Conservation In Action

Coshocton Soil and Water Conservation District

**SWCD Supervisors**
- Greg Waters—Chairman
- David Lapp—Vice Chairman
- Adrian Garber—Secretary
- Garry Derr—Fiscal Agent
- Kristy Leindecker—Treasurer

**NRCS Staff**
- Chuck Reynolds—District Conservationist
- Gina Schworm—Resource Conservationist

**SWCD Staff**
- Deb Bigelow—District Administrator
- Mary Thomas—Administrative Assistant
- Ryan Medley—District Technician
- Zach Wallace—District Technician

Mission: Providing leadership to educate and assist landowners in the wise management of our natural resources.

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**164 in Attendance at Annual Meeting and Banquet**

The Coshocton Soil and Water Conservation District held their 72nd Annual Banquet at the Coshocton County Career Center Thursday evening, October 16, 2014. 164 area residents and special guests were in attendance. A baked ham dinner was served by the Fresno Methodist Church and preceded the meeting. The Ohio Soil & Water Conservation Commission held an election for two supervisors elected to the Coshocton SWCD Board of Supervisors. Adrian Garber and David Lapp were elected and will each serve a three year term starting January 1, 2015. Adrian Garber, David Lapp, Jim McKinney and Knox Porteus were candidates for the position.

Melvin Lahmers and Jake Hillyer, Crop Consultants from TMK Bakersville, were the evening’s guest speakers. Mr. Lahmers and Mr. Hillyer talked about how they use Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, or Drones, in their work with the agriculture community to check the condition of crops and fields.

Coshocton Soil and Water Conservation District announced the 2014 Outstanding Conservation Farmer of the Year Award which went to Porteus Brothers Farm - Seth and Homer Porteus. Seth and Homer farm 1,150 acres in Linton Township where they have been innovators of cover crops in Coshocton County. Porteus Brothers converted a tillage tool that they now use to broadcast rye cover on all their acreage. In 2014, they also converted from full width tillage to all no-till planting. They participated in the 2014 SWCD Aerial Cover Crop Program and have installed over 70,000 feet of tile on their farm. Seth and Homer are members of the Coshocton County Farm Bureau. Seth and his wife Debbie have two children, Mindy and Jason, who are also active in the farming operation. Congratulations to Porteus Brothers Farm-Seth and Homer Porteus for being named 2014 Outstanding Conservation Farm of the Year.

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**2014 Outstanding Conservation Farmer**

Porteus Brothers - Seth & Homer Porteus

Seth Porteus (L) pictured with SWCD Supervisor Garry Derr
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Coshocton SWCD sponsored the Coshocton County Junior Fair Hay Show and recognized the winners from the 2014 County Fair: Alfalfa Hay–Cameron Mizer, son of Terry and Pam Mizer, Ridgewood FFA; Clover Hay–Michaela Greten, daughter of Mike and Kerrie Greten, This-N-That 4-H; Grass Hay–Ryan Greten, son of Mike and Kerrie Greten, This-N-That 4-H; Light Mixed Hay–Jenna Wyler, daughter of John and Annette Wyler, Ridgewood FFA; and Mixed Hay (Heavy)–Kadie Conkle, daughter of Steve and Pam Conkle, Ridgewood FFA. Winners received a Rosette and $10 cash award for attending the banquet.

Kirk Scheurman was recognized as the winner of the Coshocton SWCD’s Big Tree Contest. The winning “Big Tree” was a Sycamore tree which measured 191” in circumference with a vertical height of 110’ and an average crown spread of 109’.

Tom Heading from Coshocton Is Blooming Committee presented the third annual City Big Tree Contest award for anyone living in the City of Coshocton. Paul Wiley was recognized for his Oak tree that measured 133” in circumference with a vertical height of 135’ and an average crown spread of 113.5’.

The winner of the Mystery Photo Contest which was part of the SWCD’s display at the Coshocton County Fair was Kim Lacy. Kim was among 68 winning entries received. The mystery photo was of the Bill and Caroline Daugherty farm in Millcreek Township. The meeting adjourned after door prizes were drawn.

5th Grade Poster Contest Winners Announced

Thank you to all 5th grade teachers and students who participated in the Annual 5th Grade Poster Contest sponsored by the Coshocton SWCD in conjunction with the SWCD’s fair display. Coshocton County 5th graders prepared entries in the 2014 contest titled “Have You Eaten Any Soil Lately?” after a classroom presentation on how everything we eat can be traced back to a plant grown in the soil. Sixteen class-winning posters were on display for the fair-going public to vote to determine the overall winners. Eight hundred sixty-two total votes were cast at the fair.

Jessica Johnson of Conesville Elementary placed 1st, Alana Shroyer of Ridgewood Middle School placed 2nd, and Jacob Lonsberry of Coshocton Elementary placed 3rd. Jessica won a $25 cash award and a pizza party for her class, Alana won a $15 cash award and an ice cream party for her class, and Jacob won a $10 cash award and an ice cream party for his class.
Cover Crop Program Expands in 2014

The Coshocton Soil & Water Conservation District once again coordinated a cover crop program in 2014. Twenty-two landowners participated in our program seeding 636 acres of oats, 1,296 acres of rye, and 325 acres of a pea/rye/radish mixture. Fisher’s Ag Service aerial applied 2,257 acres of cover crops on September 9 from Richard Downing Airport. SWCD Technicians Ryan Medley and Zach Wallace coordinated the program helping landowners get fields identified and mapped for aerial application. Lapp Farms and TMK Bakersville trucked seed to the airport to be loaded on the planes for aerial application.

Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District (MWCD), in cooperation with ODNR, Division of Soil and Water Resources, provided a $13 per acre cost share for 1,752.8 acres to Coshocton County landowners. The Coshocton SWCD Board of Supervisors also provided a $13 per acre cost share to 167.1 acres that were not cost-shared through MWCD due to the acre limit set for our county. This way, every landowner who signed up to participate in the program this year received cost share on up to 200 acres. Producers paid approximately $17 per acre as their portion of the cost share.

Plant tissue samples were taken and analyzed during the 2013-14 project and indicated that $32/acre worth of fertilizer can be captured in the rye and $25/acre worth of fertilizer can be captured in the oats. While we cannot say for certain that the producer could reduce his/her fertilizer needs to this extent, we do know that the nutrients are captured and held, which reduces the likelihood that they will leave the field. Coshocton SWCD recently received an ODNR-DSWR mini-grant to further their plant analysis study of cover crops for the 2014-15 season. Grant funds will allow SWCD Staff to take soil samples and plant tissue samples throughout the season to investigate how long it takes for the nutrients to become available.

Cover crops have been in the news quite a bit recently. They reduce soil erosion, improve organic matter of the soil, retain soil moisture, suppress weeds, and increase nutrient cycling. Coshocton SWCD board and staff would like to thank all those landowners that participated in the cover crop program. We look forward to learning more about cover crops in Coshocton County and sharing this information with our producers.
Farmers Breakfasts Continue on December 9

The next Farmers Breakfast will be Tuesday, December 9 at 7:30 a.m. at Edie Ryan’s Restaurant. The topic will be “Lending Options for Beginning Farmers” and we’ll hear from Farm Credit Mid-America’s Kelly Miller and USDA-Farm Service Agency’s Sam Raber.

The first Farmers Breakfast of the season was held November 11th, where we welcomed 31 attendees to hear about “Manufacturing Ethanol and Utilizing Its By-Products” from Three Rivers Energy’s Alan Brinker. Mark your calendars for the 2015 events: January 13 - “The Future of Drones In Agriculture,” February 10 - “Coshocton Grain Company: Moving Forward,” and March 10 - “Managing Flood Waters in Coshocton County and Beyond.”

Fall Foliage and Farm Tour Draws Crowd

The Coshocton County offices of OSU Extension, Soil & Water Conservation District and USDA-Farm Service Agency thank everyone who participated in the 2014 Fall Foliage and Farm Tour and to the following hosts: The Animal Boutique and Villas, Porteus Family Beef Farm, Franklin School and Franklin Methodist Church, Fallon Park - AEP Conesville Coal Lands Equine Trail, Wills Creek Dam, Conesville Community/FCV Volunteer Fire Department, Shawnee Springs Winery, Mill Creek Central Railroad, Wells Sheep Farm and Nickel Valley Resorts.

Many local people volunteer their time, energy and resources to ensure the success of the annual tour. This year was no exception. The 2014 tour brought over 1,580 people through the south central section of Coshocton County despite the cold temperatures on Saturday. These participants represented 5 states and 30 Ohio counties.