Morgan County Soil and Water Conservation District

100 S. Burke Street

Versailles, MO 65084

573-378-5822 ext. 101

Soil Conservation News

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

MORGAN COUNTY HAS COST-SHARE FUNDS AVAILABLE

The Missouri Department of Natural Resources' Soil and Water Districts Commission has developed the cost-share program to provide financial incentives to help farmers and landowners install water quality protection and erosion-control practices. The program has helped conserve and assure the continued productivity of Missouri's soil and water resources, saving an estimated 137 million tons of soil.

Funds for the program come from the one-tenth-of-one-percent parks, soils and water sales tax approved by voters and are administered by local soil and water conservation districts.

A "landowner" is a person, firm or corporation who holds title to any lands lying within the soil and water conservation district.

The landowner must have an active conservation plan approved by the district. A conservation plan outlines a landowner's decision on how to most effectively use his land, and how to maintain or improve the soil, water and related resources.

The land must be assessed as agricultural land and have a Farm Service Agency farm number.

Cost-share funds are available for the following practices; Grass and legume seeding's, Diversions, Permanent Vegetative Cover on Critical Areas, Ponds, Sod Waterways, Terraces, Nutrient and Pest Management, excluding cattle from ponds, woods and streams, Streambank Stabilizations, Grazing Systems, Spring Developments, Well Decommissioning's, Incinerators, Composting Facilities, Poultry Stackhouse and Composters, Swine Concrete Storage Pit and Cattle Feeding Facilities.

Requests for assistance are on a continuous sign up and land owners are on a first come first served basis.

New USDA portal enables farmers, ranchers and private landowners to request conservation assistance online

Washington, D. C. May 27, 2015 - Agriculture Secretary, Tom Vilsack announced that farmers, ranchers, and private forest landowners can now do business with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) through a new online portal. With today's launch of Conservation Client Gateway, producers will have the ability to work with conservation planners online to access Farm Bill programs, request assistance, and track payments for their conservation activities.

"What used to require a trip to a USDA service center can now be done from a home computer through Conservation Client Gateway," Vilsack said. "USDA is committed to providing effective, efficient assistance to its clients, and Conservation Client Gateway is one way to improve customer service."

Conservation Client Gateway enables farmers, ranchers and private landowners to securely:

Request NRCS technical and financial assistance;

Review and sign conservation plans and practice schedules;

Complete and sign an application for a conservation program;

Review, sign and submit contracts and appendices for conservation programs;

Document completed practices and request certification of completed practices;

Request and track payments for conservation programs; and

Store and retrieve technical and financial files, including documents and photographs.

Conservation Client Gateway is entirely voluntary, giving producers a choice between conducting business online or traveling to a USDA service center.

"Our goal is to make it easy and convenient for farmers and ranchers to work with USDA," Vilsack said.

Customers can log in 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to electronically sign documents , apply for conservation programs, access conservation plans, report practice completion, or track the status of conservation payments. Through conservation Client Gateway, producers have their conservation information at their fingertips and they can save time and gas money by reducing the number of trips to USDA service centers."

Conservation Client Gateway is available to individual landowners and will soon be extended to business entities, such as Limited Liability Corporations. It is part of the agency's ongoing Conservation Delivery Streamlining Initiative, which will feature additional capabilities in the future.

For more information about Conservation Client Gateway, visit: www.nrcs.usda.gov/clientgateway

USING COVER CROPS FOR PREVENTED PLANTING ACRES

Prolonged rain and flooding has resulted in many fields that will go unplanted this year. Producers in this situation need to weigh not only their program and insurance options ("prevented planting") but should also assess agronomic options to ensure long-term productivity from this difficult situation.

Producers should explore the benefits of planting a cover crop that has the potential to capture applied nutrients, fix nitrogen, build organic matter, control weeds, control erosion and/or improve soil health and biology during the remainder of the growing season. These together can build considerable yield potential for following crops.

Producers are advised to check with the USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) and their crop insurance agent on prevented planting requirements and haying, grazing, harvest restrictions for cover crops. For more information, USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) recently published a frequently asked questions (FAQ) on crop insurance and prevented planting.

http://www.rma.usda.gov/help/faq/ksmone excessprecip.html

A key soil health concept is to ensure that there is vegetation green and growing during all times of the year.

BUILDING vs. LOSING TOPSOIL

As excessive rainfall runoff of flood waters cut across unprotected fields, the top soil may have been lost from erosion and scouring. With the productive topsoil lost, so too are the nutrients, organic matter, and soil biology. If tillage is applied to these water-damaged fields to control weeds or smooth them out, even relatively flat soils will lose carbon , nitrogen, and biomass.

Above-ground biomass of cover crops helps protect the soil from further sun, wind and water damage. Selecting high biomass cover crop mixes will rebuild topsoil. Cover crops, especially if no-tilled, will add organic biomass both above and below ground to rebuild topsoil quicker than if left to grow weeds or especially if left with no cover. Avoid removing biomass from the field by harvesting for forage or grain, which will reduce the organic matter benefits. Instead consider killing or mowing prior to seed-head formation particularly if reseeding could be incompatible with subsequent crops. This will also insure rapid decomposition and leave more nutrients in the roots that are available to soil organisms and subsequent crops.

SOIL BIOLOGY, STRUCTURE and COMPACTION

Many fields saturated for long periods lose soil organisms that create soil macro-pores and cycle nutrients and lose beneficial soil biology such as mycorrhizae fungi and rhizobia bacteria that build the soil structure. Without these organisms, the soils are very subject to compaction, crusting, and high bulk density problems.

Some fields may be so compacted that remediation activities are needed. However, cover crops, whether used alone or in conjunction with other compaction remediation activities, are essential to rebuild healthy soil structure. The roots of cover crops help to penetrate compacted zones, hold soil aggregates together, and sustain healthy organisms to restore health structure. Growing roots is essential to re-establish the mycorrhizae in the soil and to create pathways for air and water to move through the soil profile, which are key components to restoring the soil's functional properties and will keep the pathways more open to result in a quicker fix of the compacted layers.

USING COVER CROPS FOR PREVENTED PLANTING ACRES CONTINUED

BUILDING vs. LOSING NITROGEN

Cover crops can build organic nitrogen, and/or sequester residual nitrogen in the soil. A legume or legume mix planted in early summer can help provide some of the needed Nitrogen of a following corn crop. A brassica or grass, or brassica and grass mix can scavenge residual N from the soil and even more in situations where manure or preplant nutrients have been recently applied. Additionally, this results in a more rapid gain in total soil biomass and a higher total nutrient availability for subsequent crops. Make sure all legume seed is properly inoculated. Remember that planting brassicas too early (prior to August) may cause them to bolt and produce large tubers or seed.

COVER CROP SPECIES AND GUIDE

Cover crop selection and management should focus on maximizing both above and below-ground biomass and encouraging nutrient cycling as deep in the soil profile as possible. Choosing a mix of a grass with a fibrous root system and a legume or brassica with a tap root will usually provide the widest range of benefits. Planting wildlife friendly cover crops such as buckwheat or brassicas and leaving the growth and/or the grain can be a very valuable winter food source for a wide variety of wildlife and pollinators. Just remember that allowing cover crops to produce seed may not be desirable in many cropping situations.

SEEDING and ESTABLISHMENT

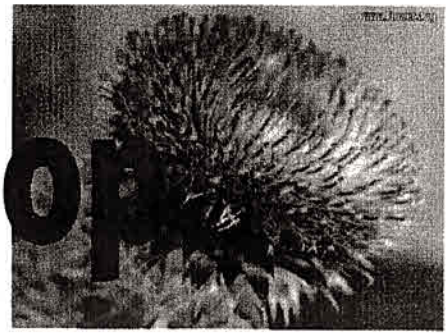
It is best if seed is drilled or planted with planting equipment. This also addresses concerns about crusted soil and seed to soil contact.

Producers are advised to check with the USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) and their crop insurance agent on prevented planting requirements and haying, grazing, harvest restrictions for cover crops. For more information, USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) recently published a frequently asked questions (FAQ) on crop insurance and prevented planting.

http://www.rma.usda.giv/help/faq/ksmone excessprecip.html

If you are interested in planting cover crops this fall, the Morgan County SWCD is offering state cost-share on a new cover crops pilot-project. Please stop by or call the office for more information. Our number is (573)378-5822.

Weed Workshop



Free Workshop

Thursday, August 13th @ 6:00
Hunter Civic Center
(201 W. Jasper St., Versailles)

Sponsored by:
Morgan County SWCD & MU Extension

Speaker: Joni Harper, MU Extension Agronomist

Hands on weed identification
Weed & Brush Control Discussion

Meal will be provided

Help us know how much food we need

Please RSVP by August 11- Morgan SWCD - 573-378-5822 ext. 3

If you need an accommodation , please contact Patty Wittrock at 573-378-5822 before August 12th.

Morgan County Soil and Water
Conservation District
100 S. Burke Street
Versailles, MO 65084

Phone: 573-378-5822
Fax: 573-378-6163
E-mail: patty.wittrock@swcd.mo.gov

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage Paid
Stover, MO
Permit #69

"Return Service Requested"

New Face in the Office

We have a new face in the office this summer. Abbey Kempker is working part time as our Summer Intern. Abbey is a student at Lincoln University. Abbey works three days a week and will be with us through the end of August.