



Pasture Walk Scheduled for September 6 at Clark Farm

The farm of Allen and Marcy Clark near Brewersville will be the site of a pasture walk on September 6, beginning at 5 PM. The Clark's raise Boer goats and the primary topic of discussion for the evening will be management of goat herds. Goats can fill a valuable role in a cattle operation and that will be also be discussed.

Because of increasing demand for goats and the presence of a processing plant in Jennings County specializing in goats, the Sand Creek Watershed Steering Committee and the Soil and Water Conservation District felt that an educational meeting on the topic of goats would be beneficial to many landowners.

Speakers for the evening include Gil Myers of Magnolia, Kentucky. He is a livestock parasitologist and works as a private consultant providing service on parasite control and prevention. Robert Zupancic, Grazing Specialist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, will discuss the role of goats with cattle herds, pasture management and fencing. Donnie Brewer of Brewer Livestock at Lovett will discuss what makes an ideal market goat.

The Clark farm is located at 300 W County Road 580 N which is just south and west of Brewersville, and is about two miles northeast of the Jennings County 4-H Fairgrounds. Anyone is welcome to attend this free event, but RSVP would be appreciated so that we can supply adequate amounts of handout materials. Also, plans are to have available a variety of goat food products for people to sample after the meeting. It would also be advisable to bring lawn chairs. For more information, contact the SWCD at 812-346-3411 X3.

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Conservation Tillage Increases In Jennings County

Since 1990, your Soil and Water Conservation District, in cooperation with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Farm Service Agency, along with Purdue Cooperative Extension Service have cooperated to conduct tillage transects about every two to three years. This consists of driving a pre-determined route with over 200 points in the county and recording types of crops and the planting methods that were used to produce the crops.

This year's transect information is in and shows that conservation tillage, especially no-till, was used more than ever in the county. For 2007, 65% of the soybean fields were no-tilled and another 23% of the soybeans were planted with other forms of reduced tillage which left some residue on the surface of the soil after planting. By contrast, only 50% of the soybeans were no-tilled in 2004. Looking farther back, only 8% of the farmers used no-till for soybeans in 1990.

For the 2007 corn crop, 37% was no-tilled. This was also an increase over recent years. Another 7% was planted with other forms of reduced tillage. The 2004 transect showed only 28% of the corn was no-tilled. These numbers have grown from 1990, when only 11% of the corn was no-tilled.

It was somewhat surprising that there was such a significant increase in no-till considering that many fields were rutted due to wet conditions during the 2006 harvest. However, many farmers are taking advantage of the benefits of no-till such as fuel savings, time savings, and the need for less equipment. One of the most important benefits is the increase in soil quality that goes with no-till as well as the reduction in soil erosion which can be up to 90% less than with conventional tillage.

The steering committee of the Sand Creek Watershed is considering putting together a program this winter for the benefit of farmers who want to know more about no-till. If you have specific questions or topics you would like to see covered, let us know what they are.

Water Quality Monitoring Training Available

This past April, several volunteers were trained to do water quality monitoring as part of the volunteer Hoosier Riverwatch program. Since that time, we have had inquiries from others who are interested in getting the training. Recently we have learned that another training session may be available here in Jennings County in September or October. Anyone interested in getting the training should contact the Soil and Water Conservation District to let us know of your interest. We will provide more information as we get it for anyone who wants to take advantage of this free training opportunity.

Cost-Share Funds Are Still Available

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 75% cost-share assistance. Some common practices would include various livestock and pasture/hayland management practices, 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 funds from the state, and federal programs such as the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). For assistance on 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.

Family farm report

(Summarized by Drover's Magazine on 6/7/2007) Most U.S. farms, even among the largest operations, are family farms, according to a new report from USDA's Economic Research Service. Large-scale family farms and non-family farms account for 10 percent of U.S. farms, but 75 percent of the value of production. Small family farms make up the overwhelming majority of U.S. farm numbers, but produce a modest share of farm output and receive substantial off-farm income. The report notes that many farm households have a large net worth, reflecting the land-intensive nature of farming.

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/eib24/>

USDA's ERS counted 2.13 million farms in the United States during 2002, the latest year data is available. Of those farms, 28,673 (1 percent) had sales exceeding \$1 million, but account for nearly one-fourth of agricultural sales. A similar pattern is found among cow-calf operations. USDA's latest count finds 760,880 operations with at least one cow, but only 78,850 operations with 100 or more cows. Of the 33.5 million beef cows in the United States, 52.8 percent are in herds of 100 head or more. Regardless of farm type, family farms remain the norm — even among large farms. For instance, USDA says 87.8 percent of all million-dollar farms in the United States are family farms. — G.H

Fall Home and Garden Workshop

On September 22, 2007 from 8:30 am – 1:00 pm, we are presenting a **Fall Home and Garden Workshop** in the Visitors Center at the Muscatatuck National Wildlife Refuge.

Topics to be covered are:
“Spring Freeze/Summer Drought What To Do With Trees and Plants”

“Composting”

“Winter Plants for Wildlife”

“Rain Gardens”

Cost is \$8 per person.

Prepay or pay at the door

RSVP is required by September 17th

Lunch will be included in the workshop. For further information or to RSVP please contact us at 812/346-3411 ext 3.