



Soil & Water Conservation Update

A Newsletter from the Dickinson SWCD

September 1998

Nutrient & Pest Management Workshop Series to be offered in NW Iowa

A new series of workshops will take you through all the steps needed to carry out a Nutrient and Pest Management program on your own farm. Some of the topics to be covered include: soil sampling by type and grid method, reading soil surveys and interpreting soil test results, late spring nitrogen tests, taking manure credits, insect ID and lifecycles, weed ID, environmental concerns and record keeping.

The series will be held over two growing seasons. There will be six sessions held each winter and three in-field sessions each growing season.

The program fits the small land-based farmer who would like to complete nutrient and pest practices on their own, as well as the large land-based farmer who wants to be a better consumer of a consultant's services.

This can benefit you if you:

- ☒ want to be more in control of your fertility and pest operations
- ☒ are a livestock producer who wants to take greater advantage of their manure as a fertilizer
- ☒ are interested in how your operation effects water quality
- ☒ are interested in raising your net profits

The workshops will include lectures, exercises, and hands-on in-the-field training. Most importantly you will be working on your own farm.

If you are interested in finding out more about the workshop series, contact the Soil & Water Conservation District office at (712) 336-2604 or Jeff Kestel, Iowa Lakes RC&D Coordinator at (712) 262-2083.

District Commissioners

Mark Ingwersen — Chairperson
Keith Van Kleek — Vice Chair
Orville Berg — Treasurer
Chris Hoffman
Bill Northey
Lance Heikens — Assistant

District Website

Dickinson SWCD

www.ia.nrcs.usda.gov/county/dickinson.html

~ Updated ~

District Mission Statement

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



BACKYARD CONSERVATION

It'll grow on you.

Composting turns household wastes into valuable fertilizer and soil organic matter. Composting can be as simple or

involved as you would like. It depends on how much yard waste you have, how fast you want results, and the effort you are willing to invest.

In your backyard

All organic material eventually decomposes. Composting speeds the process by providing an ideal environment for bacteria and other decomposing microorganisms. The final product, humus or compost, looks and feels like fertile garden soil. This dark, crumbly, earthy-smelling stuff works wonders on all kinds of soil and provides vital nutrients to help plants grow and look better.

On the farm

On the farm, potential waste is turned into a resource that saves money and helps the environment. Producers use livestock manure to fertilize crops. When manure is properly handled, it can be safely applied to the land without the risk of polluting water. Composting is also practiced in some poultry operations. The compost is used as fertilizer on the farms and for lawns and gardens.

Getting started

Many materials can be added to a compost pile, including leaves, grass clippings, straw, woody brush,

vegetable and fruit scraps, coffee grounds, livestock manure, sawdust, and shredded paper. Do not use diseased plants, meat scraps that may attract animals, or dog or cat manure which can carry disease. Compost bins may be as simple as a ventilated garbage can, built with wire mesh, picket fence, pressure treated wood, brick or concrete blocks and other materials.

Using compost

Compost can be used for all your planting needs. Compost is an excellent source of organic matter to add to your garden or potted plants. It helps improve soil structure which contributes to good aeration and moisture-holding capacity. Compost can also be used as a mulch material. Studies have shown that compost used as mulch can help prevent some plant diseases.

If you would like additional information about Composting stop in at the District office to pick up a tip sheet.

Conservation Staff

Ann Ditsworth — State Secretary

Paula Koster — Conservation Assistant

Carroll Oskvig — District Conservationist

Willard Punt — Soil Conservation Technician

John Wills — Environmental Specialist

Jim Bell — Earth Team Volunteer

Clarence Call — Earth Team Volunteer

Maurice Dougal — Earth Team Volunteer

Outdoor Classroom

The Annual Outdoor Classroom will be held on September 17th at the Kettleson-Hogsback Area. This special event is organized by the SWCD each year for all Dickinson



County 6th Grade students to attend. The goal of the event is to provide the students with memorable, hands-on learning opportunities. This year the stations they will visit include: soils, insects, trees, wetlands, wildlife, fish & fisheries, wild geese, bike safety and a nature walk.