



The Talbot Soil Conservation District

June 2009



Tradewinds

Inside this issue:

WHAT IS NO-TILL?	1
09/10 COVER CROP	1
POULTRY PADS	2
ENVIROTHON	2
FARM BILL	3
NEW EMPLOYEE	4
BLUEBIRD BOXES	4
SOIL SURVEY	5
CREP AGREEMENT	5
PASTURE WALKS	5

Our Office is Closed On:

July 3rd—Independence Day

September 7th—Labor Day

DID YOU KNOW?

There are more living organisms in a cubic foot of soil than there are people in China.

SO WHAT IS NO-TILL?

DAVID WILSON, SOIL CONSERVATION TECHNICIAN

No-till as defined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is the practice that states that all residues shall be uniformly distributed over the entire field and no full-width tillage (moldboard plow, chisel plow or disking of the entire field) shall be performed regardless of the depth of the tillage operation.

“Farm Ugly” was a catch phrase from the 80’s designed to convince mid-western farmers who were accustomed to clean fields of black soils laid bare by the plow to try no-till farming. No-till farming is the practice of planting directly into a soil which has not been tilled. Existing vegetation including weeds or



A Conventionally Tilled Field

cover crop are controlled with an herbicide application prior to or at planting. From an environmental standpoint the primary benefit from

no-till is protecting the soil from rain storms and preventing soil erosion. This keeps valuable top soil and the nutrients it contains on the field and out of waterways. A secondary benefit is moisture conservation from the plant residue shading the soil. Economic benefits include lower equipment costs and reduced fuel usage from the elimination of numerous tillage trips.



No-till Cropping System

No-till is also considerably faster for the farmer allowing him to cover more acres in a timely manner. While farmers have widely adopted no-till do to the environmental and economic benefits many landowners still balk at the weedy unkempt looking fields. We need to bring back the “Farm Ugly” campaign, this time to bring landowners around to acceptance of no-till which in many situations is simply the right thing to do.

COVER CROP ANNOUNCED FOR 2009/2010

LEVIN SCHWANINGER, SOIL CONSERVATION PLANNER

The Maryland Department of Agriculture has announced the 2009/2010 Cover Crop signup between June 22nd and July 8th, 2009. The program has changed some from last year. This year there will be one application for both Traditional and Commodity cover crop program. Farmers will be able to enroll up to 750



acres, of which 250 acres may be designated for the commodity program that will be determined in the Spring. There will be standby applica-

tions for more acreage. MDA will also be bringing back a fall partial payment for the Traditional program.

Look for an MDA mailing about a week before signup for more details about this years cover crop program. Call and ask for Levin or Dave for more details.



MACS POULTRY PAD ELIGIBILITY

DAVID WILSON, SOIL CONSERVATION TECHNICIAN

The Maryland Department of Agriculture has revised their criteria for poultry house pads due to the overwhelming demand which has outpaced the available funding. MDA has developed an eligibility worksheet with a minimum required score to target their limited funds to the most environmentally sensitive sites. The worksheet gives the highest points for farms in the critical area, in the 100 year flood plain, or on sensitive soils. Since most of our farms are not located in these environmentally sensitive areas they won't earn these points.

Many of our poultry farms can still qualify if they earn the points for co-cost sharing with the EQIP

program. EQIP has greatly expanded the availability of poultry pads and the rates at which they reimburse them. We should still be able to install poultry pads for everyone who needs them but it will now take the combination of state and federal funding. Please see the EQIP update section for more information.



EASTERN SHORE REGIONAL ENVIROTHON

CRAIG ZINTER, DISTRICT MANAGER

The Eastern Shore Regional Envirothon was held at the Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center in Grasonville, MD on April 29th. This year we welcomed Wicomico County for the first time. Fourteen teams representing seven High Schools and four Counties (Talbot, Dorchester, Wicomico and Somerset) participated. Prior to the competition, the 71 students had attended two training days covering the four core natural resource areas: aquatics, forestry, soils, wildlife and a 5th issue that incorporates a current environmental issue. This year the 5th issue topic is Biodiversity in a Changing World.

County and school participation included:

Talbot County – Saints Peter & Paul H.S. (3 teams) and St. Michaels H.S. (2 teams)

Dorchester County – Cambridge – South Dorchester H.S. (3 teams) and North Dorchester H.S. (2 teams)

Wicomico County – Parkside H.S. (2 teams)

Somerset County – Crisfield H.S. (1 team) and Washington H.S. (1 team)

The competition recognizes high score winners in each of the resource areas as well as crowns County Champions that will represent their-

spective Counties at the MD Envirothon which will be held June 16-18 at Mount St. Mary's College in Emmitsburg, MD.

The overall Eastern Shore Regional Envirothon Champion was a team from Washington H.S. in Somerset County with a



score of 373.00 points. 2nd place went to a team from Cambridge – South Dorchester H.S. with a score of 363.50 points. 3rd went to Crisfield H.S. also from Somerset County with a score of 350.50 points.

Individual high scores for each of the resource areas went to:

Aquatics – Dorchester, Cambridge – South Dorchester H.S. – 67.00 points

Forestry – Somerset, Crisfield H.S. – 104.00 points

Soils – Talbot, Saints Peter & Paul H.S. – 74.00 points

Wildlife - Talbot, Saints Peter & Paul H.S. – 77.00 points

Biodiversity – Somerset, Washington H.S. – 90.00 points

County winners that will represent their County at the MD Envirothon were:

Talbot – Saints Peter & Paul H.S. – 348.00 points

Dorchester - Cambridge – South Dorchester H.S. – 363.50 points

Wicomico – Parkside H.S. – 308.00 points

Somerset – Washington H.S. – 373.00 points

Thanks to the Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center for hosting the Eastern Shore Regional Envirothon, and thank you also to all the resource leaders, advisors and staff. Congratulations to all the participants, teams and winners. Good luck at the MD Envirothon!

2008 FARM BILL NEWS BRIEFS

MARK MASON, SOIL CONSERVATION TECHNICIAN

While the new Farm Bill (**now known as the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008**) has been passed, the rules are still being written. The new rules will take effect October 1, 2009 which is the beginning of the new federal fiscal year.

Here is a summary of what we know so far about the new Farm Bill:

- ▽ The adjusted gross income for eligibility in USDA programs has been reduced from the current \$2.5 million down to \$1 million, unless 2/3 of the income comes from the farm or forestry.
- ▽ The former **Conservation Security Program (CSP)** has been renamed the **Conservation Stewardship Program**. The old CSP will continue for existing participants but there will be no new enrollments or enhancements. The new CSP will run through 2017 with an annual enrollment cap and an annual average payment rate of \$18 per acre.
- ▽ The **Environmental Quality Incentive program (EQIP)** continues but with a \$300,000 per applicant cap over 6 years. To simplify the paperwork EQIP will now pay a set amount per practice rather than a percentage of the various flat rates used before.
- ▽ The **Agriculture Management Assistance (AMA)** program will \$15 million per year targeted to the 16 states with the lowest crop insurance participation, which includes Maryland. Eligible practices for the 2009 AMA program are related to Organic Production (crop or livestock producers) and irrigation practices
- ▽ Producer eligibility for CSP, EQIP, and AMA, an applicant must be an individual, entity or joint operation.
 - ▽ The applicant is engaged in agricultural production.
 - ▽ The land being offered for enrollment in CSP, EQIP and AMA is used in agricultural production or livestock production.

- ▽ Land eligibility for CSP, EQIP, and AMA is cropland, hayland, pastureland, and forestland (not eligible in CSP) where crops, livestock or forests are produced.
- ▽ Conservation practices will contribute to an improvement in the identified natural resource concern.
- ▽ The producer must certify that they have control of the land for the contract period (A deed, lease, written authorization from the landowner.)



- ▽ Land under other conservation programs may be eligible. EQIP does not pay for the same or similar practices on the same land. Land enrolled in CRP or CREP may only be offered for enrollment during the last year of existing contract before enrolling into new CSP contract.
- ▽ Participants are limited to payments \$50,000.00 per person for any fiscal year.
- ▽ The practice shall be applied on that land until after the CRP contract has expired or been terminated. Land under other conservation programs that provide a payment is eligible, if AMA is used to treat different resource concern. Land in CRP is not eligible for the AMA program.
- ▽ The **Wildlife Habitat Incentive program (WHIP)** has changed

slightly from last year. Previously WHIP years were open to non-farms on non-croplands.

Eligible lands:

- ▽ **Agriculture land:** Cropland, grassland, woodlands determined by NRCS to be suitable for fish and wildlife habitat development. Agricultural lands may include cropped woodland, marshes, incidental areas included in the farming operation, and other types of land used for the production of livestock.
- ▽ **Nonindustrial private forestland:** Rural land that has existing tree cover or is suitable for growing trees.
- ▽ **Privately owned land** that is suitable for the production of food or fiber. The land must be located such that agricultural or forest production would be feasible and allowed under local regulations. Lands zoned for residential or commercial use are not eligible unless they are currently in agriculture production or have a current forest management plan.

- ▽ All lands must be of sufficient size (at least 1 acre, 3 acre for aerial control of Phragmites)
- ▽ At **least \$500** of cost-share assistance for eligible practices.
- ▽ For 2009 contracts, each participant will be limited to no more than \$300,000 in financial assistance. Participants are limited to payments \$50,000 per person for any fiscal year.

The new **Chesapeake Bay Watershed program** will channel additional money through existing programs. Funding levels are \$23 million in 2009, \$43 million in 2010, \$72 million in 2011 and \$50 million in 2012.

More updates and briefs can be found at: <http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usdahome>

TALBOT SCD WELCOMES HEYDSHA CORDORO-RODRIGUEZ

Heydsha R. Cordero-Rodriguez was born and raised in Moca, Puerto Rico. She earned a General Agriculture BA degree in the University of Puerto Rico at Mayaguez in 2007.

During her BA she worked as a volunteer with NRCS in Mayaguez, PR and completed two summer internships as a Soil Conservationist-Student Trainee with NRCS in Kalispell and Helena, Montana respectively. Heydsha was awarded by USDA-NRCS Caribbean Area with the Conservation Prize in recognition of her hard work towards the conservation of Natural Resources during her undergraduate studies.

After her graduation she went back to Montana and worked for 1.5 years with NRCS as a Soil Conservationist in Great Falls, Montana.

She has been active for 4 years as a member of

the National Organization of Professional Hispanic NRCS Employees (NOPHNRCSE), working with Student Scholarships and Natural Resources Committees. In her free time she enjoys modeling and outdoor activities.

On her thoughts on Maryland, she answered: "I am very pleased to have the opportunity to work in Maryland, experience different agriculture and enjoy my contribution to the conservation of the Chesapeake Bay".

Maryland has welcomed me in the way that I feel like home! I look forward to working with many Maryland farm-



Heydsha Cordoro-Rodriguez, Soil Conservationist (NRCS)

ers and bringing help any way I can!

BLUEBIRD BOXES INSTALLED AT OUR NEW BUILDING

TERESA KAMPMEYER, DISTRICT CONSERVATIONIST

Bluebirds are one of the most beloved species in North America. They are secondary nest builders usually nesting in the abandoned tree cavities of woodpeckers. Their beautiful colors, delightful songs, habit of consuming insects, and strong family devotion, provide happiness and inspiration to people. Bluebirds were once greatly imperiled by contamination of their insect food with DDT, the lack of nesting cavities and the competition with exotic species. This caused the population to severely drop.

However, Eastern Bluebirds have made a great comeback. This is in large part due to the thousands of people who have erected and monitored nest boxes for these magnificent birds.

The Talbot SCD recently established a Bluebird trail around the District's new Building. The Board of Supervisors and staff would like to thank the following Partners for making this project possible: Dave Wilson, USDA RC&D Coordinator; Tom Hutson and Jayne Fitzgerald, 4-H coordinator with the University of Maryland Extension; Ned Gerber and Andi Pupke, Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage; and Tom Cohee of Barkers Landing.

In short, Dave Wilson secured a grant to pay for the materials needed for the posts and construction of the boxes. Tom Hutson and Jayne Fitzgerald worked with Juvenile

boxes; and Tom Cohee dug the holes for the posts and granted permission for us to extend the trail on to his property which gave us a total of 8 boxes in all.



Mark Mason and Andi Pupke installing predator guards.

Drug Court teenagers who built the boxes; Ned Gerber donated the predator guards to mount on the posts; Andi Pupke gave training and guidance to the staff to install the predator guards and monitoring the nest

Within two weeks we had success in two nests with eggs. Bluebird houses must be 300 ft apart because they are very territorial.

It is also necessary to control the House Sparrow (English sparrow), or it will eliminate the bluebirds. That is why monitoring is so important. House sparrows and European starlings are non-native species introduced from Europe and their aggressive seizure of cavity nest sites is the main reason for the rarity of blue birds today. House sparrows will enter blue bird boxes and frequently kill bluebirds, destroy their eggs, or drive them from their nests.

Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage has a simple device that can be added to the bluebird box to trap the house sparrow. At no time should they be allowed to successfully nest in bluebird boxes. Doing so will only increase the house sparrow population and further reduce the number of the bluebirds.

SOIL SURVEY UPDATE

JAMES BREWER, SOIL SCIENTIST

The new updated soil survey for Talbot County will soon be available for public use. In approximately two weeks the updated soil survey will be uploaded onto the NRCS internet active Web Soil Survey. The web site address is <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov>.

With the Web Soil Survey you can view and print a soil map. It can create thematic maps and produce soils reports specifically for you Area of Interest (AOI). It can provide information on soil map unit descriptions, interpretations and soil properties. All of which can be viewed on line or printed as a customized report.

The updated Talbot Soil Survey has a few changes from the 1970 soil survey. The 1970 soil survey contained 12 interpretation and soil property tables whereas the updated survey will have over 40 tables available. Although the soils haven't changed significantly since 1970 some of the soil names will be different in the updated soil survey. This is a result of a new soil classification system (Soil Taxonomy) which was introduced in 1976. Also improved laboratory analysis and the recognition of seasonal water tables below 40 inches in the soil have led to new soil series being established. We will still have Sassafras, Elkton, Othello, Fallsington, and Woodstown but have added Hambrook, Crosiadore, Nassawango, Ingleside, and Lenni. New data for crop yields and woodland productivity indexes will be included in the updated soil survey along with new interpretations such



as Agricultural Disposal of Manure and Wasterwater, Forestland Site Preparation, Planting and Harvesting, and Suitability for Clay Liner Material.

The updated survey will also contain not only information about the major soil components of a map unit but also the minor components of the map unit (inclusions within the delineations) to help users better understand the soil and its relationship on the landscape.

NEW CREP AGREEMENT SIGNED

STEVE SPIELMAN, SOIL CONSERVATION PLANNER

In late April, a new and enhanced CREP program was announced. The financial incentives for enrolling erodible or environmentally sensitive land have never been better. If you have been thinking about signing up for filter strips, enrolling that strip section of a field, or constructing that shallow water area for wildlife, now may be the time. While eligibility and payment rates are site specific, some of the general points are as follows:

- ▽ *Filter strips receive a 150% bonus on the annual soil rental rate; Riparian Forest Buffers receive a 200% bonus .*
- ▽ *Most practices are eligible for a one time signing bonus of \$100/acre*
- ▽ *Wetland Restoration projects are now eligible for state cost sharing.*
- ▽ *Eligible width for filter strips is now 35-100 Ft. The width can be extended to 250 ft. or highly erodible land or for specific wildlife purposes.*
- ▽ *Eligible width for filter strips along drainage ditches or channelized streams remains at 35 ft.*
- ▽ *Filter strips being re-enrolled into the program are eligible at their current widths.*

For additional information , contact Steve Spielman at 410-822-1583 or steve.spielman@md.nacdnet.net

PASTURE WALKS FOR GRAZING OPERATORS

The Maryland Grazer's Network is coordinating two outstanding grazing operators to offer on-farm learning opportunities for grazers, support agency personnel, and anyone interested in learning more about developing a pasture-based production system. Learn how the Network can provide experienced beef, dairy, or sheep grazers to work as mentors with farmers wanting to improve their grazing systems or begin a grazing system.

Tuesday, June 23- Host, Ron Holter, Holterholm Farms, 5619 Halter Road, Jefferson, MD 21755-8508, (Western Shore)

Monday, June 29- Host- Eddie Draper, the Wye Research Farm and Angus Herd, 2016 Carmichael Road, Queenstown, MD 21658, (Eastern Shore)

For more information, or to register to attend either farm day, contact:

Elmer Dengler, NRCS, elmer.dengler@md.usda.gov or 800 384-8770 x333

The farm tours are scheduled to begin at 10:30 AM and continue until 1:30 PM - lots of time for questions and networking. There is no charge for either session and a complimentary lunch will be provided. In addition to learning more about grazing, short presentations will be given throughout the tour on marketing opportunities, simplifying farm economic record-keeping and cost sharing opportunities specifically for grazing practices.



Talbot Soil Conservation District
28577 Mary's Court, Ste 3
Easton, Maryland 21601
(410) 822-1583 ext. 3

NONPROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE PAID
EASTON, MARYLAND
21601
PERMIT NO. 268

NEWSLETTER FOR JUNE, 2009

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

DISTRICT STAFF

Craig S. Zinter, District Manager
Teresa D. Kampmeyer, District Conservationist
L. Dale Willson, Secretary
Jim Brewer, Soil Scientist
Heydsha Cordoro, Soil Conservationist
Mark Mason, Soil Conservation Technician
Scott Nordhoff, Soil Conservation Planner
Levin Schwaninger, Soil Conservation Planner
Roy R. Scott, Soil Conservation Associate
Shawn Smith, Soil Conservation Planner
Steve Spielman, Soil Conservation Planner
David Wilson, Soil Conservation Engineer Technician

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

John Swaine III, Chairman
S. Taylor Spies, Vice Chairman
Lemmie Swann, Treasurer
Jane Ward, Member
Kyle Hutchison, Member
Shannon Potter, Secretary (Extension Service)
Phil Foster, Associate Member
Vicky Sump, Associate Member



NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION SERVICE



CONSERVATION
DEVELOPMENT
SELF-GOVERNMENT



MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE