soil. Roots store food. They gather and store raw materials: water nitrates and minerals, which are converted into plant food by the leaves. This food is essential for future growth. Short roots mean less future grass production.

Over grazing destroys roots and leaves. Pasture management is really leaf area management. A good rule of thumb is to take half, leave half of the plants leaf area during any grazing rotation. This allows the plant plenty of leaf area to continue making food for regrowth. Removing 60% or more of the leaf area, will stop a large percentage of root growth for several days. If repeated overgrazing occurs, plants will become stressed and lose vigor. Beginning grazing heights for cool-season forages are 6-8 inches. Never graze below a 3 inch height, as to allow adequate leaf area for regrowth. (Reprinted from NRCS Soil and Pasture Health Guide)

The Cole County SWCD through the Grays Creek AgNPS Project has several conservation practices for the establishment and enhancement of forages. Grazing management practices will also help provide an efficient use of your forage resources.

The Programs and Services of the Cole County Soil and Water Conservation District are funded by the 1/10-cent Parks and Soils Sales Tax and private donations.

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1911 Boggs Creek Road
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