

**FOSTER  
COUNTY SOIL  
CONSERVATION  
DISTRICT**

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*"Fostering" Our Natural  
Resources*

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Fall 2015



FOSTER COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

**Conservation  
Communicator**

**Fall Fieldwork**

What a wonderful fall harvest season it has been! Beans are done and corn is going quick and smoke is in the air. Some times too much. If the slough is ready to burn you don't need a 40mph wind to do it. A still day will do just as good a job and the firefighters can stay at home. Now that the slough is burnt off, what should you do? One word. NOTHING. Don't dig it and definitely don't disc it. The roots from all the plants in the slough are still there and act like little straws to help draw the moisture down in the spring and if you work it, that just plugs them up. And who knows what next spring will bring. If it is a wet spring the slough will fill back up no matter what you do in the fall. It also saves fuel and time which can add up quick.

Fall is also a good time to soil test. Find out what your soil needs to be productive, then give it what it needs. Not what you think it needs. Also take a look at how productive some of your poorer ground did. If you put \$200 into it and only get \$20 back maybe it is time to consider putting it into set aside acreage. There are many different programs available that Paul or Nicole will be happy to talk about.

One last thing to talk about. TREES. If you have taken or are considering taking out an old shelter belt, put some trees back in. Not only are trees good for the soil water and air, they are good for you too. Not only will they help with the heating and cooling bills in the winter and summer, they can help keep roads clear of snow in the winter. There are also programs available that Dionn will love to talk about with you.

Have a happy and healthy year.

Robert House  
Foster County SCD Supervisor, Grace City

**Manure Spreader Available**

The District's manure spreader is still available for lease. It has vertical beaters that give a wide, even spread and a capacity of approximately 420 bushels. The district has shafts to fit either 1 3/8" or 1 3/4" PTOs. A tractor of at least 120 hp with a 1000 rpm PTO is required to operate it, as well as a power washer for cleaning it.

The manure spreader is available for \$300 per day. This cost includes manure testing and soil testing on one field if the leasee desires and arranges for it ahead of use. There is a \$500 repair and cleanup deposit, which will be applied to the rental cost if the machine is returned properly cleaned and in good repair. For more information, contact the SCD office at 652-2551 ext. 3.

**Foster County SCD  
2015 Supervisors, Advisors and Staff**

Chairman Curtiss Klein	701-653-5708
Vice Chair Robert House	674-3606
Supervisor Cody Montgomery	652-5397
Supervisor Karl Hoppe	650-8810
Supervisor Marie Pozarnsky	652-1169
NRCS District Conservationist Paul DuBourt	652-2551 Ext 101
Soil Con. Tech. Nichole Johnson	Ext 112
SCD Manager Dionn Schaaf	Ext 102
SCD Ed. Coordinator Jill Vigasaa	701-799-5488
Foster County Extension Agent Joel Lemer	652-2581

**Till it to me Straight....**

- Foster County Soil Conservation District Board meetings are tentatively scheduled for 9:30 a.m. on November 9, December 14, and January 11. Please contact the district office at 652-2551 to confirm dates and times.
- USDA Service Center will be closed for Veterans Day on Wednesday, Nov. 11; Thanksgiving Day on Thursday, Nov. 26; Christmas Day on Friday, Dec. 25; and New Year's Day on Friday, Jan. 1.
- "Talking Dirt" on KDAK (1600 AM) will be at 8:40 am on Nov. 4, Dec. 2, and Jan. 6 (first Wednesdays).

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## Plantskydd for Damage Protection



The SCD has Plantskydd repellent available for protecting trees and shrubs from damage by deer, rabbits, and rodents. To prevent buck rub, the makers suggest making a 2:1 paste to apply to the tree trunks. For best protection from browsing, treat plants before the problem begins in spring or fall. With proper application, the spray is rain resistant and can last up to six months in the winter and 3-4 months during the growing season, although new growth will also require treatment. The spray requires 24 hours to dry without precipitation in order to be effective. It is nontoxic and approved for organic production. Granular form is also available to deter small mammals.

See <http://www.plantskydd.com/agriculture-testimonials.html> for others' experiences using Plantskydd for trees and crops.

## Eco Ed Day for Foster County 6th Graders



On September 2, Foster County SCD held the annual Eco Ed Day tour for sixth graders from the Carrington and Midkota Schools. Forty-eight students attended six learning sessions. While last year's event had to be moved inside due to cold, wet, windy weather, this year was notable for its high temperatures. Thanks to the City of Carrington for providing a shade canopy to help keep the kids out of the direct sun.



Foster County SCD Supervisors Curtiss Klein and Marie Pozarnsky and Foster County Extension Agent Joel Lemer taught the agronomy session on North Dakota crops, including helping the kids make seed bottles. Jim Collins from ND Dept. of Health used a model to talk about water quality and show the kids how watersheds work. Brandon Kottke, NRCS Area Biologist, helped the students learn about soils; and Ben



Wendt, NRCS Soil Conservationist, worked with the students on rangelands and range plants. Katie Whitehead and Matthew Parvey from Arrowwood National Wildlife Refuge talked to the students about wetlands and wildlife. Gerri Makay from ND Forest Service led the session on trees and woodlands.

There was also a special presentation by Tom Gibson from Project TREES (The Regional Environmental Education Series). As "Sam Ting," he talked to the group about the animals in the weasel family and the effects of pollution on wetlands and the animals and people that depend on them.

As always, the goal was to provide students with a fun, outdoor educational experience with opportunities for hands-on learning.



## Casoron Application

Those who would like to arrange for the district to apply Casoron on their tree rows this fall should contact the district office. Casoron is a granular herbicide that suppresses weeds in the spring before the trees come out of dormancy. Application will probably take place in November after temperatures are reliably below 50 degrees. For assistance, contact Dionn at the Foster County Soil Conservation District at 652-2551 ext. 3.

## Tree Orders and Planning

A list of conservation grade trees that should be available for 2016 plantings is included with this newsletter. While we can order trees at any time, the nurseries have limited supplies. The sooner we get your order in to the nursery, the more likely you are to be able to get the kinds of trees that you want. Also keep in mind that preparation of planting sites should begin this fall. Proper site preparation is critical to have a successful tree planting. Technical assistance is always available free of charge, whether the district is planting the trees or you choose to do it yourself. For assistance with tree orders, tree plans, and tree planting programs, please contact Dionn at the Foster County Soil Conservation District at 652-2551 ext. 3.

An option to consider for improving the survival of your trees is using **tree tubes**. Besides offering physical protection from damage by rodents, rabbits and, to some extent, deer, the tubes appear to help provide the trees with a better growing environment. They protect the seedlings from the wind, provide a miniature greenhouse environment, and can help protect them from damage by sprays and mowers. Local tests have found that trees have significantly faster growth and much better survival with trees tubes in place than without.



## Fall Wetland Drain Maintenance Will Be Vital For Next Spring

In preparation for next spring, producers who have legal drains and or intermittent waterways in their fields will want to make sure that they are clean of sediment, cattails, and any other debris that may have filled in throughout the year. This past month I have made numerous field visits with producers inquiring about drainage and the options available to help alleviate swollen wetland basins. A high percentage of the time I see that excessive amounts of cattails and semi-plugged culverts are huge problems in holding back water. On our fairly flat landscape, a few tenths of a foot of cattail and sediment can make a huge difference. There are many examples of what once was a 15 or 20 foot wide ring of cattails around a wetland basin that is now a large piece land completely inundated with cattails! There are some helpful and needed steps producers can take to help alleviate the wet conditions come next spring.

So what is the solution to our county cattail problem? There are a couple options that have been effective. Spraying has been very popular and can be effective if done in a timely manner. Aerial application is about the only way to cover some of the large areas that have become inundated with cattails. Sometimes the results of chemical spraying are not seen for some time while the cattails die off. Also the availability and cost of hiring an aerial applicator may be a challenge. If it can be scheduled so that the chemical application is done while the cattails are still actively growing, spraying may be the best alternative for large areas of cattails. Working with your local township and county boards may be an option to help alleviate expenses as they would see a great benefit to roads and culverts.

The next option may be to hire a contractor with a long reaching backhoe to be able to clean out the cattails and sediment debris. There are large amounts of sediment and old cattail remnants left behind that make easily a foot to two feet of "muck" that could be removed. This would be considered maintenance to that wetland, drainage ditch, and/or natural waterway. Keep in mind that this needs to be done in good judgment and that the depth and width of a drain or waterway cannot be drastically changed. If unsure about how much sediment can be taken out of these, contact our office first and we can work with you on site to figure out that amount. Again it's easy to say that removing cattails and their roots is permissible.

A couple of important items to remember are that once sediment and cattail debris are removed, they need to be spread on upland areas and not left in the wetland. Another consideration is that when cleaning a drain, it's important to visit with downstream landowners to make sure that the end result isn't causing harm. A lot of times a friendly notification goes a long way, and in fact may prompt that person to also clean their drains. This will help keep the entire system functioning properly.

If you feel new drainage is needed, contact our office so that we can work with you to evaluate alternatives for your planned drainage. This involves surface or tile drainage. Wetlands that are impacted by new drainage need to be either avoided or mitigated. Either are options to producers and we can evaluate those options with you.

A field visit can easily be scheduled if you have questions regarding wetlands, drainage ditches, and/or natural waterways.

Paul DuBourt, NRCS District Conservationist