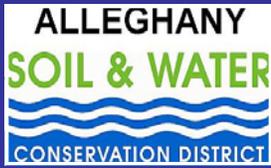


Fall 2008



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# Conservation Comments



## Alleghany Soil & Water Conservation District

*"When we heal the earth, we heal ourselves" - David Orr*

### Inside this issue:

New No-Till Grass Drill 1

NC ACSP—  
Agriculture  
Cost Share  
Program 1

EQIP—  
Environmental  
Quality Incentives  
Program 2

2009 Conservation  
Contest Theme 2

FPP—  
Farmland  
Preservation  
Program 3

What is Envirothon? 3

Contact Information 4

### Alleghany SWCD receives New Truax No-Till Drill

In May, the Council of State approved a request from Commissioner Troxler to allocate \$370,800 to the NC Foundation for Soil and Water Conservation to purchase 25 no-till grass drills to be distributed throughout the state. Alleghany was one of twenty five counties selected to receive a Flex II -88 no-till grass drill. The drills will help farmers re-establish drought damaged pastures by seeding the soil with fresh grass seed without causing much disturbance to the soil.

The new no-till grass drills for Alleghany, Ashe, Watauga, Wilkes and Yadkin counties were delivered to the Claude Shew, Jr. Farm in Wilkes County. More than 15,600 farmers own pasture acreage in the 25 counties chosen to receive one of the drills, representing about approximately 1/2 of the 1,750,000 acres of pasture across the state.

During a press conference at the Shew Farm on July 8, Agricultural Commissioner Steve Troxler stated "With the drought still ongoing, a lot of pastures have turned to weeds and need resto-



Delivery of new Flex II-88 no-till drills to assist with statewide drought relief efforts

ration... We hope this will give farmers a leg up for staying on the farm. A farm is not a farm without a farmer, it's just a piece of dirt". Cecil Settle, Executive Director of the NC Foundation for Soil and Water Conservation, said that the FlexII-88 no-till grass drill is better suited for use in smaller pastures on more varied terrain than the traditionally larger no-till drills.

District Administrator, Linda Hash, stated "This

See No-Till Drill Page 2

### NC Agriculture Cost Share Program

Nonpoint source pollution has been identified by the NC Division of Water Quality (DWQ) as the primary source of degradation of freshwater rivers and streams in NC. According to the NC Nonpoint source Assessment Report, agriculture is the largest source of stream-use impacts in the state. The

approach taken in NC for addressing agriculture's contribution to the nonpoint source water pollution problem is to primarily encourage voluntary participation by the agricultural community. This approach is supported by financial incentives, technical and educational assistance,

research, and regulatory programs. Financial incentives are provided through NC's Agriculture Cost Share Program (NCACSP). Participating farmers receive 75% of predetermined average costs of installed best management practices (BMP's) with the remaining 25% paid by the farmers

See Cost Share Page 3

## No-Till Drill (Continued from Page 1)



District Supervisor Bobby Gambill loads drill for delivery to Allegheny SWCD

drill came at a good time. We are writing plans for pasture renovation now. We have received 60 requests for drought assistance from farmers in Allegheny since May. This equipment will be valuable in completing these plans and restoring the pastures." The 2007 drought cut hay production by nearly 40 percent and devastated pastures across the state.

Allegheny continues to suffer

severe drought conditions despite rainfall received in June. District Supervisor Bobby Gambill said conditions are as variable in Allegheny as they are in other counties statewide.

Benefits of planting grass with a no-till drill include less fuel used than conventional broadcast re-seeding because it requires fewer passes over a field, the amount of grass seed needed is reduced due to the seed being dropped directly

into the soil and seed germination is improved, especially in dry hard-packed soil.

Both the Truax and the Tye no-till drills are available for rent at the rate of \$8 per acre (\$25 minimum per rental).

Please call 336-372-7777 to schedule rental of the drills.

## EQIP

EQIP is a voluntary conservation program administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) which offers financial and technical help to assist eligible participants install or implement structural and management practices on eligible agricultural land.

NRCS Soil Technician Greg Wagoner is requesting all persons interested in the program to please have application signed no later than October 1 of this year. Practices that are often contracted in the program include: fencing, wells, watering tanks, chemical

buildings, and waste storage structures to name just a few. The EQIP program addresses all resource concerns on any given farm. Those concerns are then ranked against others in the county to determine program eligibility.

Everyone interested in this program as well as other USDA programs must be in compliance with farm bill regulations which include such items as a current conservation plan on all annually planted commodity crops, a farm and tract number and other requirements.

Check with the Farm Service Agency in Jefferson, NC at 336.246.8875 to verify that you are in compliance.

For more information on this and other USDA programs call or come by our office or visit the following websites:

USDA—<http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usdahome>

NRCS— <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/>

*Soil & Water...Yours for Life*



## 2009 Conservation Contest Theme

"Soil and Water...Yours for Life" is the theme for this year's annual Soil and Water Conservation Contest. Contests include the 5th grade poster contest, 6th grade essay contest, and the 7th and 8th grade speech contest. Upon winning at their school, students will compete against winners of other county schools for a

chance to advance to the Area level. First place winners at the Area competition will be eligible to enter the State Contest in Raleigh.

Presentations will be given at each of the 3 elementary schools for 5th through 8th grades beginning this fall. Teachers will be provided with a copy of the curriculum goals

and objectives for this year's theme, a copy of the contest rules and regulations, and a list of educational resources for the students to research for additional information.

More speech contest information, details, and official deadlines will be distributed soon.

## Farmland Preservation Program

The Alleghany Voluntary Farmland Preservation Program Ordinance was adopted by the Alleghany County Commissioners on August 18, 2003. The purpose of the Farmland Preservation Program is to encourage the voluntary preservation and protection of farmland from non-farm development. This is in recognition of the importance of agriculture to the economic and social life of the county.

Members of the voluntary Farmland Preservation Program will have increased pro-

tection from nuisance lawsuits and other negative impacts on participating farms.

To become a member of the program, the farm must be participating or qualify for the PRESENT-USE VALUE (PUV) taxation program. The primary qualifications for this program are: at least 10 acres of individually owned agricultural land that has produced an average annual income of \$1000 over a 3 year period; or at least 5 acres of individually owned horticultural land producing an

average income of \$1000 per year; or at least 20 acres of individually owned forest land which are in actual production and not included in a farm unit.

There are currently over 9000 acres participating in the Alleghany FPP. Please contact our office to learn how you can become a FPP member!

See the FPP ordinance at:

<http://www.alleghanycounty-nc.gov/ordinances/1-206.pdf>



## Cost Share (Continued from Page 1)

directly or through in-kind contributions. Some applicants who qualify under the beginning or limited resource farmer statute may receive 90% of predetermined average costs.

The Soil and Water Conservation Commission allocates cost share funds to local Districts based on the level of state appropriations and water quality protection priorities.

In response to immediate, critical needs resulting from the record-breaking drought in 2007 and 2008 the NC Agricultural Drought Recovery Response Program has been designed to assist farmers with restoring drought-damaged pastureland and improving existing water supplies. Financial and technical assistance is available for pasture renovation to assist in the restoration of

pasturelands to usable condition and to improve existing water supplies for livestock watering systems.

For more information contact our office or visit the NCACSP website at:

<http://www.enr.state.nc.us/DSWC/pages/agcostshareprogram.html>



Alleghany SWCD has received applications for drought assistance totaling over 1400 acres since May 2008

## Envirothon

The Envirothon competition is a fun, hands-on, natural science academic event that challenges and engages students to think critically about the natural world and their role in it. In-class curriculum is combined with outdoor training to help students learn and experience more about Aquatic Ecology, Forestry, Soils and Land Use, Wildlife and Current Environmental Issues. Envirothon teams from each of the local

schools will compete in the Annual Alleghany County Competition October 28th in preparation for the Regional, and hopefully, the State event held each spring.

The unique combination of learning experiences and range of study is part of what has made the Envirothon a huge success with students and educators across the U. S. and Canada.

North Carolina has been awarded the honor of hosting the 2009 National Envirothon Competition to be held at the University of North Carolina at Asheville August 2 - 8, 2009.

Learn more by visiting the NC Envirothon website at:

<http://www.enr.state.nc.us/DSWC/pages/envirothon.html>



The Alleghany Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is a governmental subdivision of the State of North Carolina, charged with the responsibility of promoting soil and water conservation and establishing conservation programs in the District. The District partners with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to carry out these responsibilities. As a local organization we work with citizens, agencies, and land owners to plan and direct programs for the conservation and development of our natural resources. We work closely with other state, federal, and local agencies, such as Resources Conservation and Development, Division of Water Quality, Corp of Engineers, NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources, NC Forest Service, Farm Service Agency, NC Cooperative Extension, etc. to provide effective natural resource management and environmental education.

### *Our Mission Is...*

**...to promote the conservation of natural resources in Alleghany County through education, information, technical assistance, and available economic incentives.**



#### **District Board of Supervisors:**

*Paul Edwards—Chairman*

*Jim Dixon—Vice Chairman*

*Terry Hall—Secretary/Treasurer*

*Bobby Evans—Member*

*Bobby Gambill—Member*



***Please contact our office for more information about any of our programs:***

#### **ALLEGHANY SWCD**

P O Box 127 (90 S. Main St., Room 200)  
Sparta, NC 28675

Visit us on the web at: [http://www.alleghanycounty-nc.gov/dept\\_index.asp?dept\\_id=16](http://www.alleghanycounty-nc.gov/dept_index.asp?dept_id=16)

**Phone:** 336-372-4645 or 336-372-7777 **Fax:** 336-372-7402

**E-mail:** [linda.hash@nc.nacdnet.net](mailto:linda.hash@nc.nacdnet.net) or [janie.woodle@nc.nacdnet.net](mailto:janie.woodle@nc.nacdnet.net)

**Office Hours:** 8 am—5 pm, Monday—Friday

***Board meetings are open to the public and are held monthly on the 2nd Tuesday  
Please contact our office for details***



#### **DISTRICT STAFF:**

Linda Hash—District Administrator/Conservationist

Janie Woodle— Admin Asst/Technician/Education Director



Michelle Lovejoy  
Area 2 Coordinator

#### **USDA, NRCS STAFF:**

David Tucker—District Conservationist

Greg Wagoner—Soil Conservation Technician

Greg Goings—Soil Conservation Technician

