



Stanly Soil & Water Conservation District



WINTER EDITION

JANUARY 2017



26032-C Newt Road
Agri-Civic Center
Albemarle, NC 28001
704-986-3059

Conservation Information

Happy New Year!!

A New Year's Resolution... Conserve Natural Resources

The Stanly Soil and Water Conservation District would like to wish you and yours a Happy New Year! As we are entering into another new year, let's take the time to consider the future of our natural resources. Our very existence depends either directly or indirectly on our soil and water resources. That's why conservation and wise use is so important.

"Soil is a living and life-giving natural resource. As world population and food production demands rise, keeping our soil healthy and productive is of paramount importance. By farming using soil health principles and systems that include no-till, cover cropping and diverse rotations, more and more farmers are actually increasing their soil's organic matter and improving microbial activity. As a result, farmers are sequestering more carbon, increasing water infiltration, improving wildlife and pollinator habitat—all while harvesting better profits and often better yields." nrcs.usda.gov

Partnering with local, state and federal governments, the District offers cost sharing opportunities and economic incentives to Stanly County landowners, with an emphasis on educating the public about conservation practices. Each Cost Share program offers best management practices targeted to meet specific program goals. These programs offer assistance to address agricultural, rural and urban soil health and water resource issues. For more information about any of our programs, call 704-986-3059 or email cbrooks@stanlycountync.gov



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District Board Members

Terry Blalock	Chairman
John Pickler	Vice-Chairman
Jody Smith	Treasurer
Curtis Furr	Supervisor
Aaron Burleson	Supervisor
W. Chester Lowder	Advisor

District Board Meetings are held the second Wednesday of each month at 8:00 a.m. at the Stanly County Agri-Civic Center. All meetings are open to the public.

District and NRCS Staff

Clint Brooks	Cost Share Technician
Rita Little	Admin/Education Coordinator
Shauntae Britt	Supervisory District Conservationist
Chris Childers	Conservation Planner
Charles Dunevant	Soil Conservationist
Lin Taylor	Civil Engineer Technician



More than two dozen farmers and guests gathered for a Friday morning breakfast meeting to hear Stanly Soil and Water Conservation speaker, Will Mann of Fishing Creek SWCD in Halifax County, discuss soil health topics such as the advantage of cover crops, defining healthy soil, increasing crop yields while decreasing input costs, the rate of economic returns on healthy soil, and strategies and methods for developing a soil improvement plan.

Matthew Swain, attendee and Mount Pleasant HS Ag teacher, stated, "I'm here to support the farmers and to support the next generation of farmers."

Using a power point on "Cover Crops and Their Uses," Mann opened by explaining that 70% of Halifax County farmers use cover crops on their 110,000 acres of crop land. Cover crops reduce tillage and improve the soil.

"A lot of (Stanly County) farmers use cover crops, but they may not be fully utilized." Nathan Lowder, NRCS Southeast Regional Soil Health Specialist and Norwood farmer

The Resource Conservation Specialist stressed the success of no-till farming. This process has eliminated erosion and compaction of their crops' soil. He emphasized keeping crops canopied. Fungal species are harmed most by tillage. "Naturally, our soils have a lot of fertility in it. Our goal is to unlock that fertility."

"It's made me money. It's unbelievable how healthy our soil is becoming." Stanly County farmer, Curtis Furr of Ridgecrest

Mann stated all farmers have many factors to keep in mind when setting their goals such as dealing with parasitic nematodes, fertility, and soil borne pathogens. "Get the biology working correctly. We've got to understand populations. How many pounds of species per acre. I'm interested in farmers making a living and using the right products." "Watch the fertilizers and what kind of pesticides we're using. Insects have an antenna that can tune into weak plants."

The guest speaker informed attendees that there are over 21 herbicide resistant weeds in NC. "We've all seen the barren pit where top soil is stripped off. Weeds form trying to improve the condition. Weeds are our best indicator. Weeds tells us what's in the soil. Weeds are a great consumer of nitrates," Mann related.

He explained that the only way plants are affected by nematodes is by lack of water or high salts. He also accentuated that soybeans require as much nitration as corn. Mann then discussed transpiration, how the plant moves water. Carbon holds ten times its weight in water.

The Halifax native's presentation also included the topic of brix, a unit of measure of sugar content of a plant.

"The higher the brix, the better the plant. Keep the glucose system going to keep blooms going."

Mann also discussed the economic returns in cool and warm season grasses and legumes. One cool season broadleaf, phacelia, is one of the top 10 pollinating plants in the world with a blooming period of 145 days.

Furr has grown phacelia, but points out, "It's hard to get established."

Mann concluded his presentation by stating, "Implementing cover crops will assist to diversify soil health and improve crop quality."

Chester Lowder, attendee and SWCD advisor, observed. "Profits on row crops in Stanly County can be improved by using cover crops through improved organic matter and storage of carbon."

"Agricultural success starts with soil health. Without living soil, we cannot expect to have living crops and living farms," Shawn Hatley, attendee and proprietor of the Naked Pig Meat Co. in Oakboro, agreed.

Furr advised other farmers, "Do soil samples. Try it on a few acres." Director of Stanly SWCD, Clint Brooks, offered words of advice for anyone interested.

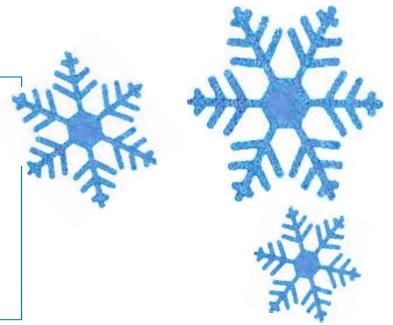
"Start small. Get some things started. Get some things in the ground."

"People that do small gardens will find it works as good on a quarter acre garden as a 100 acre field," concluded Furr.



2016 Agriculture Awareness Days

What a special day for third graders of Stanly County. The three day event was held October 4-6 at the AgriCivic Center for public, private and home school students. Students learned about soybeans, bees, aquaculture, local foods, forestry, poultry, corn, water, and more!



Thanks to all who volunteered to make the 2016 Agriculture Awareness Days a huge success.



[Sign up and Receive FSA Notifications by Text](#)

USDA-FSA announced that farmers and ranchers in NC now can receive notifications from their FSA county office through text messages on their cell phone. In addition to the free FSA GovDelivery email news, customers now can choose to receive text message alerts from their county office. These text messages inform producers of important program deadlines, reporting requirements, outreach events, and updates.

Producers can text NCStanly to FSANOW (372-669) to subscribe to text message alerts from Stanly County. Standard text messaging rates apply. Contact your wireless carrier for details associated with your particular data plan. Participants may unsubscribe at any time.

To receive GovDelivery email notifications, subscribe online at www.fsa.usda.gov/subscribe or contact the Stanly County FSA office for subscription assistance. Producers can establish subscriber preferences by choosing to receive federal farm program information by topic, by state or by county. Producers can select as many subscriber options as they want, which allows producers who farm in multiple counties or across state lines to receive updates from each county in which they operate or have an interest.

[FSA Committee Election Results](#)

Eligible voters located in Ridenhour, Harris, North Albemarle, and South Albemarle townships recently re-elected John Pickler as their representative on the committee. He will serve another three year term beginning January 1, 2017. Doris Herlocker, was elected to serve as First Alternate.

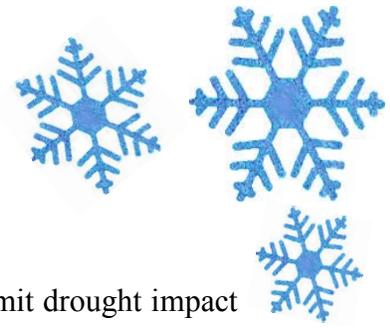
Elected county committee members serve a three-year term and are responsible for making decisions on FSA disaster, conservation, commodity, and price support programs, as well as other important federal farm program issues. County committee members are a valuable asset because they are comprised of local producers who participate in FSA programs themselves and have a direct connection to farmers and ranchers in the community.

[Ownership Changes](#)

When changes in farm ownership or operation take place, a farm reconstitution is necessary. The reconstitution is the process of combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on the farming operation. This is especially true in cases of buying or selling land. Please notify us of ownership changes to help us keep our records current.



USDA Non-Discrimination Policy The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Stanly SWCD prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees and applicants for employment on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact the USDA Office of Communication at (202) 720-2791. To file a complaint, write the Secretary of Agriculture, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250 or call 1-800-245-6340 (Voice) or (202) 720-1127 (TDD). www.usda.gov/nondiscrimination.aspx



Document the Drought: USDA U.S. Drought Monitor Offers Producers a Voice to Report Drought Impacts

The U.S. Drought Monitor's reporting feature offers producers an opportunity to submit drought impact and condition reports.

The USDA, in partnership with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the University of Nebraska in Lincoln, produced the U.S. Drought Monitor to include a reporting feature that allows producers to report local drought impacts and conditions.

The report allows producers to:

- Provide a written description of drought impacts on livelihood, activities, etc.;
- Select categories to show losses and gains as a result of the drought;
- Report on the duration of drought event;
- Select Affected Places – geographic areas ranging from an entire state to a small area within a state;
- Submit images that document the drought and its impact;

Provide contact information (includes an option to keep information confidential).

Association Holds Annual Meeting

The NC Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts held its 73rd annual meeting January 8-10, 2017 at the University Hilton in Charlotte, NC. 2016 President Ben Knox presided over the opening session on Monday morning, followed by breakout sessions that offered something for everyone. Committee meetings filled the afternoon, with the Conservation Education Dinner finishing out the evening.

The Tuesday morning general session featured a spotlight on the history and operations of Barbee Farm in Cabarrus County, followed by comments from NC Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler. Awards presentations at the session honored outstanding employees of the year, District awards and service awards. The NCASWCD business meeting filled the afternoon.

At a banquet on Tuesday evening, the Outstanding NC Conservation Farm Family awards were given for the Coastal, Mountain and Piedmont regions. The week ended with the Executive Committee breakfast meeting on Wednesday morning.

Next year, the meeting will be held January 7-9 at the Sheraton Imperial Hotel & Convention Center in Durham, NC.



Commissioner Troxler speaks at annual meeting



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www.stanlycountync.gov/soil-and-water

Mission Statement

The mission of Stanly Soil and Water Conservation District is to provide education, information and technical assistance to citizens of Stanly County for the conservation of our soil and water resources.

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