

Conservation Highlights



Annual Meeting: November 19, 2012

**DALE
MINYO**
Ohio Ag Net



The 57th Annual Meeting for the Darke SWCD will be held on November 19, 2012

at the Greenville VFW, 219 N. Ohio St. This year's featured speaker will be Dale Minyo. Dale is a farm broadcaster for the Ohio Ag Net serving as the anchor for the morning and midday broadcast. He graduated from The Ohio State University with a degree in Ag Economics. Dale's career in radio began in sales and then in 1995 he joined the broadcast team working alongside Ed Johnson. Except for a 5 year stretch working for Clear Channel Radio, he has worked for the Johnson Family and Agri Communicators. Dale lives in Morrow county with his wife Cynthia and sons Kyle and Ryan.

Dale will be discussing the recent election results with a focus on the impact to agriculture, the fall harvest in Ohio and what may or may not be happening with the 2012 Farm Bill.

The supervisor election will be from 5:30-7:00 pm with dinner beginning at 6:30 pm. Absentee ballots can be requested at the office beginning October 29th. Once dinner has been served, the program will begin with introductions, conservation awards, guest speaker and the election results.

Tickets are \$10, please call or stop by the office. We look forward to seeing you on November 19th!

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"Serving conservation needs in Darke County since 1955"



This year at the Great Darke County Fair, the Darke SWCD held a rain barrel painting contest for county FFA chapters. These barrels were painted by Franklin Monroe, Greenville and Versailles. This contest was intended to help raise awareness about the benefits of rain barrels for home owners. Look for more rain barrels at next year's Fair!

Darke SWCD Staff Members

- Jared Coppess — Program Administrator**
- Cyndie Rhoades — Administrative Assistant**
- Linda Calland — Secretary**
- Doug Steinbrunner — Technician/Wildlife Specialist**
- Tim Rank — Technician**
- Greg McGlinch — Urban/MNM Specialist**

Darke NRCS Staff Members

- Jim Bennett — District Conservationist**
- John Bleill — Civil Engineering Technician**

DARKE SWCD OFFICE HOURS

Monday — Friday
8:00 AM — 4:30 PM

2012 Darke SWCD Board Candidates

Elect two at the Annual Meeting — November 19th



RUSS BENNETT lives at 1376 Downing Road, New Madison, in Harrison Township. Russ would like to be more involved, learn more and gain more interest from others. He has always believed that God has put us here to be stewards of the land and one way of doing that is soil conservation. Russ believes he has improved his land with waterways, crop rotation and no-till. He is now starting and learning about cover crops. Russ believes he will bring an interest in soil preservation, good communication skills and a belief in the small family farm.

Russ is a graduate of Greenville and served 25 years with the Ohio State Patrol. He also served 12 years with the Preble County Sheriff's Department and two years in the U.S. Army. Russ is a member of the Castine Church of the Brethren, Darke County Fair Board, VFW, American Legion, Free Mason, Darke County Farm Bureau and the Darke County Cattlemen's Association. He has also served as a 4-H advisor for 10 years and on the 4-H Advisory Board for five years.

Russ farms in the Greenville area and Harrison Township. He has a small beef herd. Russ is married, has three children and six grandchildren all living in Darke County.



TOM HARROD lives at 12169 Cochran Road, Rossburg, in Allen Township. Tom's interest has always been in conservation and he believes soil and water quality is important to and greatly affected by agriculture. He also feels that farmers need to be involved in board decisions. Tom is a long time no-till farmer and has installed several different conservation practices and used different programs to solve conservation problems.

He is a graduate of Mississinawa Valley. Tom is a full-time farmer and has since raised hogs, turkeys, corn and soybeans. He also participates in the conservation reserve program (CRP). Tom is a member of the St. Mary's Catholic Church, Union City, Indiana. He has been a charter member of the ACE Group for farmers for the Stillwater Project. He was involved in 4-H for 10 years as an advisor and has served as a supervisor for the Darke SWCD the last six years.

Tom has been married to Jayne for 33 years; they have four children (Jessica Gower, Nick, Korey and Jennifer Gerber) and four grandsons.



BRUCE KRESS lives at 722 Red River West Grove Road, Laura, in Monroe Township. Bruce would like to give back to his community and help others. Health is a passion for Bruce and he believes the soil is the largest physical component for long term health. Bruce will bring enthusiasm, delight in discovery and many lessons of trial and error to the Darke SWCD. As an electrical engineer by training, he enjoys research, new discoveries and applying time tested processes.

Bruce is a graduate of Franklin Monroe and has a master's degree in electrical engineering. He works as a consultant at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. Bruce has been farming since 1969 and has been mentored by his dad since 1948. Bruce attends and teaches a class of 5th and 6th graders at the Castine Church of the Brethren.

After some college stints Bruce moved back home and worked an engineering job by day and enjoyed playing in the dirt with his wife Yvonne and three great children. Bruce has explored all kinds of farming, he believes organic farming fits his healthy food for people goal.



JOEL PIPENGER lives at 1087 Richmond Palestine Road, New Paris, in Harrison Township. Joel has farmed for 32 years; he worked for FSA from 1988 until now. Joel has put in filter strips and waterways on his farm.

Joel is a graduate of Tri-Village and Joint Vocational School for two years in farm management. He is a member of the Castine Church of the Brethren and the Darke County Farm Bureau.

Joel has been married to Teresa for 29 years and has a son, Kyle, who is a senior in high school. He enjoys going to his son's ball games and playing volleyball and golf.

Manure applications need to be based on soil conditions

By Ty Higgins and Matt Reese

The recent rains have helped rejuvenate pastures and bolster a final cutting of hay, but the ground is still very dry and cracked in many parts of the state. The soil conditions will be important to consider as crops are harvested and manure applications take place this fall. For Bob Carr, who farms in Licking County, the dry soil conditions will be ideal for applying poultry manure on his fields after corn and soybeans are harvested. He will be applying most of the dry poultry manure on his farm in the coming weeks following corn and soybean harvest on fields that will be planted to wheat this fall or corn next spring. Some of the dry manure has already been applied to wheat stubble as well.

“The majority of the manure is applied after we get the crops off. We do a lot of corn after corn and we primarily put it on the ground before we plant corn. We broadcast and incorporate it,” Carr said. “We run a lighter rate before we plant wheat and the dry weather has not been an issue with the dry manure. It is actually nicer on the dry ground.”

Carr is hoping the dry conditions from the summer months hold up

through the fall.

“Mother Nature always has a way of averaging out the rain,” he said.

“We already got a pretty good dose of rain. If it gets wet and delays harvest, it could be bad for the crops and it will make that manure application tough. So far, the dry conditions have been ideal.”



The dry conditions and cracked soils are less than ideal, however, for hog and dairy producers and their liquid manure applications. Manure reaching field tile through soil cracks and other direct conduits is referred to as preferential flow. It is crucial for manure applicators to take the proper measures to prevent manure from reaching tile outlets and contaminating water.

If possible, Pork Checkoff Director

of Environmental Programs Allan Stokes encourages producers to avoid land application on fields with cracked soils. If that is not a possibility this fall, Stokes recommends working the soil three to five inches deep to remove the cracks and create a more consistent soil that will absorb and retain manure.

“You could also consider multiple passes while applying lesser volumes on any given pass,” Stokes said. “This will give ample time for manure to appropriately soak in to the soil structures.”

Stokes said a third key is to take a look at drainage ditches, outlets, streams and rivers before starting land applying to observe the conditions, even though they may be dry. Farmers should also frequently check tile outlets and surface water areas too when land-applying manure in droughty areas. Checking the outlets immediately and throughout the next 24 hours is recommended depending on how dry the tile is and how far the outlet is from the site of application.

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Cover Crops & Your Garden

The Darke SWCD and City of Greenville hosted a Cover Crop for Home Gardeners Workshop on September 19th at the Assembly Room in the Darke County Parks building. The workshop focused on cover crop varieties, management practices and benefits for the home gardener. Speakers at the workshop were Deb Borgia from Sycamore Bridge Farm, Carl Moeller from Sustain Seeds, and Greg McGlinch from the Darke SWCD.

Deb focused on her experiences with cover crops and organic gardening, both from her time with Sycamore Bridge Farm and The Chef’s Garden. Carl went over the different products and blends that Sustain Seeds has to offer as well as some of the benefits of each. Greg went in depth with many different varieties of cover crops, the benefits, cautions and impact that each would have on the garden’s soil.

The Darke SWCD and City of Greenville would like to thank all of their sponsors for supporting the workshop: 4R Tomorrow, Greenville Ace Hardware, Sustain Seeds, Sycamore Bridge Farm, Stuck Seeds and Brunswick Forage Seed Sales.



Cover Crop Field Day Review: September 4, 2012



On September 4th, the Darke and Miami SWCD's hosted a Cover Crop Field Day at Batdorf Farms, just outside of Covington. The field day brought 165 people from 11 different counties. A copy of the Midwest Cover Crop Field Guide was given out to the first 100 registered attendees.

Dr. Hans Kok, an internationally known speaker, began the program with his Soil Health discussion. Dr. Kok, aka the Dutch Dirt Doctor, discussed why he believes utilizing cover crops in your crop rotation will help increase yields, reduce inputs and reduce soil and nutrient loss. At the end of his presentation, Dr. Kok did a slake test comparing tilled land versus no-till land. The samples represented the same soil type from fields divided merely by a gravel access road. The slake test is a measure of soil stability when an air dried aggregate of soil is exposed to rapid wetting. The tilled aggregate will disintegrate faster than the no-till aggregate.

After an excellent pork chop meal prepared by Batdorf's Red Barn Catering, Dr. Kok spoke to the audience again, this time about how cover crops have helped during the drought of 2012. After Dr. Kok's presentation, the group moved outside to the cover crop test plots where Tim Brunswick, Byron Seeds, focused on types of cover crops that are good for foraging and Jeff Rasaweher, Center Seeds, went over their different varieties and mixes that were planted at Batdorf Farms. Some of the varieties planted were oilseed radish, crimson clover, cereal rye, annual rye, sudangrass, triticale, oats, buckwheat and sunn hemp.

The Darke and Miami Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Agriculture for a Clean Environment (ACE), Byron Seeds and the Stillwater Watershed Project would like to thank all of the sponsors, whom without their support, events like this wouldn't be possible. Thank you Batdorf Farms, Darke and Miami County Farm Bureaus, CPS-Kirkwood and Bradford, Harvestland-Covington, Koverman-Dickerson Insurance – Glen Hollopeter Agent, Apple Farm Services, Ebberts Seeds, Farm Credit Services, Center Seeds, Ohio CAT and the Lena Ag Center.

Rain Barrels: Conserving water while saving money!

Rain barrels are a practical solution to capture valuable rain water from rooftops. A rain barrel has been a way for urban and rural residents to collect small amounts of water for use in a variety of methods: water plants, gardens, lawns, flower beds, drip irrigation systems, wet compost piles, tool cleaning or when washing outdoor items.

The rain water is soft, full of nutrients and reduces our dependence

on municipal and ground water. Harvesting this valuable resource can be both financially and environmentally beneficial. Urban residents can utilize the rain water outdoors, hence reducing their municipal water bill.

The Darke SWCD and the City of Greenville are committed to educating and assisting rural and urban residents in implementing conservation practices like rain barrels, rain

gardens, pervious pavement and many other practices. If you are interested in installing a rain barrel on your property, contact our office. We are selling rain barrel kits for \$30.00.

**Kits are easy to assemble and make great gifts. Call for yours today.
937.548.1715, Ext. 3**

FFA Land Judging Contest Held at Downing Fruit Farm

On September 18th, Downing Fruit Farm hosted the county FFA Land Judging Contest. All Darke county schools and Miami East entered teams in the competition. Early morning rain and afternoon winds weren't enough to deter these 12 teams from competing.

The soil pits proved to be challenging for the teams. Even though they all were located within the same field, they varied greatly. Upon arrival the students went to the practice pit to get a feel for the area. After the practice session, the teams were divided into four groups for the competition. The groups were given 15 minutes at each of the four stops, three soil pits and the written test area. Once the teams finished, all soil pit evaluations were reviewed by Greg McGlinch and George Skidmore with the participants.



The county winners were: Rural Winner: Versailles Team #1; Urban Winner: Tri-Village; Individual Rural Score: Patrick Garber, Greenville; and Individual Urban Score: Tiffany Mogle, Tri-Village.

We would like to thank Downing Fruit Farm for hosting the competition, George Skidmore for helping evaluate the pits, Ditch Maintenance for digging the pits and the FFA chapters for participating. The teams now move on to Districts in Montgomery County. The goal of the county contest is to prepare them for Districts. Good luck to our county FFA teams!

Manure applications need to be based on soil conditions

Continued from page 3.

Tile plugs and control structures can be used to ensure manure does not exit outlets or they can be used in an emergency situation to stop manure that is already flowing. "If the rains do start up again, producers need to make sure they don't see any signs of manure that has moved off the fields," Stokes said. "They need to be prepared to react if they see a situation like that."

That is why it is vital to have an emergency response plan already in place.

"Make sure you clearly understand and you have a good and up to date emergency action plan that addresses what happens if you do have an unintended release of manure and be prepared to implement that if it becomes necessary," Stokes said.

If there is an unintended release of manure — the producer should take steps to effectively deal with the situation, with the first step being to immediately stop land-applying ma-

nure in that particular location. "Producers should then also take steps to retain the manure that may be coming out of a tile drain or other containment devices," Stokes said. "This will keep the manure from migrating down the drainage way so it can be collected and taken off for proper land application in a different location."

"Make sure you clearly understand and have a good and up to date emergency action plan."

It is also important to remember that worm holes can have the same effect as cracked soils. Night crawlers and crayfish often burrow directly down to field tile.

"Worm holes are prevalent in no-till. If you're going out there and applying without working any ground ahead of it, there is a good chance the manure will go straight down to

the tile lines," said Amanda Meddles-Douridas, an Ohio State University Extension specialist. "Just working the ground a little below the surface where you're applying the manure will sever the ties to the tile lines." The nutrient losses from a significant rainstorm this fall could be costly if not managed properly. "When applying after corn or soybeans in the fall, you need to remember that the manure will be out there all winter," Meddles-Douridas said. "If you're not planting a cover crop you don't have anything taking up those nutrients so you do have a greater risk of losing those nutrients. As fertilizer prices increase, that is money that could be going down the drain. The best practices are to make sure you are incorporating that or injecting it so you are making contact with the soil and that will help hold it there. Or you can use a cover crop with at least 90% surface cover, which will help keep the manure from moving off site and hold the nutrients."

Darke SWCD

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**Serving conservation needs
in Darke County since 1955**



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Conservation Highlights



REMINDERS:

- **Annual Fish Sale**
Pickup at 2:30 PM sharp
October 16, 2012
- **Tree Sales Coming in 2013!**

This year for the Darke SWCD booth in the Coliseum, Kathy Lecklider (right) and Amanda Everman (left) painted rain barrels for the display. We would like to thank them for sharing their artistic abilities. These pictures don't do them justice, feel free to stop by the office to see these in person.

