

FOSTER COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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"Fostering" Our Natural Resources

For descriptions of trees and shrubs log on at: www.lincolnoakes.com or www.ag.ndsu.edu/trees/handbook.htm

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Issue No. 73

Summer 2015



FOSTER COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Conservation Communicator

Grazing Season Management Considerations

With this year's dramatic weather swings, many ranchers were left with no choice but to turn their cattle out to pasture much earlier than what they probably normally like to. This early turnout onto pastures can have a dramatic negative impact on the health of the plant species in the pastures if not managed properly throughout the grazing season. This is especially true for native rangeland pastures. Pastures that have been seeded or have been cropped years ago but have since gone back to grass can typically handle more grazing pressure early in the year, but too much can be very detrimental to these pastures as well. The management considerations need to involve: rest/recovery periods during the grazing season, annually changing the starting pasture, and fall alternatives for forage.

Typically, a June 1st turnout date is a good rule of thumb to go by. This allows for most of our cool season plants to reach the fifth leaf stage. This is crucial for the plants to establish themselves and be able to withstand grazing pressure. Rest or recovery periods are needed throughout the grazing season in order to allow the plants to maintain the proper leaf area to be able to conduct photosynthesis and therefore maintain a healthy root system. By maintaining a healthy plant, a rancher will then be able to secure the proper nutrition for their cattle. The recovery periods should be about 30 to 40 days per pasture. Sometimes this isn't easily attainable, but with one or two crossfences it is very easy to be able to give that kind of time for recovery.

Annually changing the pasture which the cattle start out in is another management consideration. It is important to change the order each pasture is used throughout the grazing season from one year to the next so that different grass species will be grazed at different times. This is critical to establish plant diversity throughout your pastures. Having a diverse plant community will enable the protein levels of the grasses to be maintained throughout the season, therefore reducing the need for creep feed and still maintaining calf gains late into the season.

The last management consideration is the use of aftermath grazing and fall seeded cover crops. This is sometimes a lost resource. Typically, after harvest there is the "green-up" effect. The grasses that germinate in the field after harvest provide much better nutritional benefit than any pasture grasses will at that point of the grazing season. This would be a great benefit for the pastures too, as it will allow them to get ready for the next season. The plants will have a chance to store carbohydrates before winter, which will enable the plant to start photosynthesis much sooner in the spring. Fall seeded cover crop mixes can be utilized as an even greater source of fall nutrition. These are broadcasted or seeded immediately after harvest. Cattle can typically graze these mixes from the beginning of October through snowfall. There is a tremendous source of forage in the crop fields and it is much better than feeding in September due to the pastures being bare. Remember, overgrazing a pasture will not only hurt you the next year but also in years to come. They are a fragile resource that needs management.

Paul DuBourt
NRCS District Conservationist

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Till it to me Straight....

- Foster County Soil Conservation District Board meetings are tentatively scheduled for 8:30 a.m. on September 14 and October 5 and 9:30 a.m. on November 9. The October meeting will be held at the Schoolhouse Café in Grace City. Please contact the district office at 652-2551 to confirm dates and times.
- USDA Service Center will be closed for Labor Day on Monday, Sept. 7 and Columbus Day on Monday, Oct. 12.
- "Talking Dirt" on KDAK (1600 AM) will be at 8:40 am on Aug. 5, Sept. 9, Oct. 7, and Nov. 4 (first Wednesdays except in September).

Midkota Students Took Second Place in State Envirothon



2nd Place. Midkota Team 1. Back row L to R: Klay Frappier, Joseph Vollmer, Gilbert Black, advisor. Front row L to R: McKenna Frappier, Brooke Ronningen, Jena Anderson.

Congratulations to our local students for doing so well in the North Dakota Envirothon. The 16th Annual North Dakota State Envirothon Competition was held at Crystal Springs Bible Camp on May 6-8. A total of 120 students from around the state were challenged on their knowledge and skills using hands-on testing sites, as they walked through four diverse outdoor trails to see who knew the most about natural resources and the environment. The scores received from a 10-minute oral presentation given before a panel of judges, along with the scores earned on the testing trails, determined the team that would represent North Dakota this summer at the National Conservation Foundation Envirothon Competition in Springfield, Missouri. The Minot High School Envirothon Team "Super Omnia Tectas" won this year's competition. Second place honors went to Midkota High School Envirothon "Team 1", coached by Gilbert Black, sponsored by the Foster County Soil Conservation District. Third place honors went to the Bismarck High School "E-Society" Envirothon Team. Midkota's Team 1 had the highest score on the Soils Trail.

Midkota also sent a second team, which also did well in the competition and came in seventh.

The Envirothon is a problem-solving natural resource competition for high school students. Teams consisting of five members in grades 9-12, from a school, organization or club, study in the areas of prairie (forestry), soil, water, wildlife, and a current environmental issue. Team members demonstrate proven concepts of hand-on education combined with the excitement of effective educational tools, which will help our schools to nurture environmentally aware students and meet the immediate need to teach more environmental natural resource education.

The Envirothon is sponsored by the Sheyenne James RC&D Council in partnership with local, state and federal agencies, organizations, private business and Soil Conservation Districts.



7th Place. Midkota Team 2. Back row L to R: Gilbert Black, advisor, Victoria Vollmer, Mikayla Donohue, Jade Boote. Front row L to R: Jesse Gilbertson, Carson Quam.

Keep North Dakota Clean Poster Contest Winners

We are pleased to announce this year's local Foster County winners for their grades in the Keep North Dakota Clean poster contest. The winners and themes are: Grade 3 – Reduce, Reuse, Recycle: Tyson Oka, Sophie Garr. Grade 4 – Habitat, Homes for Wildlife: Haley Wolsky, Hudson Schmitz. Grade 5 – Plant a Tree Today for Tomorrow: Gabrielle Catalano. Grade 6 – Help Prevent Run-off Pollution: Amanda Oka.

These students received a voucher for a free conservation grade tree from Foster County Soil Conservation District. The public was able to view their posters at the SCD's booth during the Foster County Fair in June.



L to R: Tyson Oka, Haley Wolsky, Hudson Schmitz, Gabrielle Catalano, Amanda Oka, Sophie Garr.



A reminder to anyone interested in implementing Best Management Practices through the Kelly Creek Watershed Project: We need to hear from you soon! We need to begin planning now in order to have funding set aside for you for the last year of the project. Please contact Dionn at 652-2551 ext. 3.

Project TREES in Carrington

On March 17, Tom Gibson from The Regional Environmental Education Series (Project TREES) was in Carrington to give presentations at the grade school. Some students learned about the water cycle from rancher "Pete Bogg" or about how early settlers struggled to get adequate water from immigrant "Gunnar." Others met game show host "Darin Ewe" and played his conservation quiz show for "conservation dollars and common cents." Project TREES is a statewide program that was developed by Foster County SCD and is managed through the district. Tom Gibson has been the presenter for the program for 24 years. The variety of programs he offers allow students to see different programs each year.



Our thanks to Runnings for allowing us to display and care for the district's root view boxes at their store. The boxes were planted with common cover crop seeds from Pulse USA, and were "no-tilled" into the soil that we used last year. Again, we hope to display the effects that cover crops can have below ground as well as above, which allows them to provide benefits such as improving soil quality and nutrients, erosion protection, weed suppression, and managing soil moisture. If you're interested in learning more about cover crops and how they can benefit your operation, stop in or call the SCD and NRCS at 652-2551 ext. 3.

Windbreak Renovations

Many planted shelterbelts and farmstead windbreaks in North Dakota have deteriorated due to age or disease and are no longer functional. Through the North Dakota Statewide Windbreak Renovation Initiative, the North Dakota Forest Service (NDFS) will offer technical and financial assistance to private landowners to restore, protect and enhance this deteriorating resource. NDFS and partners will assess windbreak condition and provide a written plan for renovating the windbreak to restore functionality. Through a grant from the North Dakota Outdoor Heritage Fund, this initiative will provide cost-share to landowners to implement their written windbreak renovation plan. Interested landowners will complete the Windbreak Renovation Questionnaire located on the NDFS website. This questionnaire also serves as the pre-application. Pre-applications will be accepted on a continuous basis. Periodic deadlines, or cut-off dates, will be used to group applicants into pools. Upcoming pool deadlines are August 15, 2015 and March 15, 2016. NDFS will review the information provided on the landowner questionnaire to determine if the project is eligible to participate. If the project is eligible, a forester or technician will work with the landowner to develop a Windbreak Renovation Plan. There is no cost for this service and no obligation for the landowner to implement the plan. If the landowner desires to implement the plan, the forester or technician can assist in applying for cost-share.

Applications for cost share will be reviewed, ranked, and approved or denied based on funds available. Successful applicants will sign a cost-share agreement with NDFS. The landowner will have two years to complete the windbreak renovation as described in the Windbreak Renovation Plan. When the renovation is complete and inspected, the landowner will be reimbursed for 50% of the actual cost of implementing the plan, subject to project-specific practice and payment limits as described in the cost-share agreement.

Please visit the NDFS website (www.ndsu.edu/ndfs) or contact Foster County SCD for more information.

Carrington Arbor Day

The Soil Conservation District held its 11th annual First Grade Tree Planting on May 4 this year. This event is part of the City of Carrington's official Arbor Day celebration. The tree planting was attended by City Auditor Heather Carr, Carrington Public Works Director Dan Trosen, and SCD Supervisors Marie Pozarnsky and Cody Montgomery. School personnel attending included Superintendent Brian Duchscherer, Counselor Gloria Odden, Para Dawn Kollman, and Maintenance head Dale Perus.

Teachers Brittany Phelps and Kristee Page brought their students to learn about planting trees and conservation from SCD Supervisor Curtiss Klein and SCD District Manager Dionn Schaaf. The Carrington Tree Board provided two trees for the Class of 2026 to plant. The students all pitched in to plant a "Burgundy Belle" red maple at the high school grounds, and a "Snowdrift" flowering crabapple tree at the city park. Connor Gast, Jadyn Lura, Aubrey Meis, and Moly Hansen got to take home the four kid-sized shovels provided by the SCD, and the students and their teachers all received conservation T-shirts.

