



DICKINSON SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

SPIRIT LAKE, IOWA 51360 712-336-3782, EXT. 3

MAY 2006

A Quality Environment

SOILS UPDATE OF DICKINSON COUNTY BEGINS IN JULY

**Dickinson is first County in Iowa to use
state-of-the-art technology**

By Dan Pulido, NRCS Soil Scientist

Soil Scientists of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Dan Pulido, Julie McMichael, and Don Watson stationed in Storm Lake, will begin the soils update of Dickinson County in July. A newly developed advanced technology will be used the first time in Iowa for soil survey updates.

Light Detecting and Ranging (also called **LiDAR**) technology will be used as the imaging base for the county. LiDAR uses the same principles as radar, but instead of using radio waves, it uses laser pulses shot from an airplane above. This produces a very precise distance to the earth's surface, thereby generating a very accurate depiction of the land surface and topography.

The soils team will first begin the survey in the Iowa Great Lakes Watershed and then move to other areas in the county. The total estimated cost of the project will be about \$795,000 and will take about three years to complete.

ROOFED LIVESTOCK STRUCTURES ADDED TO EQIP FUNDING

By Carroll Oskvig, NRCS District Conservationist

Roofed livestock structures that are designed to confine livestock throughout the year, are eligible for cost-share through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). These structures allow manure to be stored in a manner to protect water quality. Examples of roof structures include hoop buildings and monoslope buildings.

Cost-share for roofed livestock structures is based on the

average number of animal units in the structure during the year. There is a \$50,000 EQIP cost-share limit for all animal waste facilities.

Producers with roofed structures are required to follow a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP), as are all other producers with EQIP animal waste systems. Each year the CNMP is reviewed to ensure the amount of nutrients from manure and fertilizer will meet the Nutrient Management Standard found in the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Field Office Technical Guide. Soil testing at least every four years and annual manure testing is required. A \$250 incentive payment is available to EQIP participants to develop a CNMP.

Several more dead animal management practices have been added to the EQIP cost-share practice list. The list now includes: Animal Mortality Facility, Composting Facility, Anerobic Digesters (Ambient Temperature) and Anerobic Digesters (Controlled Temperature).

Animal waste pits that are associated with open feedlots, as well as concrete pits under confinement buildings continue to be included on the EQIP cost-share list.

Open feedlot practices such as Waste Treatment Lagoons, Closure of Waste Impoundments, Diversions, Waste Facility Cover, Filter Strip, Mulch, Pond Sealing or Lining with Bentonite, Drainage Water Management, Roof Runoff Management, Surface Drain, Manure Transfer and Sediment Basins are included on the EQIP cost-share practice list.

For more information on EQIP practices related to animal waste management, grazing, nutrient management, pest management, erosion control structures and conservation tillage, contact the NRCS office in Spirit Lake at 712-336-3782, Ext. 3.

District Commissioners

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Orville Berg Bill Northey

Assistant Commissioners

Phyllis Nielsen Curt Smith

District Mission Statement

The Dickinson SWCD will serve its customers and the needs of the District's natural resources through education, promotion, and demonstration.

SHELTERBELT / WINDBREAK - NEVER TOO EARLY TO PLAN

By Betty Romero, NRCS Soil Conservation Technician

It's never too early to plan for a Shelterbelt or Windbreak. A successful shelterbelt project requires several basic steps:

1. Windbreak design or plan
2. Selection and ordering planting stock
3. Proper preparation of planting site
4. Suitable planting techniques
5. Proper care after planting.

Start early by visiting your local NRCS office where the staff can give you technical support for this process and perhaps offer some cost-share options through programs available to producers.

Call us today at **712-336-3782, Ext. 3**, to make an appointment.

IOWA GREAT LAKES WATERSHED ASSESSMENT

By Jim Frederick, IDNR Watershed Assessment Coordinator

The Dickinson Soil and Water Conservation District is working with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Clean Water Alliance to do an in-depth assessment of the Iowa Great Lakes watershed.

We will assess the entire watershed, which will include both agricultural and urban land and the lakes themselves. We will look at the traditional causes of pollution to the lakes such as sediments, Nitrogen, Phosphorus and livestock wastes. But what is unique to this study is that we are going to do a detailed assessment of the urban watershed. We will look at

how the development around the lake is affecting the water quality of the lake, both during construction of the building, which causes sediment runoff directly into the lake, as well as looking at the water runoff from all the lawn fertilizers and other pollutants that are in the storm water. The lake itself will also be studied to see what the effect of several thousand boaters has on the lake.

I am also trying to get a baseline of information on the present water quality of the lake. There have been many studies done over the past several years and also a lot of water sampling that has been done by several people and agencies. I will try and get some solid base line condition of the lake as it is today, so as time goes on and things are done in the watershed to improve the water quality we can have a benchmark to measure the successfulness of the improvements.

I will also work with Mike Hawkins from Iowa DNR and Steve Anderson from the Clean Water Alliance to implement new technology such as GIS (Geospatial Information System) and LiDAR (Light Detecting and Ranging) to help identify areas of concern that we can concentrate on to make needed improvements in the watershed.

After the assessment is done, I will work with local groups and Federal, State, and Local agencies to develop alternatives that can be implemented in the watershed to improve the water quality of the lake.

The final product will be a living document that groups and agencies can use to address the needs of the Iowa Great Lakes Watershed. We will be able to revise the watershed plan as conservation measures are completed and land uses changes are made in the watershed. This project will take

about 18 months to complete.

I am located in the Iowa Lakes Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) office in Spencer, but spend a great deal of my time working in the Dickinson SWCD office in Spirit Lake. Their office number is 712-336-3782, Ext. 3.

If you would like to meet with me to discuss the assessment, feel free to call the office and I can set up an appointment to meet with you. I am also available to speak to groups about the project. You can also reach me at the Iowa Lakes RC & D office in Spencer at 712-262-2083. My e-mail address is iglcoordinator@gmail.com

CRP FIELD BORDERS FOR UPLAND WILDLIFE

By Bill Fitzgerald, District Technician

A new continuous sign-up CRP practice has become available this spring through the Farm Service Agency. This practice, CP33, provides field borders for upland wildlife habitat. The field borders can be from 30 to 120 feet in width and must run the entire length of a fence line or field edge. These borders must be seeded to a native grass and forb (wildflower and legume) mix and can also have up to 10% of the area planted to shrubs.

This new practice provides a unique opportunity for those in the flatter parts of the county to add some wildlife habitat to their land and may be able to help address some problem areas (wet spots, point rows, etc.)

If you have an interest in adding a field border, please contact the Farm Service Agency and we will work with you to draw up a plan based on the practice requirements.

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