



Stanly SWCD's 2014 Farm Family

The journey began with the decision to honor Jim Cogdell and The Fork Farm & Stables with the distinction of Conservation Farm Family of the Year for the Stanly County District. The Fork, as it is known, then competed and won the Area 8 title, as well as the Mountain Region title, putting them in the running for the State honor. Facing stiff competition, they took 2nd place in the State contest. However disappointing, The Fork has much to be proud of in making it to the finals. It is a pleasure to recognize them for their conservation practices and natural resource management.



Congratulations!!

The Fork Farm & Stables

**2014 Conservation
Farm Family of the Year**

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

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District Board Members

Terry Blalock	Chairman
John Pickler	Vice-Chairman
Richard E. Clayton, Sr.	Secretary/ Treasurer
Curtis Furr	Supervisor
June Mabry	Supervisor
W. Chester Lowder	Advisor

District and NRCS Staff

Grayson Sarif	Cost Share Technician
Rita Little	Admin/Education Coordinator
Nathan Lowder	District Conservationist
Miranda McDaniel	ATAC Admin. Support Asst.



Southeastern Soil Health Field Day 2014

Approximately 150 individuals from three states, including two exchange students from Argentina and Brazil, attended the Southeastern Soil Health Field Day on May 29th at the Fork L Farms in Norwood.

“Cover crops...keep it covered” Lowder

By, Sandy Hatley

Nathan Lowder, NC Division of Soil and Water District Conservationist, welcomed every one to his family’s farm and introduced the opening speaker, Ray Archuleta, Conservation Agronomist with the NRCS East National Technology Center in Greensboro. Archuleta, known as “The Soils Guy”, began by explaining the soil health movement. He stressed the need to farm in nature’s image, to emulate forests and prairies.

“Farming is nurturing, not forcing. We treat soil like dirt. Why are we not treating it like a living system?” Archuleta involved several home school students in a slate test to check the porosity of soils. With no porosity, there is run-off. No till soil was more porous. The soil scientist stressed the need to limit physical and biological disturbance. “When you till, you cause the soil to cannibalize itself.” Explaining that nature’s tillage machine is comprised of dung beetles, roots, and earthworms, Archuleta identified a pivotal point. Soil is a living ecosystem; or is it a growing medium?



“We treat soil like dirt.” Archuleta

The Soil Whisperer stressed the importance of organic matter and the use of cover crops. He warned that growers need to be patient. Improvements with cover crops take three to five years. He encouraged farmers to find a mentor, be patient, and get organized.

Attendees then divided into three separate breakout sessions. In one, session, Andrew Baucom, Stanly/Union County Extension Agent, explained the long term soil health study on Fork L Farms, growing

continuous cotton for the next five years. The study will test yield potential of tilled versus no till soil and cover versus no cover.

In another session, Ridgecrest farmer, Curtis Furr, discussed how he has been growing intense cover crops for the past four years. He has seen his yields increase with his cotton crop averaging three bales to the acre. Furr described the large equipment that he has used in his farming such as a pendulum spreader to spread seeds in the fall. Sowing rye, radish, winter peas, vetch, and crimson clover has given his fields a good stand of cover crops. The plants



help hold moisture and keep the top soil from washing away. “I don’t have a problem with ditches washing down through the fields,” Furr stated.

During the last breakout, Jessica Morgan, Anson County Ext. Agent, and Grayson Sarif, Stanly SWCD, gave soil reports. They discussed using the Haney test to evaluate soil health of different test plots.

In the closing session, Dr. Alan Meiger, Extension Associate in the Soil Science Department of NCSU, discussed tillage intensity and infiltration. He explained that corn requires most of its water when it’s tassling in Jun and July.



Much of the water is in the top 25% of the plant depth. Also, statistically, most of the carbon is located in the top layer of the soil and cover crops can help build up carbon.

Lowder announced that there will be a Pasture/Crop Field Day on Fork L Farms on July 31st.

Users Urged to Submit Soil Sample Information Online

RALEIGH – The N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services is reminding growers and gardeners to get a head start on their planting projects by submitting soil samples now. There is no fee currently, and reports are available in one to two weeks. Also, sample information forms can now be completed and submitted online for more accurate and efficient processing.

“As the weather warms up, homeowners start focusing more on yard and garden maintenance and landscaping projects, which could benefit from soil sampling and agronomic advice,” said Jagathi Kamalakanthan, NCDCA&CS soil testing agronomist. “Submitting samples during the off-peak times ensures faster turnaround times and no fees for this service. Plus, you will have the information in plenty of time to put fall gardening plans and yard or pasture renovations in place.”

The peak season for submitting soil samples is December through March, when a \$4 fee is charged per sample. Off-season times are April through November, when no fees are charged.

Many home gardeners drop off their soil samples along with a hand-written sample information form at the nearest county Cooperative Extension office. The new online procedure requires a little forethought but is worth the effort. Before going to the extension office, clients should visit the Agronomic Services Division’s Public-Access Laboratory Information Management System website at www.ncagr.gov/agronomi/pals, create a user account, and respond to a verification email. Then, they can fill out and submit their sample information form online. A copy of the electronic form should be sent along with the samples to the soil lab as usual.

There are several good reasons to establish a PALS account. It is a great way for the grower or home owner to take charge of the accuracy of their information. Clients can directly enter, update and correct their name, address and other details. This procedure reduces errors and duplications that invariably occur when staff must key in data from handwritten forms.

“Once an account is created, online submission is also a great time saver,” Kamalakanthan said. “For all future submissions, the client’s information is automatically filled in.”

Another advantage of having a PALS account is that clients are always notified by email when their report is completed and posted online. Every account is associated with a verified email address.

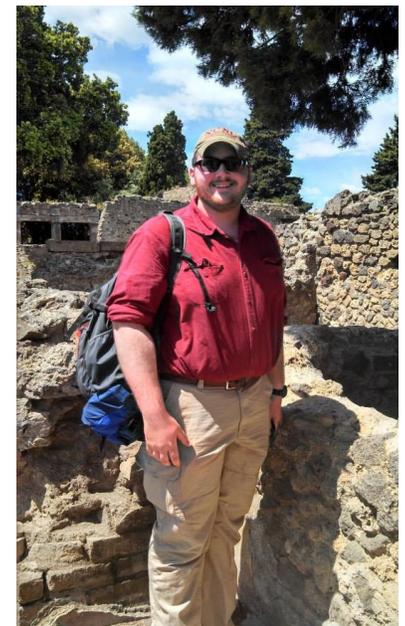
Although the agency prefers that clients set up an account, having one is not necessary to search for reports online or to submit samples with a hand-written form. However, if clients do not put a valid email address on the sample information form, they will not receive notification when their report becomes available online. The division does not routinely mail soil test reports.



NRCS Student Trainee Program

This summer the Stanly County NRCS field office is hosting a soil conservationist student trainee. Thomas Privott, a native of Nash County, is a rising senior at North Carolina State University pursuing degrees in Natural Resources with a soil and water system concentration and Political Science as a Thomas Jefferson Scholar. Upon graduation, he plans to pursue a Master’s of Soil Science degree. This summer is his third year with USDA-NRCS. The previous years, he trained in Nash and Robeson counties.

The SWCD welcomes Thomas to Stanly County. He is a valuable asset to our office this summer.



Stanly County Farm Service Agency Seeks Nominations



Stanly County FSA is dedicated to ensuring fair representation on the county committee, including socially disadvantaged, minority, female, and beginning farmers and ranchers. Committee members are a critical component of the operations of FSA. They help deliver FSA farm programs at the local level by providing input on commodity price support loans and payments, conservation programs, incentive, indemnity and disaster payments for some commodities, emergency programs, and payment eligibility, etc., within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws.

Stanly County is divided into three local administrative areas (LAA), each with a representative on the committee, to ensure diversity across the county. Each committee member serves a three year term, with a three term limit. This year the local administrative area holding an election is LAA III, which in general is the Big Lick, Tyson and Center townships. This area has been served for the past nine years, a term limit, by Mr. Keith Hill. Stanly County farmers, ranchers, and landowners, along with the FSA staff, are extremely appreciative of Mr. Hill's service.

Nominations are being accepted through August 1, 2014, for this LAA and can be submitted at the FSA office using form FSA-699A, which is available in the office and online at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/elections>. Once nominations are received and verified eligible, they will be placed on a ballot which will be mailed to all eligible voters in the local administrative area. Voters will have until December 1, 2014, to return voted ballots to the FSA office. The newly elected member will take office January 1, 2015, and serve along with members from the other two local administrative areas; Curtis Furr from LAA II (Almond, Endy and Furr townships), and John Pickler from LAA I (Ridenhour, Harris, North and South Albemarle townships), and Betty McSwain, the current appointed minority advisor. **Please consider submitting a nomination.**



**Local
Administrative
Area III**

**Big Lick, Tyson,
and Center
Townships**



Stanly County Farm Service Agency
26032A Newt Road
Albemarle NC 28001
Phone: 704-982-5114, extension 2
Fax: 704-982-6301
E-mail: jennifer.almond@nc.usda.gov



No-Till Drill Available For Rent

In days of old, the practice of turning the soil before planting a new crop led to soil erosion and farmland degradation. No-till planting reduces erosion and promotes soil health. Stanly SWCD's Truax 88 No-Till Drill is designed with three seed boxes that allow for planting regular grass seed, fluffy seeds and clovers. It's perfect for seeding and reseeding fields and pastures. The District rents the drill for \$10 per acre in Stanly County and \$12 per acre for out of county use. There is a \$50 minimum charge in county. Any citizen in Stanly and surrounding counties are eligible to use the No-Till Drill. Call the SWCD office at 704-986-3059 for more information.

Agriculture Cost Share Program Year 2014

The Stanly Soil and Water Conservation District was allocated \$51,994 for the Agriculture Cost Share Program (ACPS), \$15,000 for the Agricultural Water Resources Assistance Program (AgWRAP), and \$1,763 for the Community Conservation Assistance Program (CCAP). All in all, the District received \$68,757 from the Division of Soil and Water Conservation in 2014.



Program Year 2014 \$68,757 allocated

Agriculture Cost Share (ACSP) - 2 contracts written

1	Litter Shed	\$50,625	97% of allocation	100% complete
1	Gutters	\$1,349	3% of allocation	0% complete
		\$20	Returned to State	

Agricultural Water Resource Assistance Program (AgWRAP) - 1 contract written

1	Water Supply Pond	\$15,000	100% of allocation	0% complete
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Community Conservation Assistance Program (CCAP) - 1 contract written

1	Cistern	\$1,700	96% of allocation	0% complete
		\$63	Returned to State	

Program Year 2013 \$60,460 allocated

\$11,146	Returned to State	18%
\$14,835	work completed	26%
\$34,010	work to be completed	56%

Program Year 2012 \$87,846 allocated

\$11,625	Returned to State	13%
\$76,220	work completed	87%



Now Accepting Litter Spreader Applications

The Stanly SWCD is now accepting applications for poultry litter spreaders. Any applications received will be ranked against all other applications on hand to determine priority.



If you have any questions on this matter please feel free to contact the Soil and Water Conservation office at 704-986-3059 or gsarif@stanlycountync.org

