



February 2020 Newsletter

Looking into the Future

2/18 8:30-3:30 Nitrogen: MN's Grand Challenge & Compelling Opportunity Conference Current topics in crop production and environmental stewardship will be relevant and informative for today's agricultural producers and professionals and anyone else who appreciates high-quality, research-based information. Register now for the 6th annual Nitrogen Conference, which will be held on February 18th, 2020, at the Arrowwood Conference Center in Alexandria, MN. Certified Crop Adviser credits <https://extension.umn.edu/courses-and-events/nitrogen-conference>

2/18 9-3:30 Grow Your Bottom Line

Managing stress, water quality & ag practices, local farmers, round table discussions, vendor booths. Renville Community Center 221 Main St N, Renville, MN 56284. Please RSVP with Melissa by calling 320-523-1550 Ext. 116 or email Melissa.Edmondson@mn.nacdnet.net

2/18 6-7pm Trees & Shrubs, Soil, Climate Change-What's the Connection? AJ Lange, Forester, MPRB Forestry Department will be speaking on the connection of our vegetation, management, soils, and climate change. Also come and learn about spring planting plans of trees and shrubs on the trolley path! Linden Hills Environmental & Sustainability Community contact Ginny Halloran at gkhalloran@gmail.com

2/20 10-12 Making Lemonade from Last Fall's Lemons

Information provided by farmers to farmers is especially vital – talking with others that have planned, implemented, and witnessed the results. Get experienced trouble shooting, learning about logistics, and first-hand knowledge of practices. Discussions with local farmers about how they've used soil health practices to benefit their operation and economics. The Chisago County SWCD and NRCS will provide program information that can help with implementing practices. If you need an accommodation to participate in this event, please contact Jennifer Hahn at 651-485-7848 or by e-mail at coordinator@mnsoilhealth.org. Oak Inn 5896 Old Main St, North Branch, MN 55056

2/21 9-3 Renting it Out Right

A workshop to help you act on your conservation values will be held at the School Sisters of Notre Dame in Mankato (170 Good Counsel Drive). This workshop, which is being offered by the Land Stewardship Project (LSP), in partnership with the Living Earth Center, is for farmland owners, those inheriting a farmland investment and farmers who would like ways to invest in soil building on rented land. Robin Moore at 320-269-2105, rmoore@landstewardshipproject.org <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/renting-it-out-right-soil-building-on-rented-farmland-tickets-91186052939>

2/24 8:30-12:30 Farm Economics & Soil Health Winter Workshop

Join us for the Farm Economics and Soil Health Winter workshop where you'll hear from area farmers Rick Clark and Matt Alford as well as lunch and raffle prizes! RSVP by registering at eventbrite or calling Jackson SWCD at 507-662-6682 ext 3 <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/winter-workshop-tickets-86522550277?aff=ebdssbdestsearch> 312 10th St, Heron Lake, MN 56137

2/25 9-2:30 Economics of Soil Health

Join the Faribault and Martin SWCD to hear from farmers Rick Clark, Matt Alford, and Andy Linder talk about the economics of soil health practices. Lunch provided by RSVPing by February 18th to 507-235-6680 Ext 118 or jesse.walters11@gmail.com 920 10th St, Fairmont, MN 56031

2/25-2/26 Farming & Ranching for the Bottom Line

The theme for this year's annual conference is "Discover the Triple Bottom Line: Economics, Ecology and Sociology." You can either register online, by telephone or by e-mail at **Eventbrite:** To register online, go to <https://triple-bottom-line.eventbrite.com> **Telephone:** Call Cindy at 701-250-4518, ext. 3 and leave your name and e-mail address **E-mail:** E-mail Cindy at lucinda.makedonski@nd.nacdnet.net and include your name and e-mail address

2/26 9-11 Dirt & Doughnuts

Farmers attending this workshop will learn from other farmers who are willing to share their experiences using soil health practices with you. Lessons learned by these farmers are vital and can get you on the right foot faster. Hear firsthand from local farmers Doug Toussaint, Ken Packer & Ryan Hough as they discuss tillage, cover crops, crop rotations, ect. Learn from other Minnesota farmers how these practices have benefited their soil, farming operations and bottom line. The Wilkin SWCD and NRCS will provide program information that can help with implementing practices. If you need any accommodations to participate in this activity or event, please contact Kim Melton at 218-643-2933 or by e-mail at Kimberly.melton@mn.nacdnet.net. RSVP appreciated but not required. 505 S 8th St, Breckenridge, MN 56520

Still Looking Into the Future

2/26 8:30-3:30 Economics of Soil Health & Cover Crops: What's the Bottom Line? The keynote speaker on the day will be Rick Clark, an Indiana farmer and also speaking will be two local (Faribault County) farmers Andy Linder and Matt Alford. All 3 will share their experiences with cover crops and soil health and how they are making them work economically in their operations. please RSVP by Monday February 17th by emailing lindsey.Zeitler@mn.nacdnet.net or by calling 507-373-5607 Ext. 3. 2200 West 9th St, Albert Lea, MN 56007

2/27 11:30-2:30 Lunch & Learn-Irrigation Water Management Don't miss out on this excellent opportunity to learn more about how to make high level irrigation water management work for your farm. Vasudha Sharma, Ph.D. will be joining the Sherburne SWCD this year to speak about her work at the Sand Plain Research Farm. Valley and Reinke Irrigation will also be present on advanced irrigation technology. A free hot dinner will be provided for all attendees. Register by 2/21 to Miranda Wagner 763-220-3434 x 105 or mwagner@sherburneswcd.org 10775 27th Ave SE Becker, MN 55308

2/27-2/29 2020 MOSES Organic Farming Conference 60 Workshops | 6 Sessions Crops, Livestock, Market Farming, Soils, Business, & More. Learn from experienced organic farmers, researchers, and ag professionals. 10 Organic University™ Courses. Dig deeply into a farming topic with a full-day class before the conference. Two-Floor Trade Show Find buyers, suppliers, ag agencies, seeds, tools & more. 300 Harborview Plz, La Crosse, WI 54601

2/27 9-3 Show Me the Green! Economics of Soil Health Come and hear from local farmer Matt Alford who will share insights in researching soil health changes on his farm including economic impacts. Farmer Rick Clark from Indiana will also be talking about "farming green" and the benefits of farming green along with the economic impact of regenerative farming. 3 Soil and Water Management CEU's Lunch is free and provided RSVP by Feb 21 to 507-835-4800 x 3 mark.schaetzke@mn.nacdnet.net

2/27 11:30-2:30 Lunch & Learn-Irrigation Water Management Don't miss out on this excellent opportunity to learn more about how to make high level irrigation water management work for your farm. Vasudha Sharma, Ph.D. will be joining the Sherburne SWCD this year to speak about her work at the Sand Plain Research Farm. Valley and Reinke Irrigation will also be present on advanced irrigation technology. A free hot dinner will be provided for all attendees. Please register by 2/21 to Miranda Wagner 763-220-3434 x 105 or mwagner@sherburneswcd.org 10775 27th Ave SE, Becker, MN 55308

2/28 8:30-3 Economics of Soil Health & Cover Crops: What's the Bottom Line? Hear from Rick Clark and two local area farmers about how they are making cover crops work economically in their operation. Hear data on how cover crops have increase the profitability for their farms and how their focus has changed from yield to ROI and net profit per acre. \$15 registration that includes lunch, RSVP by February 26th to SWCD@co.olmsted.mn.us or 507-328-7070 CEU credits available. 106 City Center Pl, Stewartville, MN 55976

3/5/20 Midwest Soil Health Summit

The 2020 event will feature two educational tracks: Silvopasture featuring Diomy Zamora and Gary Wyatt from University of Minnesota Extension and Keefe Keeling from the Savanna Institute and Agriculture featuring farmers who have established soil health practices as well as educators and researchers. More speaker and session information will be updated as it is finalized. Oliver Kelley Farm is at 15788 Kelly Farm Rd NW, Elk River. Questions? Call Jerry Ford 763-244-6659

<https://www.sfa-mn.org/midwest-soil-health-summit/>

3/6 10-2 Modifying Existing Farm Equipment

Need better field conditions? What can you upgrade on your equipment to help? Join us for a local farmer-led workshop on modifying existing farm equipment for strip till, no-till, and cover crops including Farmers showing modifications they made to their equipment. Equipment dealer experienced in modification Soil health discussions Lunch is free and provided when you sign up before February 28th. Contact Rock County SWCD 507-283-8862

3/6 8:30-3 Gardening with Climate Change

How do we adapt our gardening to remain successful with climate change? Join in and learn from several specialists to understand what is ahead and tools to trouble-shoot the dynamics. Pre-Registration required by Monday, February 24 For more information or with questions, call (507) 835-3620 email nelso191@umn.edu. Weather-related announcements will be sent by email notification to registered participants & posted on the SROC website at sroc.cfans.umn.edu.

3/7 8:30-4:30 Watershed & Climate Summit

Harnessing soil, water, renewable energy and healthy ecosystems to fight against climate change! Practical learning and networking for students, landowners, water stewards, climate activists, and citizens of all ages... Bringing together people doing regenerative agriculture and soil health work on the land with pioneers in wind, solar, electric vehicles and energy storage. <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/watershed-climate-summit-2020-tickets-91545520115> 9700 France Ave South Partnership Center, Bloomington, MN 55431

Looking Into the Future...Farther Into the Future

3/10 9-12 Taking a Peak Under the Covers

Information provided by farmers to farmers is especially vital – talking with others that have planned, implemented, and witnessed the results. Our farmer mentors are just that – farmers in Minnesota that have been using soil health practices and are willing to discuss their experiences with other farmers. Get experienced trouble shooting, learning about logistics, and first-hand knowledge of those practices. Join us for comfortable discussions with local farmers about how they've used soil health practices to benefit their operation and economics. The local NRCS will provide program information to help with implementation. If you need an accommodation to participate in this event, please contact Kelly Heather at (507) 537-1401 or by e-mail at kelly.heather@mn.usda.gov by 2/28/20. 100 E Burlingame St, Ghent, MN 56239

3/10 9-2:30 Irrigators Clinic

A great line-up of speakers have committed to participating in the event representing: University of Minnesota, Minnesota Department of Agriculture, Soil RX Inc., Bonanza Valley Irrigators Association, Natural Resource Conservation Service, West Central Irrigation, and local irrigators. Topics to be addressed: Introducing Regenerative Ag to Your Conventional Operation, The Basics of Soil Health, Irrigation and Water Quality Research in Central Minnesota, and Irrigation Variable Rate Technology. Local sponsors will be on site with informational booths and technologies. Pre-registration is required by 2/28, \$10 registration fee (includes meal). Registration at the door is \$20 and meal can't be guaranteed. Make checks payable to: Pope SWCD. Mail payment to: Pope SWCD, Attention Holly Kovarik 1680 Franklin St. N., Glenwood, MN 56334. Location 24895 Hwy 28, Glenwood, MN 56334

3/13 EQIP Applications Due

Stop into your local NRCS office to sign up for EQIP 2020. Cover crops, no-till, strip till, nutrient management, pest management, feedlot projects, grazing, adding a small grain, and more!

3/17-3/19 Keys to Marketing Success: How to Become a Price Maker and Not a Price Taker Anyone interested in taking control of their own destiny and net profitability. If you want to learn the Top 10 factors to becoming a price maker and not a price taker, this school is for you. Registration includes all classes, digital course materials, and lunch each day! Full Time College Student will receive \$200 discount. With a paid registration at \$1275, one immediate family member will receive a \$200 discount <https://soilhealthacademy.grazecart.com/sha-marketing>

3/19 9-3:30 Growing Healthy Soils

Learn how to take advantage of reduce till, no-till, cover crops and more in Minnesota to improve your operation & bottom line with David Brandt and more! The Farmer-Led Council and the Prior Lake-Spring Lake Watershed District is proud to host the first Growing Healthy Soils Event in Scott County in coordination with its partners: Scott SWCD, Scott WMO, Lower Minnesota River Watershed District, and Vermillion River JPO. RSVP to Scott SWCD at 952-492-5414 or by registering at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/growing-healthy-soils-event-tickets-88508420067> Ridges at Sand Creek 21775 Ridges Dr, Jordan, MN 55352

3/26 8:30-12:30 Our Farms...Our Future

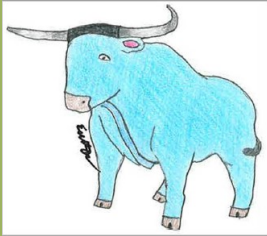
Managing and maintaining the farm through best management practices. Are you a farmer? New to conservation practices? Not sure where to get started? Join the ATCC Farm Business Management Program, Douglas Soil and Water Conservation District, and Natural Resources Conservation Service for a free seminar. For more information please contact the Douglas SWCD or Alexandria Technical and Community College Farm Business Management (FBM) program SWCD: 320-763-3191 Ext 3 FBM: 320-762-0021

Find these events on our website

<https://mnsoilhealth.org/events/>

And Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/mnsoilhealth/>



Babe's Country

Alley Cats or Alley Cropping?

We know that alley cats aren't welcoming, comfortable, or what we'd like to interact with but alley cropping isn't as rough. So what is alley cropping? It's growing food, forage, or specialty crops between rows of trees and/or shrubs. You can start with a forested area and clear out land to grow other vegetation or start out with ag ground and plant trees and/or shrubs.

Why would we consider alley cropping?

Diversifying. We know that putting all of our eggs in one basket rarely provides positive outcomes, diversifying our business, investments, and products provides us with a system that allows us to ride out market rollercoasters. Alley cropping also provides benefits to our soil by reducing erosion, providing diversity underground, providing cover, and reducing disturbance. Utilizing forages offers an opportunity to integrate livestock as well and provides livestock shelter from the sun, wind, and precipitation.

What can alley cropping look like?

Hardwoods or mast producing timber rows within row crop or forage acres.

Forage planted between tree and/or shrub rows

Planting specialty crops between tree and/or shrub rows

When a thinning or harvest occurs in our forests, it is a great opportunity to grow other crops either short or long term and still maintain timber production. Depending on the long term goals and objectives of the land, different species can be utilized.

Adding trees and/or shrubs to existing crop land can be utilized to reduce wind erosion, drift control, wildlife benefits, and shelter for livestock.

Considerations

Long term goals of the land (timber, mast, fruits, specialty, row crops, forage, etc)

How much space and light is needed for each crop

Timeframe of each crop, how long you intend to grow those species

Compatibility of species in the area

If integrating livestock, are there species not suited

Access to site for management and harvest

Site conditions-soil, slope, wetness

A great place to start is contacting your local conservation office NRCS, SWCD, DNR, and the Minnesota Forestry Association.

MN Soil Health Coalition Activities

The Minnesota Soil Health Coalition has been busy providing education, mentoring, networking, and logical information to farmers, the general public, and youth. We are very grateful for our members and partners for participating and support in accomplishing these objectives! Because of your support and understanding of the importance of implementing soil health practices, we have been able to:

Reached over 400,000 farmers

Reached over 500 technical staff

Educated over 300 youth

Participated in 39 meetings providing educational information

Obtained grants for education and research

Promoted stories, success, and partner events in the state

Provided farmers a voice and representation

Created and provided the farmer mentor program

Podcasts

Website

Social media

Partnering with local, state, and federal agencies, cooperatives, seed dealers, wildlife organizations, ag industry, watersheds, and ag groups



Upcoming

Soil health testing and correlation to agronomics, management, and economics

Farmer discussion meetings

Annual Soil Health School

Field days for learning

Educating youth

Meeting with lenders

Increase urban education

Increase partnerships



Contact

Jennifer Hahn

Coalition Coordinator

651-485-7848

coordinator@mnsolhealth.org

<https://mnsolhealth.org/>

FB @mnsolhealth

Made possible by the Minnesota NRCS



Natural Resources Conservation Service

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender

