



Sand Creek Watershed Update

Volume 3

A Publication of the Jennings County Soil and Water Conservation District

Issue 1

Meeting Planned for Goat and Sheep Owners on June 5

The Jennings County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and the Jennings County Purdue Extension Office will be sponsoring an informational meeting for goat and sheep owners on June 5, 2008.

This will be somewhat similar to a very successful meeting held last year, except that this time you will have the opportunity to be trained on FAMACHA, which is a system to diagnose your animals for anemia and parasite infestation by observing conditions of their eyes. This is training that was requested by many of those who attended our goat owner's workshop last September. This process can be used for both goats and sheep and should be started in early summer.

We will be meeting at the farm of Allen and Marcy Clark, located at 300 W County Road 580 N, which is about 2 miles northeast of the Jennings County Fairgrounds. The agenda for the evening will be to begin at 3:00 PM with a pasture walk, discussing pasture management, forage selection, fertilizing pastures, and the importance of quality forage for animal health.

At 4:00 PM we plan to have a cookout similar to the meal we had last year which had several dishes made from goat meat or goat milk. After the meal, Mike Neary, Extension Sheep Specialist, will conduct the FAMACHA training. Those attending the training will receive a binder containing reference material about the FAMACHA process and a card certifying completion of the training. Attending training such as this is the only way to become certified in the process. There is a \$12.00 charge to cover cost of material.

In order to provide a quality training environment, attendance for the training will be limited to the first 40 families who register and pay the \$12.00 to cover materials. We reserve the right to limit attendance to one person per family if we get a heavy response to this training opportunity. If we can't accommodate all who want to attend the FAMACHA, we will try to have some additional training or activities for those not going to the FAMACHA training.

You may make reservations and/or pay your fees for the training by contacting the SWCD at 812-346-3411, Extension 3, or the Jennings County Extension Office at 812-352-3033. Call either office if you have questions or need more information about this event.

Jennings County SWCD Receives Two Grants to Assist Farmers

The Jennings County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) recently received two grants to help in a statewide effort to reduce sediment and nutrient runoff in local streams. The grants total \$12,000 and come from Clean Water Indiana funds which are administered by the State Soil Conservation Board of the Indiana State Department of Agriculture.

The first grant will provide \$2,000 for the SWCD to promote pasture and livestock management practices. Plans are being made to host field days for farmers which will include a workshop for goat owners similar to the one which drew about 90 people last summer. Another field day will be held which will be more useful for cattle producers and will emphasize pasture and livestock management. The SWCD will also provide technical assistance to landowners for planning and installing practices related to improved livestock management and pasture improvement.

A second grant in the amount of \$10,000 will be used to address sediment and nutrient reduction by soil testing of cropland and pastures in the county. Soil testing to determine nutrient needs provides one of the best ways for farmers to ensure that their fertilizer dollars are providing the best return on their investment. Testing can also reduce application of excessive fertilizers which can lead to more nutrient runoff associated with soil erosion.

The SWCD will promote soil testing by providing technical assistance to help those who may have questions about proper methods of sampling and testing soils. Assistance will also be provided for interpreting soil test results. The SWCD will also use some of the funds to provide financial incentives to farmers doing soil testing. Farmers who are already doing soil testing on a field basis will be encouraged to utilize grid sampling methods which provide more detailed analysis and can be used for variable rate spreading of fertilizer which often leads to greater savings of fertilizer.

The SWCD will reimburse farmers at the rate of \$4.00 per soil test or \$1.00 per acre for grid sampling, up to a maximum of \$250.00. Soil samples may be brought in to the SWCD office for shipment to a testing lab or landowners may utilize other vendors for doing the soil tests. Cost-share will be available until May 1, 2009.

According to Brad Ponsler, SWCD chairman, "By encouraging more extensive use of soil tests, the SWCD hopes to show farmers how they can stretch their fertilizer dollars and, at the same time, help improve water quality by reducing nutrient losses that occur with soil erosion." For more information, contact the SWCD by calling 812-346-3411 X3 or visit them at the USDA Service Center in North Vernon.

Soil Testing Available Through SWCD

The Soil and Water Conservation District has made arrangements with A & L Great Lakes Lab at Fort Wayne to accept soil samples for nutrient testing. Landowners may bring samples to the SWCD office, where they will be forwarded to the lab. Test results will be sent back to the SWCD for review with landowners and are generally available within a few days of sending samples to the lab. The SWCD also has soil probes available for loan to make it easier to get the samples.

For more information, contact the SWCD by calling 812-346-3411 X3.

Various Cost-Share Programs Are Still Available

At this time some cost-share funds are still available through the Sand Creek Watershed water quality improvement program. Conservation practices that contribute to erosion control and water quality improvement may be eligible for up to 80% cost-share assistance. Some common practices include various livestock and pasture/hayland management systems, nutrient and pest management, cover crops, filter strips, tree planting, and no-till planting. Sources of funding include a grant for the Sand Creek watershed, Lake and River Enhancement (LARE) funds from the state, and federal programs such as the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and the Environmental Quality Improvement Program (EQIP).

The watershed grant funds have mostly been spent, but the state of Indiana is willing to provide continued funding through the LARE program. LARE has been available for the Sand Creek Watershed in Decatur and Jennings Counties since 2002 and the state has committed to more funding as long as there is a demand for funds.

For help with determining what practices may be needed on your farm, contact the Soil and Water Conservation District office at 346-3411 X3. Bob Steiner, Watershed Coordinator, is available to visit your farm and help plan for needed practices and assist with selection of a possible cost-share program that may fit your needs.

Filterstrips Provide Clean Water, Financial Benefits

Planting a strip of grass or a grass/clover mix along a stream is an effective method of controlling sediment that may be running off cropland into streams. In addition, filterstrips can be enrolled in the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program, whereby landowners receive cost-share assistance to establish the strips as well as a rental payment each year for 10 to 15 years.

Rental payments are based on soil type. Since bottomland soils are among the most productive, payments may start out at over \$150 per acre and then 20% is added as an extra incentive, making final payments over \$180 per acre. In the Sand Creek Watershed, special incentives from the Lake and River Enhancement Program may add up to \$650 per acre as one-time payment for establishing the filterstrips.

Other benefits of filterstrips include providing wildlife habitat as well as helping to control erosion on streambanks. For more information contact the SWCD office or the Farm Service Agency office.

Check out our new web site at www.jenningswcd.org. Also, let us know what kind of information you would like to see on the site and we will do our best to keep improving the content of the site.

Jennings County SWCD

2600 North State Highway 7

North Vernon, Indiana 47265-9109

Return Service Requested

<p>Jennings County Soil and Water Conservation District <i>Office Hours</i> Monday– Friday 8:00 AM until 4:00 PM Phone: 812-346-3411 Extension 3 www.jenningswcd.org</p>

Web Sites of Interest

The internet has numerous web sites that provide a wealth of information about agriculture and natural resource-related topics. For conservation tillage information, No-Till Farmer's web site, www.no-tillfarmer.com, is full of tillage and crop production topics, message boards, as well as links to numerous other related web sites.

Purdue's Entomology Department has online newsletters that are updated weekly during the cropping season. The Pest and Crop Newsletter keeps producers up to date on trends of pests in crops and latest ideas for pest control. You can find it at www.extension.entm.purdue.edu/pestrcrop/index.html,

The National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service web site, attra.ncat.org, has information about crop production, forage management, energy saving techniques, livestock production, organic farming, pest management and much more.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service Indiana home page at www.in.nrcs.usda.gov has information on government programs as well as several technical resources and latest news related to conservation of natural resources.