

# Reporter

ST. CHARLES COUNTY

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

## Kurt Schaefer Elected as Director of Missouri Department of Natural Resources

Kurt Schaefer will assume the role of DNR Director effective January 13, 2025, and await Missouri Senate confirmation. "I look forward to carrying on the department's mission of efficient and sustainable management of Missouri's natural resources, protection of human health and the environment, and the development of comprehensive energy policy," states Schaefer. Schaefer previously served as a General Counsel and Deputy Director of DNR. He oversaw emergency response, environmental remediation and cleanup of the destruction caused by the Taum Sauk Reservoir failure in December 2005. He also served as lead counsel for negotiating state and federally required sewer infrastructure capital improvements with the City of Kansas City and the St. Louis Metropolitan Sewer District.

The St. Charles County SWCD will once again be publishing "Farm Features" in order to share the histories and stories of St. Charles County farm families and highlight the important conservation efforts they are putting into practice. If you would like your farm featured in the newsletter, email Ally at [Alexandria.hecht@swcd.mo.gov](mailto:Alexandria.hecht@swcd.mo.gov).



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Conservation District

## Huber Homestead: Where Family, Farming, and Legacy Grow Together



Farming, at its heart, is a family affair, a legacy passed down through generations. The Huber family's story, woven into the fabric of St. Charles County for over a century, beautifully illustrates this. Ray Huber and his wife, Dawn, reside in their lovingly restored farmhouse in St. Paul, surrounded by the bustling life of their homestead. Here, you're welcomed with sounds of beef cattle, the rustling fields of soybeans, wheat, and corn, and the welcoming chorus of chickens and ducks where the Huber legacy continues.

Ray and Dawn's five children—Christal, Mackenzie, Joseph, Samantha, and Gabriel—all grew up with the rhythm of the farm life in their blood. While their paths have branched out—Christal and Mackenzie working for Mizzou, Joseph becoming an architect in Colorado, and Samantha working for Land O' Lakes WinField United and serving as an Appointed Member at MU Extension, and Gabriel pursuing veterinary medicine at the University of Missouri—the farm remains a touchstone, a shared hobby and history.

Continue reading on page 4.

## Are You Preparing For MDC's First Ever Missouri Birding Challenge?

The Missouri Department of Conservation released news in January about a partnership with the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the Missouri River Bird Observatory (MRBO), and the Missouri Conservation Heritage Foundation (MCHF), inviting both new and experienced birders to join the first ever Missouri Birding Challenge.

The first ever Missouri Birding Challenge is planned for May 1 through 15, 2025. Participants can compete alone or on a team in different birding categories based on their

ages, birding experience, and comfort levels. Birders will use eBird ([eBird.org](http://eBird.org)) to record their lists of birds identified at public natural areas around the state, or even their own backyards. Once participants complete a category, they will be entered into a

drawing for fun, bird-related prizes such as binoculars and gift cards. There is a fee of \$10-\$25 per person or team depending on the category. The Fees go toward migratory bird conservation efforts. Registration will be open April 1-30 through the webpage. Learn more about the Challenge at [mdc.mo.gov/discover-nature/activities/birdwatching/](http://mdc.mo.gov/discover-nature/activities/birdwatching/) Missouri-bird-challenge.



The black-capped chickadee is a favorite winter visitor to backyard bird feeders. Picture provided by the Missouri Department of Conservation.

# World Water Day; Saving Our Glaciers

Saturday March 22 is World Water Day and the theme this year is “Glacier Preservation”. Key messages from the campaign are that glaciers are melting faster than ever. As the planet gets hotter due to climate change, the frozen world is shrinking, making the water cycle more unpredictable and extreme. Glacial retreat threatens devastation; floods, droughts, landslides and sea levels rising cause damages for billions of people. Lastly, glacier preservation is a survival strategy. We must work together to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and manage meltwater more sustainably for people and the planet.

There is still time to protect and preserve glaciers, as a vital fresh water source. Some strategies that we can implement or adapt to help make an impact are reducing our global emissions, strengthening water resource management, adaptation planning for vulnerable communities, ecosystem restoration, and transboundary cooperation.

Many of the Soil and Water Conservation District’s practices and overall message is to help protect and preserve freshwater.

Cover crops promote water infiltration methods. They cover the ground with their

residue which helps improve soil structure for their roots, while overall improving infiltration and water storage capacity. When water enters and is held in the soil profile, the crops and water quality are directly benefited.

Riparian corridors protect streams by holding soil in place. They help slow erosion down that is being washed off from adjacent fields which helps remove pollutants that could end up in our water and harm wildlife and human life.

Wetland management (NRCS) practices help landowners protect, restore, and enhance wetlands. Wetlands are vital to our fresh water ecosystems because they act as natural filters that remove pollutants and sediments from our waters. They also help with flood control and some wetlands can even replenish our groundwater supplies.

We all need to take steps to protect water because we’re not adding any new water on this planet. All the water that we have now is all the water that there ever was, and ever will be.

Water is precious and should be treated in such a way.



**In 2023, glaciers lost more than 600 gigatons of water, the largest mass loss registered in 50 years.**

**Mission: Clean Stream April 5, 2025, 8:00 AM—2:00 PM**

**Mission: Clean Stream is taking place all across St. Charles County. Volunteers will work together to pick up trash along our rivers and streams. Every bit of trash picked up by volunteers is a bit of trash that doesn’t make it into our precious rivers and streams.**

**To signup for an event near you visit [greenwaynetwork.org/](https://greenwaynetwork.org/)**



## St. Charles County Stream Care Guide is Online

The St. Charles County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) worked with City of Wentzville Stormwater staff to produce a new county-wide Stream Care Guide. The guide is sponsored by the SWCD, the City of Wentzville and St. Charles County government.

This guide highlights the watersheds we live in and the activities within our watersheds that can harm water quality. It explains the functions of a stream and the natural and human influences that affect stream ecosystem changes. St. Charles County has made it available online to all residents. You can visit the county website’s **Stormwater Management and Watercourse Protection** page to link to the new Stream Care Guide, or click on the QR code at right.

**NEW**

**Stream Care Guide Available**

Educating St. Charles County Residents About Local Streams and How to Protect Waterways and Private Property

To help the community better understand our impact on waterways, landscaping and stream stabilization tips, St. Charles County—in partnership with the City of Wentzville and the St. Charles County Soil & Water Conservation District—has created a unique and engaging Stream Care Guide. In this edition, residents will find out how they can:

- Prevent or minimize erosion issues.
- Avoid flooding impacts.
- Protect property values.
- Preserve water quality.
- Contribute to the survival of fish and wildlife.

As stewards of the two mightiest rivers on the North American continent, everything we do has the potential to affect our county’s tourism, flooding, tax dollars, and the beauty of life’s most important natural resource: water.

Scan the QR code with your phone’s camera to begin reading the Stream Care Guide to learn more about the county’s local waterways and what you can do to protect them and your property.

**St. Charles County  
Soil & Water Conservation District**  
**330 Interstate Dr.**  
**Wentzville, Mo., 63385**  
**636-922-2833, ext. 3**

The Reporter Newsletter is published by the St. Charles County Soil & Water Conservation District quarterly, in March, June, September and December.

**Editor—Theresa Strunk**  
**Writer—Alexandria Hecht**

For advertising information or to submit news, call the district at 636-922-2833, ext. 3.

The district is supervised by a board of supervisors made up of farmers from St. Charles County and a University of Missouri Extension representative:

**Board of Supervisors**  
Adam Bonderer, Chairman  
Jim Petersen, Vice-Chairman  
Eli Isele, Secretary  
Bob Feise, Treasurer  
Bruce Siem, Member

**SWCD Personnel**  
Theresa Strunk, Manager  
Charlie Perkins, Technician  
Alexandria Hecht, Info/Ed Specialist

**NRCS Personnel**  
Vacant, District Conservationist  
Brandon Rivera, Soil Conservationist

The mission of the Soil & Water Conservation District is to conserve the soil and water resources of the county; promote the wise use of these resources through education; protect residents from undue hardship caused by erosion, sedimentation and flooding; protect the agricultural soil base to ensure continued productivity; and preserve the quality of water and water courses within the county.

# St. Louis SWCD Fills Vacant District Manager Position

St. Louis County Soil and Water Conservation District had a vacancy for their district manager position for just about 3 months. The wait is finally over and the position has been filled.

Anna Carreón started at St. Louis SWCD on December 30, right before the new year. She has been hired to manage and oversee the daily operations of the St. Louis SWCD. She provides landowners and farmers with agricultural conservation assistance and really showcases her knowledge and passion for conservation through her outreach efforts to the public.

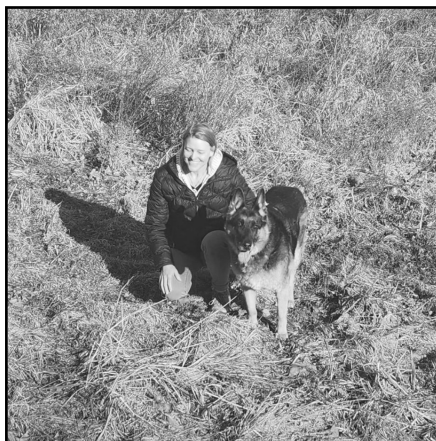
Anna is expected to split her time between the Wentzville office and the St. Louis Urban Service Center to help with outreach efforts and be closer to the landowners and farmers she would be helping.

Anna is a passionate conservation advocate who does water quality monitoring, stream clean-ups, bush honey suckle removal, and tree planting for streambank stabilization in her free time. As avid gardeners, Anna and her husband make the most of their small St. Louis County plot—they grow vegetables, used to have chickens, installed a rain garden in

the fall, and have converted the majority of their turf grass into a pollinator haven and glade. One might say they are exceeding the carrying capacity of their habitat.

As the St. Louis County Soil and Water Conservation District Manager, Anna's role will be to assist farmers in implementing conservation practices, and to provide conservation outreach and education to students, landowners and municipalities. Assisting farmers allows Anna to reconnect with her roots from early childhood on a farm in Jamestown, Missouri. She is grateful for the opportunity to learn from and serve her board, fellow districts, partner agencies, and the farm and conservation communities. If you stop by our office, please say hello and welcome Anna Carreón to the area.

If you need assistance and live in St. Louis county please reach out to Anna Carreón. Her email is [anna.carreon@swcd.mo.gov](mailto:anna.carreon@swcd.mo.gov) or you can call the office at 636-922-2833, ext. 038 to speak directly with her.



Anna Carreón and her dog, Bentley, hiking along Deer Creek.

## St. Charles County SWCD State Cost-Share Cover Crop Sign-Up

Have you been thinking about installing a conservation practice on your farm, but are unsure where to start? Now is a good time to call the St. Charles County Soil and Water Conservation District to start the process.



Cover crops growing over old corn stalks.

St. Charles County SWCD announced that applications for state cost share cover crops are due by July 15, 2025. After that date, cover crop applications will be complete as funds and staff time allow for the remainder of the fall 2025.

If you have any questions or want to get started on the contract process contact Charlie Perkins, St. Charles County SWCD Technician. 636-922-

2833. ext. 3.

### SUMMARY OF 2024 CHANGES

\$5,000 Annual maximum per operator (the lifetime maximum no longer applies).

The state commission removed the two production crop requirement (continuous corn or continuous beans are eligible).

### Current Payments

Incentive payment of \$30 per Acre for a 1 or 2 species cover crop mix.

Incentive payment of \$40 per acre for 3 or more species cover crop mix.

## Century Farms in St. Charles County

There has been a total of 104 recorded Century Farms in St. Charles County. The oldest recorded Century Farm in St. Charles County is from 1816. That is four years after St. Charles county was established and five years before Missouri was an established state. The Missouri Century Farm program can be seen as a celebration as the lasting and hardworking contributions that farmers and ranchers have made to our county's and state's heritage.

The Centennial Farm project was established in Missouri in 1976, awarding certificates to persons owning farms that have been in the same family for 100 years or more. Ten years later, the University of Missouri Extension and the MU College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources created the annual Century Farm program and recognition.

You have to apply for the program. The landowners with farms that have been in the same family for 100 years can be recognized with signs, a certificate and a booklet. The application period is open February 1 through May 1 each year. If you are interested in applying, go to University of Missouri Extension's website under programs or you can type in this link: <http://extension.missouri.edu/programs/century-farms/cf-apply>.

## Producers Can Now Enroll in ARC and PLC

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is accepting enrollments and elections for the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) for 2025 from Jan. 21 to April 15. ARC and PLC provide financial protections to farmers from substantial drops in crop prices or revenues, and are vital economic safety nets for most American farms.

For more information on ARC and PLC, producers can visit the ARC and PLC webpage or contact your St. Charles/ St. Louis County USDA Service Center at 636-922-2833.

**Huber story continued from page1.**

Ray’s memories of his own childhood on the farm, particularly the dairy farm with its 110 head of cattle, are vivid and warm. His face lights up as he recalls mornings in the milk barn with



**The Huber family offers picturesque landscapes as you drive up to their quaint home.**

powdered chocolate milk and the joy of making homemade ice cream with cousins, even the brain freeze!

The Huber family’s connection to the community runs deep. Their dairy farm once produced up to 1,000 gallons of milk a day, much of which was sold to the beloved local St. Charles Dairy Co., a cherished memory for many, even

though it closed its doors in 1979.

Ray, a full-time roofer and owner of Huber Roofing, embodies the spirit of hard work. Though he briefly left farming in the 1990s, the land called him back. “There’s a lot of daylight left and I needed more to do,” he says with a smile, explaining his return to the cattle business.



**Picture of Rascal the III with Christal, Mackenzie, and Samantha’s friends in the background.**

His children were the ultimate driving force behind his return to farming. Their involvement in 4-H, showcasing their livestock talents at the St. Charles County Fair, instilled in Ray a deep appreciation for the organization. He believes 4-H is “super important for kids because it teaches responsibility and creates lasting friendships and connections within the community, “ he smiled

proudly as he showed the interviewer pictures of his children participating in 4-H St. Charles County Fair events.

The Huber family’s commitment extends to conservation, a legacy passed down from Ray’s father, Ferdinand Huber. Ferdinand, with the help of St. Charles County Soil and Water Conservation

District, implemented the first grassed waterway on the property some 60 years ago.

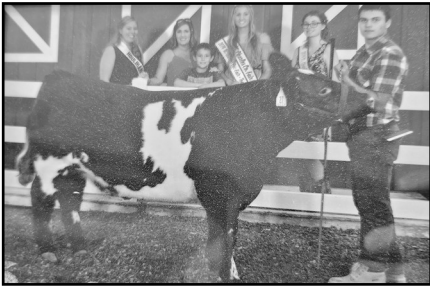
Following in his father’s footsteps, Ray constructed another waterway in 2017, working with SWCD Technician, Charlie Perkins and Jerry Busch from NRCS. “Grassed waterways are great for conveying concentrated water flows into a larger stream,” explains Perkins, emphasizing the importance of erosion control. Ray is already planning a third waterway!



**A seeded field border that was completed in 2019.**

In 2019, Ray also completed a cost-share project on a field border, again collaborating with the SWCD. “Field borders provide a place to turn around equipment at end of crop rows,” Perkins notes, “and they can also provide some wildlife habitat or forage.”

Ray’s dedication to conservation is about more than just his land; its about the future. By implementing practices like grassed waterways and field borders, he’s ensuring the vitality of his farm for generations to come. He’s preserving not just soil and water, but the very heart of the Huber family legacy.



**The two pictures to the left show the Huber kids participating in the St. Charles County Fair.**

“4-H helps kids build life skills (leadership, etc.) through hands-on projects, fostering confidence and community involvement “

-Brittney Bird, 4-H Youth Program Associate

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# St. Charles SWCD Outreach Efforts Help First Lego League Group, Brick Masters, in Regional Competition

St. Charles County Soil and Water Conservation District's outreach coordinator, Ally Hecht and Charlie Perkins, District Technician along with Anna Carreón, St. Louis County District Manager, met with a small, but mighty group of 6th and 7th graders who call themselves the Brick Masters. Ally and Charlie presented information to a group of bright, motivated 7th graders about water filtration and used the Enviroscope to present information about watersheds and the direct impact of pollution in our waters.

This group of students, the Brick Masters, are a part of a unique group called the FIRST Lego League Challenge. The FIRST Lego League Challenge is an international competition specifically for elementary and middle school students. Each year, teams are given a scientific and real-world challenge for teams to focus and research on. This year's theme is Submerged— which explore the layers of the ocean.

"This group of kids is going to do great things for our future," boasts Hecht. This group of students is special because they are motivated. Their real-world challenge was an innovation project. The Brick Master's innovation project was a 7-layer water filtration system that they wanted to use to help clean and manage problem areas such as Gulf of Mexico.

These kids have truly been inspired by their work. They want to make and patent their product. They are even currently

working on their own website which will feature their hard work and their product. The website will also feature additional resources that detail how you can help manage and keep our water clean and safe within your own local community.

"The reason Brick Masters met with St. Charles SWCD is to gain insight and look at real world perspectives that can be added to their project", Ashwini, one of the parents of the talented kids said. She excitedly tells the SWCD team how much of an impact these kids have made on their lives by becoming so involved in this project. The parents are learning just as much as the kids are.

Their competition was just a few days after the scheduled meeting in January. St. Charles County SWCD was delighted to hear that Brick Masters did well in their competition and placed second allowing them to move forward to Regionals. Their next competition, Missouri Regional Championship Tournament, is February 22 at Francis Howell School District.

**Good luck, Brick Masters!**



A group photo of the Brick Masters with St. Charles County and St. Louis County SWCD



Presenting the Enviroscope model teaches the children about the importance of keeping our watersheds clean!



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# Have You Spotted Me?! The Invasive Spotted Lanternfly

The spotted lanternfly was first discovered in the United States in Pennsylvania in September 2014 in Berks County (Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, 2015). The insect quickly spread like wildfire, within a two-year time frame it was spotted in Delaware, Virginia, and parts of New Jersey.

By 2020, the outbreak continued. The spotted Lanternfly was detected in the state of Connecticut, Ohio, and New York. In 2021, the spread



Tree of Heaven, Invasive Species.  
Richard Gardner, Bugwood.org

native to Asia, specifically southern China, Taiwan, and Vietnam. This invasive insect feeds on the sap of over 70 plant species,

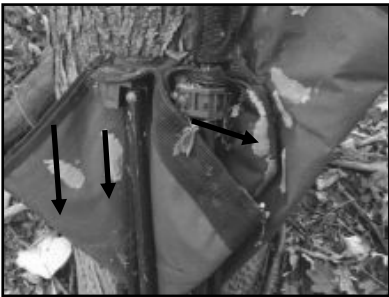


On the left, leaf with sooty mold and leaves on the right, with sooty mold.  
Photo from Bugwood.org

including grape, apples, hops, oak, walnut, maple and ornamental plants. As they feed on the Tree of Heaven, the spotted lanternfly acquires chemicals from the plants that make them distasteful or toxic to predators (MDC).

## What is the risk?

This bad insect has the potential to cause huge amounts of damage to our forests and food supply by feeding on trees and crop plants. When the insects feed, they excrete a sticky fluid (called honeydew) that causes a sooty mold which is what causes further damage to the plants. The SLF is also a threat to recreation and tourism in our state.



Spotted lanternfly egg masses can be laid on any surface and need a careful eye for inspection. They can be found on outdoor furniture like these folding camping chairs. Can you spot the egg masses?

## What is the spotted lanternfly?

The spotted lanternfly (SLF) is a large plant hopper

firewood to shipping containers. State officials are looking for this pest in commercial areas where shipping and imported goods are common. They are also surveying areas where preferred hosts to SLF grow, including vineyards, orchards and stands of invasive Tree of Heaven.

## How can you help?

Early detection is important! Learn how to identify these bugs by visiting HungryPests.com. If you see or suspect that you see these bad insects snap a picture of them and collect the insect. Then, email [plantpest@mda.mo.gov](mailto:plantpest@mda.mo.gov) with a picture and the location.

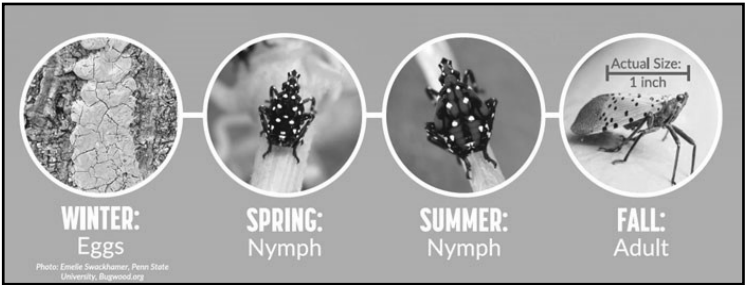
## How do they spread?

The SLF finds its way to new areas by hitchhiking with humans. They lay their egg masses on any hard, smooth surface, including firewood, landscape materials, outdoor furniture, vehicles and more.

## What is Missouri doing to guard against the spotted lanternfly?

The invasive species are not currently in Missouri, but the insect is known to be a hitchhiker. The SLF egg masses can hitch a ride on a variety of outdoor material, sneaking into Missouri on anything from

*“This invasive insect poses a threat to Missouri’s crops, forests, recreation and tourism.”*



## St. Charles SWCD Partners with St. Charles County Libraries

St. Charles County Soil and Water Conservation District has partnered with the St. Charles County Library to bring three fun and exciting events to the public this spring and summer! These special presentations will be given all across St. Charles County at different library locations. The program is recommended for elementary and middle school children and they do require pre-registration to attend. Pre-registration for these events will open from March 13th to April 10th. You can pre-register by going to [www.stchlibrary.org/events](http://www.stchlibrary.org/events) and clicking on the date of the event.

The first set of presentations focus on water pollution. The children will get a hands-on, interactive demonstration about the sources of our water, the effects of water pollution, and how they can be environmental heroes.

The other event dates will be announced in late March. Follow St. Charles County SWCD on Facebook for updates on when the other classes will open for registration. We hope to see you there!

### Library Event Dates:

- ⇒ April 10th
- ⇒ April 18th
- ⇒ April 22nd

# Annual Poster Contest Theme is Home is Where the Habitat is

The SWCD is once again sponsoring the local level of the National Association of Conservation Districts' (NACD) annual Conservation Stewardship Poster Contest. In St. Charles County, the contest is open to all fourth grade students. The 2025 theme is "Home is Where the Habitat is". This theme highlights the essential roles of both natural and managed habitats in the environment.

The contest opened March 3, with a deadline of April 18. Any fourth grade St. Charles County student may participate. Students can participate as individuals and

do not have to enter a poster through their classroom.

Send an email to [Alexandria.hecht@swcd.mo.gov](mailto:Alexandria.hecht@swcd.mo.gov) for official rules and guidelines. Cash prizes will be awarded to the top four posters in the county; and the grand prize poster will be entered into the state level contest.


Winners will be announced on May 2, 2025. Winning county posters will be on the district's website and Flickr page, as well as on the website of St. Charles County government.



## The More You Know...

The pallid sturgeons are prehistoric bottom dwellers that live in the Missouri and Mississippi rivers. The sturgeon family has been in existence since the Cretaceous time period, about 70 million years ago! The pallid sturgeons have been listed as endangered since the 1990s. They are considered endangered due to human activities destroying their habitats such as dams, channelization, overharvesting, water pollution, and hybridization (hybridization with shovelnose sturgeon). The Missouri and Mississippi rivers are their main home because they are the only site that provides suitable habitat for the pallid sturgeon, so habitat protection and restoration in these areas are necessary for their survival.

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# Reporter

## A New Tick Found in St. Louis County Poses A Serious Threat to Animals and Livestock

Researchers at Washington University have identified the first invasive longhorned tick ever found in St. Louis County in late February. According to the Missouri Department of Agriculture, the sesame seed-sized arachnid is to be considered a “serious threat.”

The tick is from the Western Hemisphere and it was reported for the first time in the United States in 2017. Possible routes of entry include imports of domestic pets, horses, or livestock or people unknowingly carrying the tick back to the United States after traveling abroad.

It’s important to note that the longhorned tick can reproduce without a male, so a single tick can create a population in a new location. One female longhorned tick can lay up to 2,000 eggs.

The longhorned tick is a pest of concern for livestock. This tick often takes on large infestations on one animal, causing great stress and reducing growth and potential production. A severe infestation can even kill the animal due to blood loss.



**This sesame seed-sized tick has recently been located in St. Louis County. Officials at Tyson Research Center say, “Only one has been spotted, but there are more than likely more out there.”**

Disease spread is another threat. The tick is known to transmit the agents of several livestock and human diseases (USDA). To help prevent the spread of the longhorned tick treat your livestock for ticks, keep grass and weeds manageable and clear away brush, check your livestock for ticks regularly, and safely remove ticks from people and animals as quickly as possible if you find any. If you think you have found a longhorned tick, soak the tick in alcohol to kill it

and then place it in a zip-lock bag, and give it to your veterinarian for identification.