Lawrence County Soil & Water Conservation District

Quarterly Newsletter

JANUARY 2021

Upcoming Dates:

Soil & Water Board Elections

Area 2 nomination: Tim Neely

Area 4 nomination: Marty Blevins

Election Period: **February 1st– February 20th,**

Ballots Counted by Election Judges: **February 22nd–February 28th**

Certification of Election: **March SWCD Board Meeting**

NEW WITH OUR PARTNERS

New Faces:

Nathan Bilke

My name is Nathan Bilke new District Conservationist for Lawrence, Barry, Newton and McDonald Counties . I was born and raised outside of Seneca, Missouri. I graduated from Northwest Missouri State University in 2003 and was fortunate to move back to SW Missouri where I was a water quality project manager under SWCD and NRCS for 5 years. After that job was finished I worked as a soils and geologic consultant for 2 years then took a job full time with USDA NRCS in NW Missouri in 2009. I remained in NW Missouri until 2020 when I took a supervisory position in Rolla and then transferred to SW Missouri a year later as a supervisor for Lawrence, Newton, McDonald and Barry Counties with USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service.

Over the course of the last 15 years my focus has been on grassland management and soil science with USDA. I have had some very unique opportunities to do short work stints in many parts of the world from Thailand to Alaska and closer places like Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas and Colorado. These opportunities although at the time were hard to wrangle with a growing family they were some of the best experiences of my career.

Although USDA NRCS is my career it is not my identity. My identity is in the biblical promises of the Gospel. I have been married to my AMAZING high school sweetheart for 21 years and have 3 wonderful kids that the Lord has blessed us with. In my leisure time I enjoy spending every moment I can "out of doors" hunting, fishing and primitive camping.

FARM SERVICE AGENCY

REMINDERS AND DEADLINES

DMC– Dairy Margin Program for 2022 is delayed, dates will be announced when available.

DECEMBER 31, 2021:

OCCSP Organic Cost Share Program: Reimbursement for yearly fees.

JANUARY 7, 2022:

OCTECP: Organic and Transitional Education and Certification Program

Sign up for 2020 and 2021 OTECP. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will provide pandemic assistance to cover certification and education expenses to agricultural producers who are certified organic or transitioning to organic.

MARCH 15, 2022:

ARC/PLC: Agriculture Risk Coverage, and Price Loss Coverage for base acre farms.

NAP: Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program-spring oats, perennial grass and hay, alfalfa, cane berries, pumpkins, sweet corn and most annual fruit and vegetables.

Acreage reporting deadlines:

Please contact the office if you have a question on a crop not listed below. A plant date is required so report as soon as planted. If acres are not reported by deadline, a fee will be assessed prior to certification. If you have prevented plant acres due to disaster, notify the office with 15 Days of the date of the disaster.

JANUARY 15, 2022: blueberries and elderberries, peaches

MAY 15, 2022: Spring oats

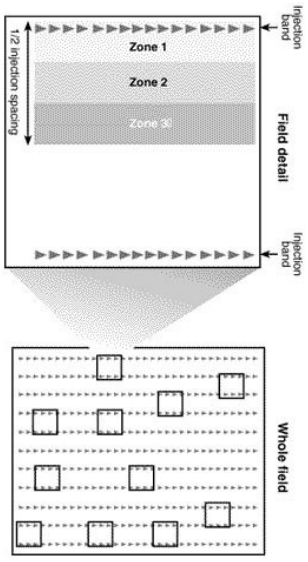
JULY 15, 2022: Deadline for several crops including perennial grass, alfalfa, corn, soybeans, grain, sorghum, forage sorghum, sudangrass, and sorghum– sudangrass hybrids, crabgrass, pearl millet and other warm season annual forages.

Grid Sampling

Collecting a represent soil sample is an important step in developing a nutrient plan for your farm. The goals of your soil sampling plan should be to identify manageable sized fields with similar characteristics, and accurately and cost effetely determine the nutrient status of those fields.

John Wheeler, Lawrence County SWCD Board Chair, has used grid sampling on all his farms for spreading fertilizer. "It is a good opportunity for farmers and the environment. Fertilizer cost can become expensive and by grid sampling it will help limit the amount of fertilizer you need on your pasture and crop land, once you sample, you are able to determine which part of the field needs additional fertilizer as well as areas that don't. It's unbelievable to see how many parts do not need as much as you think. I highly recommend doing this on fields before spreading any fertilizer. It will help the cost by a lot."

Should I grid sample my field? Grid soil sampling is a method of intensively sampling your field, typically obtaining a sample for every 2.5 acres or less. This method of sampling is typically used when a farmer uses variable rate technology to apply fertilizers or lime. Grid sampling is most justified on high value and high yielding soils, particularly when you anticipate significant variations in soil test levels including low testing areas within a field. It can also be useful the first time you sample the soil in a field with an unknown history.



When should I sample? The best time to collect soil samples is when the field is idle and enough time is available to plan fertilizer and lime applications for the next crop. Sampling after harvest in the fall and winter usually works best for forages and spring-seeded crops.

For winter wheat and fall-seeded crops, sampling while the field is idle in the summer works well. Pre-plant or presidedress nitrogen samples for corn should be taken in the spring as close to planned nitrogen application as possible.

Sampling while the field is idle allows you to better identify areas according to soil type, topography, and old field boundaries while allowing easy access to the field.

It is best to wait at least three months after application of phosphorus fertilizer, lime or manure before taking a soil sample. Sample your fields every three to five years. It is also recommended that you sample a field at the same time of year as your last sample because some soil test levels fluctuate during the year.

On fields where the location of injection bands for fertilizer or manure is known, the objective is to take 30 cores using the following method:

At a randomly selected point in the field, take three 6- to 7-inch cores, one from each of three zones adjacent to an injection band. (See figure to the right.)

- Repeat the procedure at 10 or more randomly selected locations in the field.
- Take the cores at various points in each zone as you move among sampling sites in the field.

On fields where the location of the fertilizer or manure bands is not known, take at least 20 cores, randomly scattered over the field. Without a sampling method like this, the tendency is to take too many cores over the injection point on fields with banded manure or fertilizer. This causes an overestimate of the value of nutrients in the soil.

For more details on pricing and info contact your local MFA office.

EQUIPMENT RENTALS

Contact: 417-466-7682 ext 3
Christian.wooldridge@swcd.mo.gov
Megan.clay@swcd.mo.gov

10’ John Deere 1590 No-Till Drill

$10/acre plus $25 delivery

Rental minimum $75 plus $25 delivery

EZ Spray 300 Gallon Boomless Gas Powered Sprayer

$100/day $25 delivery or free pick-up

24’ EZ Harrow Pasture Drag

$75/day or $150/weekend (Friday-Sunday)

$25 delivery or free pick-up

Titan T-Post Driver

$75/day, $100/ weekend, $175/week

The Lawrence County Soil and Water Conservation District has a fiscal year that runs from July 1-June 30. When discussing plans for your farm, some of the questions we will ask is how soon do you want to start your project and how quickly can you complete it once your contract has been Board Approved. While our contracting times run year round, the dollars available to cost-share on your project are limited in nature. Our cost-share allowances come from the Parks, Soil and Water Tax and we are only allotted a certain amount of money. In a nutshell, this means first come, first served! In addition to providing technical advice and contracts, our office is always willing to help with any farming related questions such as assisting in reading soil test results and general farm layout advice based on your management. Fiscal Year 22 has some unobligated funds for the following cost-share programs; Grazing Management at $53,499.02, Sensitive Areas at $71,590.41, Sheet & Reel/Gully Erosion at $35,945.04 and Woodland Erosion at $2,373.75.

Cost-Share Programs

Contact our office now for possible cost-share assistance on any of the following projects:

- **Grazing Systems** (cross fencing, wells, waterlines, tanks and lime)

  ** GRAZING SCHOOL CERTIFICATION REQUIRED**

- **Well Decommissioning**
- **Grass and Legume Seedings**
- **Streambank Protection**
- **Exclusion Fencing**
- **Waterways**
- **Cover Crops**
- **Pest Management**

! With the COVID-19 procedures in place, our office is open by appointment only. Please call us at (417) 466-7682 ext. 3 to talk about what plans you have for your farm or to make an appointment.

If you want any updates or news via email or text, go to www.mosoilandwater.land/lawrence click on the "receive updates from the district".

Soil Health Practices for Livestock Producers

Tim Schnakenberg, University of Missouri Extension field specialist in agronomy

In recent years there has been some renewed interest in soil health by many farmers and ranchers across the country. This comes from a desire to leave our farms and ranches to succeeding generations in better shape than how we may have received them. Some call this regenerative agriculture.

From a livestock production perspective, improved grazing management, commonly referred to as "management-intensive grazing" has been shown to more uniformly distribute animal waste, enhance soil biological activity, improve water quality and water infiltration, reduce the use of fuel and machinery, lower soil loss, extend the life and improve the quality of forages grazed, reduce weed pressures and improve the economic sustainability of livestock operations.

These practices keep cattle on the move, limiting overgrazing, and in the process, pastures receive a rest so that their root systems and top growth are strong and healthy.

Plant diversity and healthy root systems also help improve soil microbiology and animal health. Livestock agricultural systems typically have an advantage over row crop monocultures because in forages there may already be diversity of species, year-round cover and often there is manure that helps to keep soil chemistry active and alive. Some species, such as native grasses that are adopted in the grazing system, also improve wildlife habitat.

It is a common practice to use legumes such as clover and lespedeza that enhance the soil life by providing a very different component to the living ecosystem below. With the help of Rhizobium bacteria that these species attract, they can bring nitrogen from the atmosphere into the root systems that greatly aid soil microbe activity along with the benefit of nitrogen for other plant species that grow in close proximity. Every year root systems from these plants are pruned back and nodules decay and regrow, leaving nitrogen in the soil for all kinds of other life to benefit from.

University of Missouri Extension and Natural Resources Conservation Service, often with support from local Soil and Water Conservation Districts, have been teaching the concepts of regenerative agriculture for thirty years. These two- or three-day classes are offered to farmers and ranchers throughout Missouri. Since their inception in 1990, over 19,000 Missouri farmers and ranchers have participated in these learning opportunities. There are normally 25-30 grazing schools offered in the state each year, highlighting research that began at the University of Missouri in the 1970s.

In addition, thanks for federal USDA dollars and Missouri funds from the Parks and Soils sales tax, cost-share incentives have been used for regenerative agriculture for many years. Thousands of producers each year incorporate these practices as a result of the educational opportunities and the incentives and technical advice provided by the agencies.

Today, the most recent USDA Agricultural Statistics Service figures show that about one in three Missouri cattle ranchers use some form of rotational or intensive grazing. There is always a need for more adoption, but great strides have been made.

The teaching of soil health has been around for decades, if not hundreds of years. It has been called different things but there has long been a segment of the ag community, both in academic and applied sciences, that have appreciated the importance of soil biochemistry in production systems. Today we have learned even more about the importance and how organisms in the soil react to and affect crop growth and how water infiltration has improved by adoption of these practices.

Productivity and economic stability on a farm begins with the soil and with water management. If the soil is not above par, our crops and forages will never produce at a sustainable level to keep the farm in business and preserve our land. The agricultural community has made many strides to enhance soil health, improve carbon sequestration and improve the efficiency of every drop of water that falls on the farm.

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"The Soil and Water Conservation District does not endorse nor recommend any of the vendors/contractors advertised in this newsletter, furthermore, any contractor/vendor that wishes to be added to the District's contractor/vendor list can be added upon request."

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