

Conservation Courier Newsletter



Volume 29 Issue 1

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COME ONE, COME ALL AG APPRECIATION NIGHT 2015

Come join us Thursday night, February 19, 2015, at the Oak Grove Civic Center for an evening of ag information, awards, conservation conversation, good food, and entertainment as we celebrate farming in Jackson County! The event will recognize the positive impact of soil and water stewardship on agriculture.

“Fahrmeier Farms & U-Pick”

will be bringing the entertainment and educational program. Bret Fahrmeier of Fahrmeier Farms, located outside of Lexington, MO is a third generation family farmer. The Fahrmeier farming operation began in 1947 as a traditional diversified crop and livestock operation. In 2004, Bret, began growing fresh fruits and vegetables for markets after graduating from the University of Missouri-Columbia. Today, he grows about 40 acres of fresh produce at the farm and focuses on selling his diverse crops direct to restaurants, area schools and offers CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) subscriptions.



On an annual basis, the Fahrmeier family welcomes and hosts many agri-tourism experiences, weddings and children's farm tours to educate others about agriculture and how food is grown. In 2008, Fahrmeier Family Vineyards was opened and offers wine tastings and special events located at the home farm. In the spring of 2014, the operation expanded with the opening their first u-pick strawberry patch and the following fall, were proud to open a roadside produce market and u-pick pumpkin patch. 2015 will be the most exciting yet with the expansion of the strawberry patch along with the addition of u-pick blackberries. In December of 2014, Bret and his family were recognized at the Missouri Governor's Conference on Agriculture by receiving the “MO Fun” award which recognized the efforts of the Fahrmeier family and their agriculture and agri-tourism operation.

Bret is joined in this family venture by his wife, Lorin and their son, Murphy along with his parents, Ron and Joan.

Other highlights for the evening include:

- ◆ Conservation Farmer of the Year Award
- ◆ Conservation Educator of the Year Award
- ◆ Conservation Photo Contest Awards
- ◆ Dinner

Ag Appreciation Night is scheduled at the Civic Center at 2100 South Broadway in Oak Grove. Dinner with program following will begin at 6:30 p.m. Admission is free although an RSVP is required by February 12, 2015 as seating may be limited.

E-mail: linda.struwe@swcd.mo.gov for your reservation or call 816-228-1836, extension 101, for a reservation and directions if necessary.

Soil and water conservation practices like no-till, terraces, waterways, ponds and cover crops have added measurably to the conservation and wise use of soil and water resources in Jackson County. *Ag Appreciation Night* is designed to recognize the efforts of farm owners and operators who have installed and maintained these practices on the land.

See you there!

Regional Conservation Partnership Program

Five Missouri projects are among the more than 100 high-impact conservation projects announced January 14, 2015 by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack as part of the new Regional Conservation Partnership Program, or RCPP.

RCPP's historic focus on public-private partnership enables private companies, local communities and other non-government partners a way to invest in efforts to keep land resilient and water clean, and promote economic growth in agriculture, construction, tourism and outdoor recreation, and other industries.

This year's projects in Missouri will accomplish a wide diversity of agricultural and natural resource goals, said J.R. Flores, state conservationist with the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, or NRCS.

"RCPP puts our partners in the driver's seat," Flores said. "Projects are led locally, and demonstrate the value of strong public-private partnerships that deliver solutions to tough natural resource challenges."

The Missouri RCPP projects include:

- * **Our Missouri Waters Targeted Conservation**
- * **Little Otter Creek Watershed Project**
- * **Regional Grassland Bird and Grazing Land Enhancement Initiative**
- * **Restoring Glade and Woodland Communities for Threatened Species in the Ozarks of Southeast Missouri**
- * **Northwest Missouri Urban and Rural Farmers United For Conservation**

Jackson County Soil and Water Conservation District is the Lead Partner in the **Northwest Missouri Urban and Rural Farmers United For Conservation** project. Other partners include: Clay County Soil and Water Conservation District, Lincoln University Innovative Small Farms Outreach Program and Cultivate Kansas City.

This project will focus on addressing water quality, water quantity, soil health, and at-risk and declining wildlife species issues that affect both rural farms and smaller urban farms. While vegetable production is the primary crop in the urban setting and corn and soybeans are the common crops for rural farms, the resource concerns are common across both grower groups. This project brings together experienced partners who have worked on these issues independent of one another for years. Success of the project will be based upon implementation of NRCS conservation practices, participants' adoption of new management practices, outreach activities completed, development of plans and standards for vegetation composters for small farms, completion of on-farm water audits and outcome summaries, and development of standards for urban runoff catchments for irrigation. NRCS is contributing \$721,000 for this project through RCPP and the local sponsors are contributing \$1.2 million.

While announcing the inaugural group of funded RCPP projects from more than 600 applications, Vilsack said the response from partners indicates that they are seeing the value of conservation activities and are investing in their futures.

"These partnerships are forging a new path for getting conservation on the ground and are providing opportunities for communities to have a voice and ownership in protecting and improving our natural resources," Vilsack said. "The Regional Conservation Partnership Program ushers in a new era of conservation, and we're excited about the down-the-road benefits from this new Farm Bill program."

This year's projects will engage hundreds of partners with wide-ranging interests, including communities, conservation districts, agribusiness, non-government organizations, for- and non-profit organizations, state and federal agencies and Tribal governments. In addition to USDA funds, partners' will contribute an estimated \$400 million, more than doubling USDA's investment.

RCPP is a 5-year \$1.2 billion USDA commitment. Projects not selected in the first year may be eligible in subsequent years.

On January 14, 2015 NRCS State Conservationist J.R. Flores and Rob Montgomery, Chairman of the Jackson County Soil and Water Conservation District Board signed the contract.



FRONT ROW (L-R): Autumn Newby, Clay/Jackson District Conservationist, Rob Montgomery, Chairman of the Jackson County SWCD Board, J.R. Flores, State Conservationist.

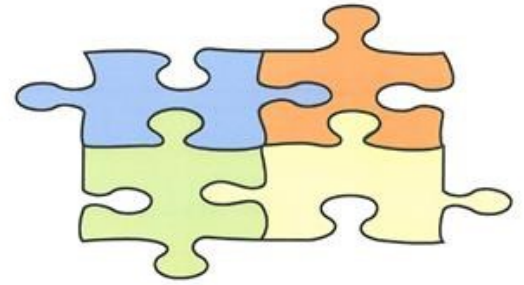
BACK ROW (L-R): Jim Pierce, Lincoln University Representative, John Campbell, Vice Chairman of the Jackson County SWCD, Board, Lala Kumar, Secretary and MO University Extension Representative and Linda Struwe, Jackson County SWCD District Manager.

FSA Program Deadlines

February 27, 2015 — Bases and yields updated

March 15, 2015 — Application for Non-Insured Program Policies

March 31, 2015 — PLC, ARC-CO or ARC Individual programs need to be selected



School Presentations Available

Staff of the Jackson County Soil and Water Conservation District and many volunteers gave hands on soil presentations to over 2000 folks with the majority being 3rd and 4th grade students in 2014. Soil presentations are limited to one a week, due to staff also conducting their regular jobs. When invited to a school, four different stations are set up which include the soil tunnel, edible soil profile, apple demonstration and a video on soil or taking the actual soil survey equipment. From set up to take down takes approximately three hours, two hours for presentations for 100 students.

Jackson County SWCD is appreciative to Department of Natural Resources and the Jackson County Legislature for funds to continue this very important endeavor of teaching students the importance of soil. The soil tunnel is titled, “A Worm’s Eye View of the World Beneath Our Feet”, the tree roots on the top help signify this. In the presentation the students are reminded, that everything directly or indirectly comes from the soil, and their very existence depends on soil.



Dates for soil presentations are still available in March and April. Contact Linda at 816-228-1836 extension 101 or email: linda.struwe@swcd.mo.gov

A BIG THANK YOU TO JACKSON COUNTY LEGISLATURE!

Sincere appreciation is expressed to the **Jackson County Legislature** for assistance in funding Jackson County Soil and Water Conservation District technical and information/education programs. With the Legislature’s help, valuable programs are conducted which protect the natural resources of the county and further the missions of the county and our district. Several specific programs include:

- ◆ **Technical and State cost-share assistance to secure conservation practices on the land, protecting county soil and water resources and infrastructure**
- ◆ **Presenting soil presentations for school age children**
- ◆ **Sediment and erosion control and watershed hydrology training workshops**



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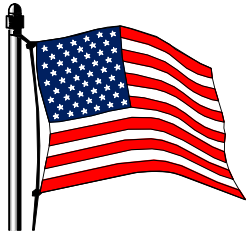
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The Conservation Courier Newsletter carries the message of natural resource conservation to rural and urban Jackson County. To receive a quarterly e-mail notice listing new topics, just e-mail linda.struwe@swcd.mo.gov with your request.



NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

The Jackson County Soil and Water Conservation District prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or a part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



**Conservation Districts
Conserving America**

If you would no longer like to receive
this publication please contact the office.

Rob Montgomery, Chairman
John Campbell, Vice Chairman
Dan Stock, Treasurer
Lala Kumar, Secretary and University of Missouri Extension
Tim Brockmeyer, Member

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**JACKSON COUNTY SOIL AND WATER
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