District Educator Retires

Rita Little began working as the Stanly Soil & Water District Educator in October 2013. Throughout her tenure, Rita touched the lives of numerous Stanly County students. She was passionate about soil health and ensuring her knowledge of conservation was passed on to the youth of the county. On an average day, Rita could be seen in an elementary school with a worm composter, explaining how organic matter is recycled naturally. She introduced children to biological process through owl pellet dissections and inspired future gardeners with individual garden-in-a-glove activities. Her demonstrations on managing soil erosion and loss sparked interest in the children that attended the annual Agricultural Awareness day. As the environmental educator, she led the poster and presentation competitions, and recognized numerous children in the county for their comprehension of conservation. Rita administered the Stanly County Envirothon teams and received multiple awards at the state level competition and one award at the international level. What Rita enjoyed most about her job was time spent in the classroom. This was obvious to anyone who saw her in action, and to any child that was lucky enough to be present for her demonstrations. Her work ethic and contributions were an enormous asset to the district and she will be greatly missed. Thank you for your years of dedication, Rita, and we hope you enjoy your retirement!
The North Carolina Agricultural Cost Share Program (ACSP) offers multiple opportunities for financial and technical assistance to implement conservation Best Management Practices (BMP) onto agricultural land.

One example of BMP is Stream Restoration. To be fully eligible for this BMP, the land surrounding the stream must be used for agricultural purposes. The funding is intended for sites where the natural streambank has been severely damaged by human or animal access, other activities, or natural processes.

Urbanization and land development within a watershed can have large negative impacts on a stream. As a watershed becomes covered with land cover such as pavement, sidewalks, and buildings, less rain is able to penetrate the land. The rain will pool together on the pavement and take the path of least resistance to find a way to a waterbody. It moves quickly off the pavement and may cause erosion in adjoining land. The vegetation on the surrounding land cannot adequately slow or infiltrate the water. The water then moves quickly across the land towards a stream, carrying with it, soil that has been taken from the land. The water arrives at the stream in much larger quantities than what would naturally flow after a storm event. These large deposits can be seen in more frequent flood events. The increased water capacity and speed in a stream causes wear and tear on the stream bank. Eventually, the impact of this increased water movement can be seen in eroded stream banks. The land adjoining the stream will start to retreat, vegetation is lost, and more soil is deposited into the stream.

These impacts can be seen even in streams that are far away from urbanized cities. Storm water follows a similar pattern when it lands on fields that are not being properly conserved. This may mean that the land is not covered by vegetation, has been compacted by continual use from vehicles or animals, or overuse by monoculture cropping.

Luckily, there are numerous BMPs available to combat these issues. This quarter, we are focusing on the BMP that can be used directly on the impacted stream. Over the last two years, Stanly Soil & Water worked with a local landowner who was losing hay land adjacent to a stream. We consulted engineers and designed a plan to reduce the slope of the stream banks, excavated the stream bed, and added J hook vanes. These practices are designed to dissipate energy and deflect stream flow to the center of the channel. Doing this creates pools and reduces streambank erosion.

Following excavation, the land was planted with native grasses, shrubbery and trees. Planting native species is the best defense against continued erosion. They are also the best suited plants to support local wildlife and to help filter run-off.

If you think you have a stream that may qualify for this program, please reach out to us and we will see if we can help you!
BEFORE
The land and stream presented signs of soil loss through eroding streambanks and pooling water. The stream created a split in the flow and deposited enough soil in the center to create an environment supportive of vegetative growth.

DURING
The project was led by Soil & Water Engineers. It called for land smoothing, reduction in streambank slope, and placing J-hook vanes. These practices dissipate energy and center the flow of water.

FINAL PROJECT
The completion of this project shows a calm stream that is prepared for future storm events. The redesigned banks create room for natural flooding and the added vegetation reduces property loss on either bank.

IMPACTS
This practice impacted the health of over 6 acres of adjoining land. Through implementation of this BMP, we reduced soil loss by 124 tons. This stream is part of a watershed impacted by turbidity. Reducing soil loss has direct impacts on working towards removing watersheds from the impaired/impacted listing.
Conservation Updates

2021 NC Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts’ Area 8 Fall Meeting
The Area 8 Fall Meeting was held virtually on October 13, 2021. Presentations were made regarding the Supervisor Code of Conduct, training opportunities for NRCS Emergency Watershed Protection Program, COVID payments for swine and dairy farms impacted by COVID, and the development of the Statewide Stream Rehabilitation and maintenance debris/removal Program (STRAP). STRAP is focused on preventing flooding, as opposed to responding in an emergency.

Scholarships and Grants Available!

- Kiss The Ground is excited to offer Regenerative Training Scholarships for farmers and ranchers seeking to transition their land management, and gain foundational knowledge on soil health and regenerative farming and ranching. Eligibility information and applications can be found here.

- USDA’s Pandemic Response and Safety Grant Program—COVID-19 Relief Aid for small scale farmers, farmer markets, and food producers. This grant is focused on recovering costs associated with pandemic-related workplace safety, market pivots, retrofitting facilities, transportation, worker housing, and medical costs. Approved applicants may receive up to $20,000. More information and applications can be found here.

- Veteran Scholarships for Ag Conferences—Scholarships are available for Military Veterans looking to attend agricultural conferences. Scholarships cover registration, up to $250. Applications and additional information can be found here.
### Erosion Control Materials

For more information contact Stanly SWCD
704-986-3059
rbrickner@stanlycountync.gov

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Excelsior Single Net</td>
<td>4 ft. x 180 ft.</td>
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<td>Straw Wattle</td>
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<td>Wood Stake</td>
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Ag Cost Share Programs Available

Soil and Water Conservation Districts implement four cost share programs, all of which share a common goal of increasing water quality. These programs include the Agriculture Cost Share Program (ACSP), the Agricultural Water Resources Assistance Program (AgWRAP), and the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). The District accepts applications year round for each of these programs. Applications are ranked based on various criteria and conservation concerns. The highest ranking applications are funded.

ACSP-The major cause of water quality problems in the area is non-point source pollution. Damage to our water resources comes from soil erosion, excessive fertilizer use, animal waste contamination, and improper use of agricultural chemicals. The Agriculture Cost Share Program helps address nonpoint source pollution.

AgWRAP-The Agricultural Water Resources Assistance Program was recently created in order to address water quantity issues. Producer concerns include water to be used for cropland irrigation and livestock watering. Multiple best management practices are available to help producers increase their water use efficiency, availability and storage.

CREP-The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program is available to protect environmentally sensitive cropland and marginal pasture land long term. This is accomplished through 10, 15, and 30 year conservation easements.

For more information on the services email Amanda Kirby at akirby@stanlycountync.gov or Rebecca Brickner at rbrickner@stanlycountync.gov or call 704-986-3059.

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).
What is Cost Share?

The Agricultural Cost Share Program was created to address nonpoint source pollution on agricultural land. This program provides technical and financial assistance to landowners to install practices that improve water quality. Landowners/producers have the opportunity to receive up to 75% cost reimbursement for implemented conservation practices. See below for common management practices.

**Livestock Exclusion**

Permanently exclude pasture grazing livestock from streams and critical areas. This will reduce erosion and improve water quality. Cost share components may include exclusion fencing, water supply well, pipeline, permitting costs, and livestock watering tanks.

**Streambank Protection**

Stabilize and protect the bank of streams through the use of vegetation. This practice reduces loss of land and improves water quality. Cost share components may include vegetation establishment, grading, and stream crossing.

**Manure Composting Facility**

A composting facility is used for the biological treatment, stabilization and environmentally safe storage of organic water material from poultry and livestock. This practice minimizes impacts on water quality and produces a material that can be used as fertilizer. Cost share components may include lumber, roofing and grading.

**Cover Crop Incentive**

Cover crops include grasses, legumes, or small grains which are grown seasonally in between cash crops and for less than one year. This practice reduces wind and water erosion, cycles nutrients, increases organic matter, improves infiltration, improves soil quality, and sequesters carbon. This is an incentive practice, so cost share is paid in equal annual payments for 3 years.

**Cropland Conversion**

Cropland Conversion is used to establish and maintain a conservation cover of grass, trees, or wildlife plantings on land that had previously been used for crop production. This practice reduces erosion and sedimentation. Cost share components may include seed, lime, fertilizer, and seedbed prep.

For a full list of Cost Share Practices and additional requirements, visit: [http://www.ncagr.gov/SWC/costshareprograms/ACSP/BMPs.html](http://www.ncagr.gov/SWC/costshareprograms/ACSP/BMPs.html)
Stanly County 4-H
2021 Greenery Sale
Taking Orders
OCT. 13 - NOV. 10
Selling Trees, Bows, and Wreaths

Accommodation requests related to a disability should be made by 11/10 to Michelle Vick, email: Michelle.vick@ncsu.edu, or by phone at 704-983-3987.

NC State University and N.C. A&T State University are committed to positive action to eliminate bias and discrimination and harassment regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, political beliefs, family and marital status, sex, age, veteran status, sexual identity, sexual orientation, genetics information or disability. NC State, N.C. A&T, USDA, Department of Agriculture, and local governments cooperating.
STANLY COUNTY 4-H
- 2021 GREENERY SALE -

ATTENTION: PAYMENT IS DUE AT THE TIME ORDER IS RECEIVED; CASH OR CHECK ONLY, PLEASE

NAME & EMAIL: ________________________________
ADDRESS: ________________________________
PHONE: _____________________________________
4-HER'S NAME: ________________________________

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</table>

GRAND TOTAL: ________

ORDERS MUST BE TURNED INTO THE 4-H OFFICE BY 12 NOON, NOVEMBER 10TH
PICK UP:
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 18 FROM 2-6PM
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 19 FROM 9AM-5PM
IN BACK OF AGRI-CIVIC CENTER
FSA is Accepting CRP Continuous Enrollment Offers
The Farm Service Agency (FSA) is accepting offers for specific conservation practices under the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Continuous Signup.

In exchange for a yearly rental payment, farmers enrolled in the program agree to remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production and to plant species that will improve environmental health and quality. The program’s long-term goal is to re-establish valuable land cover to improve water quality, prevent soil erosion, and reduce loss of wildlife habitat. Contracts for land enrolled in CRP are 10-15 years in length.

Under continuous CRP signup, environmentally sensitive land devoted to certain conservation practices can be enrolled in CRP at any time. Offers for continuous enrollment are not subject to competitive bidding during specific periods. Instead they are automatically accepted provided the land and producer meet certain eligibility requirements and the enrollment levels do not exceed the statutory cap.

Applying for FSA Direct Loans
FSA offers direct farm ownership and direct farm operating loans to producers who want to establish, maintain, or strengthen their farm or ranch. Direct loans are processed, approved and serviced by FSA loan officers.

Direct farm operating loans can be used to purchase livestock and feed, farm equipment, fuel, farm chemicals, insurance, and other costs including family living expenses. Operating loans can also be used to finance minor improvements or repairs to buildings and to refinance some farm-related debts, excluding real estate.

Direct farm ownership loans can be used to purchase farmland, enlarge an existing farm, construct and repair buildings, and to make farm improvements.

The maximum loan amount for direct farm ownership loans is $600,000 and the maximum loan amount for direct operating loans is $400,000 and a down payment is not required. Repayment terms vary depending on the type of loan, collateral and the producer's ability to repay the loan. Operating loans are normally repaid within seven years and farm ownership loans are not to exceed 40 years.

Please contact your local FSA office for more information or to apply for a direct farm ownership or operating loan.

Applying for FSA Guaranteed Loans
FSA guaranteed loans allow lenders to provide agricultural credit to farmers who do not meet the lender's normal underwriting criteria. Farmers and ranchers apply for a guaranteed loan through a lender, and the lender arranges for the guarantee. FSA can guarantee up to 95 percent of the loss of principal and interest on a loan. Guaranteed loans can be used for both farm ownership and operating purposes.

Guaranteed farm ownership loans can be used to purchase farmland, construct or repair buildings, develop farmland to promote soil and water conservation or to refinance debt.

Guaranteed operating loans can be used to purchase livestock, farm equipment, feed, seed, fuel, farm chemicals, insurance and other operating expenses.

FSA can guarantee farm ownership and operating loans up to $1,776,000. Repayment terms vary depending on the type of loan, collateral and the producer's ability to repay the loan. Operating loans are normally repaid within seven years and farm ownership loans are not to exceed 40 years.
2021 County Committee ELECTIONS

Jun. 15 2021
Beginning of nomination period.
Forms available at fsa.usda.gov/elections.

Aug. 2 2021
Last day to file nomination forms at the local FSA county office.

Nov. 1 2021
Ballots mailed to eligible voters.

Dec. 6 2021
Last day to return voted ballots to the local FSA county office.

Jan. 1 2022
Newly elected county committee members take office.

FSA Counts on YOU!
Nominate and VOTE!

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.
MAY 2021
Streamlining How You Find Information on Farmers.gov

If you’ve been to farmers.gov before, things may look a little different from the last time you were here. We’ve made some changes, to improve how you find information so that you can find what you need even more easily and efficiently.

The big, green navigation bar near the top of every page – it’s different now. It opens up, to show descriptions and subtopics, making it quicker and easier to figure out what’s where and reduce guessing. Why? Two reasons: First, farmers.gov has grown a lot over the years and the old navigation wasn’t designed for the load. Second, because you asked for it. We analyzed your comments through the “Feedback” button on the site and tested our new designs and information organization with real farmers and ranchers through surveys and live testing sessions.

Along with the new website navigation, we restructured how our pages and topics are grouped and organized to help you easily access the information you need. We also relabeled some of our existing pages using more direct language. This means that pages or information you’ve used before may have different labels or be in new places.

Important changes:

- The old Fund page is now called Loans. The Loans page has information and resources about USDA loans, including the Farm Loan Programs.
- The Recover page is now Protection and Recovery. This page has information to help you prepare and recover from natural disasters, and to mitigate risk for your operation.
- The Conserve page is now Conservation. This page hasn’t changed much and still has information on how to implement conservation practices, improve and preserve natural resources, and address conservation concerns.
- The Manage page is now Working With Us. This page connects you with resources that tell you how USDA can help you start, expand, enhance, or improve your agricultural operation.
- The Connect page has been replaced with Your Business, a guide to USDA resources that cater to your specific operation.
- Information that was on the Connect page has been moved to the Contact Us page and the Get Involved page.

We are always updating farmers.gov based on your feedback and to stay up-to-date with important USDA announcements. We’ve recently created some new webpages, and updated some existing ones, to better equip you with the vital information you need. There are even more new pages coming soon, so stay tuned!

For farmers.gov, we don’t guess what farmers and ranchers want from a website. We start by asking, then test our designs with volunteers who are also farmers and ranchers. There’s a feedback button on every page of farmers.gov. Based on your feedback, we looked for ways to make our site easier to use and to build the information that you’re looking for. Live user testing sessions provide data, such as this heatmap, showing where testers tended to click during an exercise. You helped us create the new navigation design, the new information organization, and told us how to speak using your words, and not legalese.

Check out farmers.gov today!

Date to Remember...
The Agri-Civic Center will be closed on Thursday, November 11, for Veterans’ Day
USDA Offers Options for Signing and Sharing Documents Online

Farmers and ranchers working with USDA’s Farm Service Agency or Natural Resources Conservation Service can now sign and share documents online in just a few clicks. By using Box or OneSpan, producers can digitally complete business transactions without leaving their homes or agricultural operations. Both services are free, secure, and available for multiple FSA and NRCS programs.

Box is a secure, cloud-based site where FSA or NRCS documents can be managed and shared. Producers who choose to use Box can create a username and password to access their secure Box account, where documents can be downloaded, printed, manually signed, scanned, uploaded, and shared digitally with Service Center staff. This service is available to any FSA or NRCS customer with access to a mobile device or computer with printer connectivity.

OneSpan is a secure eSignature solution for FSA and NRCS customers. Like Box, no software downloads or eAuthentication is required for OneSpan. Instead, producers interested in eSignature through OneSpan can confirm their identity through two-factor authentication using a verification code sent to their mobile device or a personalized question and answer. Once identity is confirmed, documents can be reviewed and e-signed through OneSpan via the producer’s personal email address. Signed documents immediately become available to the appropriate Service Center staff.

Box and OneSpan are both optional services for customers interested in improved efficiency in signing and sharing documents with USDA, and they do not replace existing systems using eAuthentication for digital signature. Instead, these tools provide additional digital options for producers to use when conducting business with FSA or NRCS.

USDA Service Center staff are available to help producers get started with Box and OneSpan through a few simple steps. Please visit farmers.gov/service-locator to find your local office and let Service Center staff know you’re interested in signing and sharing documents through these new features. In most cases, one quick phone call will be all that is needed to initiate the process.

Visit farmers.gov/mydocs to learn more about Box and OneSpan, steps for getting started, and additional resources for conducting business with USDA online.

To learn more about program flexibilities and Service Center status during the coronavirus pandemic, visit farmers.gov/coronavirus.

Land is not merely soil, it is a fountain of energy flowing through a circuit of soils, plants and animals.  

— Aldo Leopold —
FSA Encourages Farmers and Ranchers to Vote in County Committee Elections

The 2021 Farm Service Agency County Committee Elections will begin on Nov. 1, 2021, when ballots are mailed to eligible voters. The deadline to return ballots to local FSA offices, or to be postmarked, is Dec. 6, 2021.

County committee members are an important component of the operations of FSA and provide a link between the agricultural community and USDA. Farmers and ranchers elected to county committees help deliver FSA programs at the local level, applying their knowledge and judgment to make decisions on commodity price support programs; conservation programs; incentive indemnity and disaster programs for some commodities; emergency programs and eligibility. FSA committees operate within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws.

To be an eligible voter, farmers and ranchers must participate or cooperate in an FSA program. A person who is not of legal voting age but supervises and conducts the farming operations of an entire farm, may also be eligible to vote. A cooperating producer is someone who has provided information about their farming or ranching operation(s) but may not have applied or received FSA program benefits.

Eligible voters in local administrative area two who do not receive a ballot can obtain one from their local USDA Service Center.

Newly elected committee members will take office Jan. 1, 2022.

The candidates in this year’s election are: Bryan Burleson, Curtis Furr, Gary Hatley, and David Underwood.

More information on county committees, such as the new 2021 fact sheet, can be found on the FSA website at fsa.usda.gov/elections or at a local USDA Service Center.

Applying for Farm Storage Facility Loans

The Farm Service Agency’s (FSA) Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program provides low-interest financing to help you build or upgrade storage facilities and to purchase portable (new or used) structures, equipment and storage and handling trucks.

Eligible commodities include corn, grain sorghum, rice, soybeans, oats, peanuts, wheat, barley, minor oilseeds harvested as whole grain, pulse crops (lentils, chickpeas and dry peas), hay, honey, renewable biomass, fruits, nuts and vegetables for cold storage facilities, floriculture, hops, maple sap, rye, milk, cheese, butter, yogurt, meat and poultry (unprocessed), eggs, and aquaculture (excluding systems that maintain live animals through uptake and discharge of water). Qualified facilities include grain bins, hay barns and cold storage facilities for eligible commodities.

Loans up to $50,000 can be secured by a promissory note/security agreement, loans between $50,000 and $100,000 may require additional security, and loans exceeding $100,000 require additional security.

You do not need to demonstrate the lack of commercial credit availability to apply. The loans are designed to assist a diverse range of farming operations, including small and mid-sized businesses, new farmers, operations supplying local food and farmers markets, non-traditional farm products, and underserved producers.

For more information, contact your USDA Service Center or visit fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport.

Date to Remember…
The Agri-Civic Center will be closed on November 25 for Thanksgiving Day
Farmers Harness Benefits from Cover Crops
Cover crops are planted because of their excellent benefits, including improving the health and function of soil. This leads to better nutrient cycling, improved water infiltration and more consistent yields over time. Cover crops also suppress weeds, prevent erosion, control diseases and pests as well as help pollinators.

Farmers not familiar with how mixtures of cover crops work together might ask, “Why would I want to plant a cover crop that uses up all my water?” But using diverse annual cropping rotations and cover crop combinations increases soil organic matter. And for each 1 percent in organic matter, there is a 25 percent increase in water holding capacity and up to 30 pounds an acre more of available nitrogen.

While cover crops use some water in the soil profile to grow, they simultaneously improve the soil structure by building soil aggregates, providing armor for the soil surface, and recharging the water in the soil profile though increased infiltration.

Noninsured Crop Coverage Helps Producers Manage Risks
The Farm Service Agency’s (FSA) Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) helps you manage risk through coverage for both crop losses and crop planting that was prevented due to natural disasters. The eligible or “noninsured” crops include agricultural commodities not covered by federal crop insurance. You must be enrolled in the program and have purchased coverage for the eligible crop in the crop year in which the loss incurred to receive program benefits following a qualifying natural disaster.

NAP Buy-Up Coverage Option
NAP offers higher levels of coverage, from 50 to 65 percent of expected production in 5 percent increments, at 100 percent of the average market price. Buy-up levels of NAP coverage are available if the producer can show at least one year of previously successfully growing the crop for which coverage is being requested.

Producers of organics and crops marketed directly to consumers also may exercise the “buy-up” option to obtain NAP coverage of 100 percent of the average market price at the coverage levels of between 50 and 65 percent of expected production.

NAP basic coverage is available at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of expected production.

Buy-up coverage is not available for crops intended for grazing.

NAP Service Fees
For all coverage levels, the NAP service fee is the lesser of $325 per crop or $825 per producer per county, not to exceed a total of $1,950 for a producer with farming interests in multiple counties.

NAP Enhancements for Qualified Military Veterans
Qualified veteran farmers or ranchers are eligible for a service fee waiver and premium reduction, if the NAP applicant meets certain eligibility criteria.

Beginning, limited resource and targeted underserved farmers or ranchers remain eligible for a waiver of NAP service fees and premium reduction when they file form CCC-860, “Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource and Beginning Farmer or Rancher Certification.”

For NAP application, eligibility, and related program information, contact your USDA Service Center or visit fsa.usda.gov/nap.
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.