



With one snowstorm after another lately, most of us aren't thinking much about tree planting, but in a couple of short months the snow will give way to green grass, and the renewal of spring. We will once again usher in spring with a wide variety of trees, shrubs and groundcovers selected for conservation purposes.

New varieties this year include Canadian Hemlock, which makes great hedges and windbreaks, Canaan and Concolor Fir which make excellent

Tree & Shrub Time Order Now for Pickup in April!

by Joe Driscoll

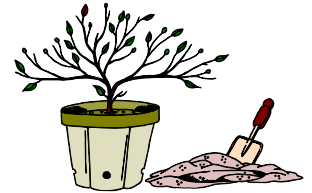
Christmas trees, Eastern Larch, a fast growing native Larch which replaces the European Larch from past years. Also new on the list is Paper Birch, once again a native North American tree which was used by Indians to build canoes.

These and other plants offered in the program are selected for their use as conservation plantings rather than for ornamental or resale purposes. Some of these uses include reforestation, windbreaks, property screens or borders, wildlife food and cover,

streambank stabilization, and erosion control. Christmas tree plantations are also common. The blueberry bushes produce a tasty treat for both man and beast.

Trees and shrubs will be available in units of 10, 25, 50 and 100. We would be happy to assist you with planting densities for groundcovers or trees. Take some time to look over the order form inside and call us with any questions. ■

Tree order deadline is March 25.



Free AEM Farm Assessments

by Bob Kalbfliesh

Free? Yes, in these trying economic times where everything costs more and more, you can still get something for free. The District is offering assessments for farm operations as part of the Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) Program. These farm assessments focus on the assets and liabilities of your operation, including soil management, pasture management, barnyards and nutrient management, farmstead water supply, and stream and floodplain management.

Conducting an AEM farm assessment can help you identify improvements that will save you money, minimize your farm's impact on the environment and evaluate any risk to drinking water supplies on and around your farm. The assessments

can identify many simple, low cost practices that can significantly reduce risk, such as establishing vegetative buffers, fencing livestock from sensitive areas, and spreading manure on certain fields at a different time of the year. The assessment will also document the sound environmental stewardship practiced on your farm, identify opportunities to improve neighbor relations and possibly reduce pressure for further regulation of agriculture.

AEM is completely voluntary. If a concern is identified on your farm during the assessment, it will be your decision whether to continue the process and implement recommended conservation practices. If you choose to correct the problem, AEM can help you qualify for state and federal cost share funding. However many times the solution could be no cost management changes that could

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Updates can be found on our website:

washingtoncountyswcd.org

Soil Quality - the Foundation of Agriculture

By Corrina Aldrich

Think of building a house, and you need to do the floors but you want to cut corners and save some money, so instead of putting in a good subfloor with some reinforcement and a nice carpet pad, you just put down some particle board and then the carpet. Sounds like it could work; I mean they are just extra layers and added cost. At this point many of you are shaking your heads saying who in their right mind would hire this idiot to build a house for them. Well that is essentially what some folks are doing when they try to garden, grow grass, or grow crops without really looking into what is going on in that all important layer underneath, the soil.

Remember you can put a really pretty carpet on top of a shoddily built floor but how long will it last? The same is true with trying to produce a product from the soil. You can start out with a great looking plant or a pasture full of livestock that seem to be performing well but do you really know what is going on underneath it all before something starts to go wrong. Such as, my cows look good but gosh I am having a hard time getting them bred; or another classic case, I bought some blueberry bushes from you five years ago and they are growing but they have yet to produce more than a few berries. The first question we always need to ask ourselves is "have I tested the soil recently?" If the answer is no, then you should definitely spend the money and do it. Soil testing and monitoring the pH can save you more money than it will ever cost you in the long run. (See related article by Tom Kilcer)

A soil test is one of many indicators of soil health. Soil health is the condition of the soil in relation to its inherent (or potential) capability, to sustain biological productivity, maintain environmental quality and promote plant and animal health. Healthy soils are productive, sustainable and profitable.

Both of these examples can be caused by very specific soil health issues that could be easily identified with a soil test or pH test. Cows not breeding may be a direct result of low Selenium levels, and soils in several areas of NY are identified as being Selenium deficient, which can be a culprit or compound an already existing problem. Selenium deficiency is also correlated with white muscle disease in beef animals. So even if you can grow green grass, have plenty of it and your livestock will eat it readily, it doesn't necessarily mean everything is perfect. There are a number of diseases in livestock which lead back to mineral deficiencies and/or imbalances, so it pays to keep a good solid base of healthy soil under your pretty green carpet.

Now to the other example, blueberries; they grow in the wild, should be pretty easy to grow them in the garden and gets lots of fruit, because I really do a good job with my other veggies. Well that maybe the case with your vegetables however blueberries are a little different because they like a really low pH, or acid soil. Most vegetables would not be happy growing under the same conditions that blueberries thrive in. Specifically,

as the pH level of a soil goes down or becomes more acid the availability of certain nutrients to the plant are greatly reduced. Likewise as a soil becomes too alkaline or has a high pH. (See related Tables, Tom Kilcer) Most plants are very comfortable in the 6.0 to 7.0 range. Blueberries like it down around 4.5 to 5.5 for pH, so you can see it is actually a big difference. Most soils are not this acidic naturally unless they are in a forested situation, have been altered manually, or have been waterlogged for some period of time so that the decomposition process has been significantly slowed. So if you are thinking about blueberries or other species (rhododendrons and azaleas are a couple) that require an acid soil for peak performance, a pH test is a necessity. It will save you a lot of headaches in the future.

These are just a couple of minor examples of how soil health can affect your existence on this planet. There is lot more to the equation of soil health than the couple of items I have mentioned here, healthy soils grow high quality nutrient rich plants, which in turn feed us through a number of avenues. A healthy soil serves five major functions: sustains life and society, resists erosion, provides physical support, cycles and stores matter, and stores and filters water. So the next time you step outside, think about the subfloor under that big green carpet, say thanks, and treat it with respect. ■



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Protected Streams and Wetlands: Do you need a permit?

Various NYSDEC publications are quoted to insure accuracy of permit-specific conditions and requirements.

By Joe Driscoll

This is one of the more common questions we receive at the SWCD office from landowners and municipalities whose projects may impact a protected stream or wetland. The answer to that question is closely tied to the particular classification which the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has assigned to the watercourse, according to its best use or water quality standard which supports that use.

For streams, those classifications are as follows:

- Class A or AA – Sources of water supply for human consumption, such as drinking, cooking, food processing.
- Class B – Primary human contact for recreation but not consumption.
- Class C/T – Fish propagation (reproduction), including trout.
- Class C – Fish propagation and fishing, except trout.
- Class D – Fishing only. Does not support reproduction.

DEC has provided us with the following guidance on which activities in which streams require permits, or may be exempt:

Disturbance of the Bed or Banks of a Protected Stream or Other Watercourse

Regulated Activities: A Protection of Waters Permit is required for disturbing the bed or banks of a stream with a classification and standard of C(T) or higher (disturbance may be either temporary or permanent in nature). Some examples of activities requiring a permit are:

- Placement of structures in or across a stream (i.e., bridges, culverts or pipelines)
- Fill placement for bank stabilization or to isolate a work area (i.e., rip-rap or coffer dams)

- Excavations for gravel removal or as part of a construction activity
- Lowering streambanks to establish a stream crossing
- Utilization of equipment in a stream to remove debris or to assist in-stream construction.

Exempt Activities: The most common activities which are exempt from the requirement to obtain a Protection of Waters Permit for Protected Streams are:

- Disturbance of a protected stream conducted by a town or county government which enters into a written agreement with DEC for specified categories of work undertaken in compliance with performance criteria that are protective of stream resources.
- Agricultural activities involving the crossing and recrossing of a stream by livestock or farm equipment at an established crossing.
- Withdrawal of irrigation waters where no alteration of the stream bed or banks is required.
- Removal of fallen tree limbs or tree trunks where material can be cabled and pulled from the stream without disruption of the stream bed or banks, utilizing equipment placed on or above the streambank (i.e., no in stream use of equipment is necessary).

Is your project Minor or Major?

MINOR protected stream projects include:

- Repair or in-kind replacement of existing structures.
- Disturbances of less than 50 linear feet along any 1,000 feet of watercourse.

All other projects are considered MAJOR.

Fill in Navigable Waters and their Adjacent and Contiguous Wetlands

Regulated Activities: Navigable waters include lakes, rivers and other waterways and waterbodies on which water vessel with a capacity of one or more persons are operated or can be operated.

A Protection of Waters Permit is required for excavating or placing fill in navigable waters of the state, below the mean high water level, including adjacent and contiguous marshes and wetlands. Some examples of activities requiring a permit are:

- Installation of bulkheads, revetments or other bank or shoreline protection measures.
- Installation of support piers larger than 12" in diameter or cross section, and cribs for docks or boathouses.
- Placement of fill for access, construction or structure installation (i.e., bridges, culverts, pipeline crossings).
- Excavations associated with construction activities and dredging for navigation channel establishment or maintenance.
- Sand or gravel mining.

Exempt Activities: An exemption from the requirement to obtain a Protection of Waters Permit for Excavation or Placement of Fill in Navigable Waters is for waters that are surrounded by land held in single private ownership at every point in their total area.

Is your project MINOR or MAJOR?

MINOR excavation or Placement of Fill in Navigable Waters projects include:

- Fill of less than 100 cubic yards.
- Maintenance dredging occurring

(continued on page 8)

Fertilizer prices are going up - are you getting all that you paid for?

By Thomas Kilcer, *Certified Crop Advisor*

No we are not talking about fertilizer suppliers short changing you. We are talking about you short changing your crops.

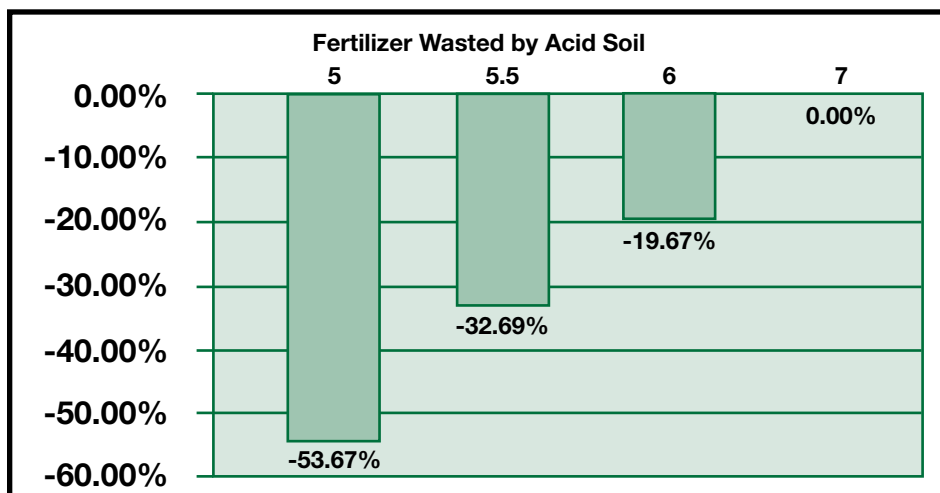
The biggest regulator of the return on your fertilizer investment is to raise the pH to above 6.2 for corn or 7.0 for legumes. This is where fertilizer is most available and the plant growth can make the most use of it. As the pH drops, fertilizer efficiency drops 30 – 50% in producing crop yield.

Correct pH soil is a **BASIC MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLE** for any manager who has any desire to run a profitable farm. A few years back I had completely soil sampled one of the top managed farms in the area. He discovered to his surprise he had alfalfa fields that were at a pH too low to ever grow corn well! Ironically, he was putting too much fertilizer on high testing fields, to the point of hurting plant growth. What he saved on fertilizer more than paid for the needed 1ime IN ONE YEAR! Since then, several more farms have gone

on to whole farm soil testing and have had the same results: decreased fertilizer bills and an increased need for corrective liming - and higher yields as the crops were allowed to reach the potential of their genetics.

The price of fertilizer is going up and the investment in this critical part of your crop production demands the highest return on each dollar invested. Fields of 5.4 – 5.8 are common, especially on rented ground. At these pH levels, as the chart above shows, you are throwing away a third of your fertilizer impact. Even at 6.0, nearly 20% is lost due to the acid soil's effect on availability. What investments do you make that can withstand a 20% loss and still return a profit? In this era of high prices, correcting the pH FIRST and then adding what fertilizer the checkbook will allow you, is the way to maximize the return in your crop. ■

Contact Tom at
tfk1@cornell.edu



Soil pH	Nitrogen Efficiency	Phosphorous Efficiency	Potassium Efficiency
7.0	100%	100%	100%
6.0	89%	52%	100%
5.5	77%	48%	77%

NRCS EARTH TEAM CONNECTION
Earth Team Volunteers - A Part of the Team!
The Earth Team



Anthony D. Mirarchi, born and raised in Clifton Park, N.Y.. Graduated Shenendehowa in 2006 and will be graduating SUNY Cobleskill May 2011, with a BT in Environmental Sciences after completion of a 15 credit internship with the NRCS as an Earth Team Volunteer. This will be my second time Volunteering through AmeriCorps, the first being on a roving trail crew in the Bob Marshall Wilderness, located in North Western Montana during the summer of 2008. I will be seeking a position in environmental assessments, water quality testing, natural resource management, and possibly environmental law enforcement upon graduation. My hobbies and interests include hunting, fishing, hiking, motorsports, and anything else that involves good company and the outdoors. ■

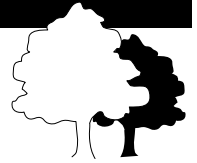


Just a reminder to folks in the county: we have an Ag Plastics Baler available to anyone wishing to bale their waste agricultural plastics. Please call the office for more details, to make an appointment to use it, or for a training session. The Ag Plastics Baler will be on display at Hudson River Equipment during their Spring Open House on March 16th. Be sure to check it out when you are there.

WASHINGTON COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

USDA Service Center, 2530 State Route 40, Greenwich, NY 12834 518-692-9940, ext. 3

email: laurie.deyoe@ny.nacdnet.net



2011 TREE ORDER FORM

Orders must reach our office by March 25, 2011, and will be available for pickup at the Washington County Fairgrounds on April 22, 8:00-4:00 or April 23, 9:00-Noon.

Species: All stock is bare root.		Age/Size	10 trees	25 trees	50 trees	100 trees	# Ordered	Cost
Conifers:	Red Pine	3-0/12-24"	\$12.00	\$25.00	\$40.00	\$ 70.00		
	Canadian Hemlock	3-0/6-12"	\$10.00	\$20.00	\$36.00	\$ 60.00		
	White Spruce	3-0/6-14"	\$10.00	\$20.00	\$36.00	\$ 60.00		
	Colorado Blue Spruce	3-0/10-15"	\$10.00	\$20.00	\$36.00	\$ 60.00		
	Canaan Fir	3-0/8-18"	\$12.00	\$25.00	\$40.00	\$ 70.00		
	Concolor Fir	3-0/6-14"	\$12.00	\$25.00	\$40.00	\$ 70.00		
	Eastern Larch (sheds needles in fall)	2-0/12-24"	\$12.00	\$25.00	\$40.00	\$ 70.00		
Hardwoods:	Paper Birch	1-0/5-12"		\$40.00	\$60.00	\$110.00		
	Black Walnut	1-0/5-12"		\$40.00	\$60.00	\$110.00		
	Sugar Maple	2-0/5-12"		\$40.00	\$60.00	\$110.00		
	Red Oak	2-0/5-12"		\$40.00	\$60.00	\$110.00		
	Wild Apple	1-0/5-12"		\$40.00	\$60.00	\$110.00		
Wildlife Species & Streambank Stabilization:	Redosier Dogwood	2-0/5-12"		\$18.00	\$32.00	\$ 54.00		
	Northern White Cedar	3-0/5-12"		\$18.00	\$32.00	\$ 54.00		
	Streamco Willow	1-0/6-12"		\$18.00	\$32.00	\$ 54.00		
Wildlife Mixed Species Packet: (30 plants) Contains 10 each of the following: Highbush Cranberry, Toringo Crabapple, Red Stem Dogwood	Highbush Blueberry: a mixture of Patriot, Blue Jay, Northland	3-0/18-24"	10 for \$ 55.00 50 for \$225.00 100 for \$360.00					
				\$36.00 per packet of 30 seedlings				
Ground Covers: (7% NYS Sales Tax has been included):								
Periwinkle (Vinca Minor) 3-6" plants (6" spacing) \$42.80/50 plants \$74.90/100 plants \$642.00/1000 plants								
Sunny Countryside Wildflower Mix 4 oz. packer covers 2,500 sq ft \$12.84 per packet								
Shady Countryside Wildflower Mix 4 oz. packet covers 1,200 sq ft \$12.84 per packet								
Fertilizer Tablets: 20-10-5 10-gram tablets 1 tablet per 1/4" stem diameter			10 tablets: \$2.14	50 tablets: \$7.49	100 tablets: \$12.84			
ORDER TOTAL (Any required Sales Tax has been included in the prices.): \$ _____								

All orders must be prepaid by cash, check or money order. We do not accept credit cards.

Make check or money order payable to "**Washington County SWCD**" and mail with this order form to the above address.

Name: _____

Mailing address: _____ City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____ Daytime telephone number: _____

Email address (optional): _____

All trees & shrubs sold are to be used for effective conservation practices such as windbreaks, erosion control, etc, and will not be planted for ornamental purposes. Trees & shrubs sold will not be removed with roots attached for resale. This is in compliance with NYS Sales and Use Tax Regulations, 20 NYCRR, Section 529.2 (c).

Species Descriptions & Site Suitability

Species	Mature Height	Description	Soil	Light
BLACK WALNUT	50'	Broad crown & compound leaves, extensive taproot, valued timber tree, nuts for wildlife.	Deep, moist	Full sun
CANAAN FIR	50'	Nearly identical to Balsam Fir; excellent Christmas tree; frost tolerant.	Moist to poorly drained	Partial shade
CANADIAN HEMLOCK	75'	Short needled, manageable landscape or hedge tree.	Moist to wet	Full sun to partial shade
COLORADO BLUE SPRUCE	100'	Attractive pyramidal shape. Sharp, dark green needles. Slow growing Christmas tree, windbreak.	Dry, well-drained	Full sun
CONCOLOR	100'	1-2" silvery blue needles; excellent Christmas tree that holds needles very well.	Well-drained	Full sun
EASTERN LARCH	70'	Native, very fast growing, marketable timber in 10-15 years; sheds	Well-drained	Full to partial sun
HIGHBUSH BLUEBERRY	6-12'	Patriot: 6-8' spacing, constant moist soil, pH of 4.6-5.0 Blue Jay: Vigorous grower with heavy fruit set; pH of 4.8-5.2 Northland: Adapts to a variety of growing conditions; pH of 4.8-5.2	Moist, well-drained	Full sun to partial shade
NORTHERN WHITE CEDAR	50'	Pyramidal form, dense foliage; used for wildlife food, cover & windbreak.	Moist, loamy	Full to partial sun
PAPER BIRCH	80'	Native alternative to white birch; fast growing; white bark when mature; grows well in clumps.	Moist to well-drained	Shade
RED OAK	75'	Lustrous green foliage, turning to a deep red in fall. Fastest growing of all oaks. Transplants easily.	Sandy to rich, loamy, well	Full sun
RED OSIER	9'	Upright shrub, red stem. Fruit in mid-August. Streambank	Poorly drained	Partial shade
RED PINE	90'	Fast-growing; native to New York; reddish-brown bark; pole-like stature; used for plantations, screens, poles, lumber.	Well-drained, acidic, dry	Full sun
STREAMCO WILLOW	10'	Fast growing shrub willow; streambank stabilization and shade.	Wet	Sun or shade
SUGAR MAPLE	75'	Spreading canopy. Brilliant fall colors. Storm sturdy. A NYS tree.	Well-drained	Full sun
WHITE	100'	Very hardy, stiff-needled evergreen; fast-growing, good for timber, screen, fresh-cut Christmas tree.	Wet to well-drained	Full sun
WILD APPLE	30'	One of several native apple trees. Fragrant blossoms are white to pink and up to 1.5_ in diameter. Small fruit makes great wildlife food.	Well-drained	Full sun
WILDLIFE MIXED SPECIES PACKET		<p>HIGHBUSH CRANBERRY: Native to New York; grows to 10' tall; prefers slightly acid, clayey loam & sandy soils; poor drought tolerance; white flowers in May, berries in fall. Food for birds and mammals.</p> <p>TORINGO CRABAPPLE: Grows 8' to 35' tall, but is usually on the shorter side; white blooms in spring; fruit for wildlife. Full sun.</p> <p>RED STEM DOGWOOD: Grows to 9'; upright shrub with red stem; fruit in mid-August; streambank stabilization; wildlife food.</p>		
PERIWINKLE (VINCA MINOR)		Maintenance-free groundcover; erosion control; lawn substitute. Grows to a height of 6". Excellent shade tolerance. Grows in low fertility, acid, clay, loam or sandy soils.		
SUNNY WILDFLOWER		Wide range of colors and bloom times; includes varieties suited to full sun or drier conditions.		
SHADY WILDFLOWER		Designed to perform in low light or partial shade conditions, but will grow in full sun also.		
FERTILIZER TABLETS		Use 1 tablet per 1/4" stem diameter. One tablet for seedlings, two for transplants.		

Soil Testing - Still a Good Idea!

By **Bill Keating**, *NRCS Technician*

Soil testing is just another expense, but too much fertilizer for targeted yields, or its inverse of too little and reduced yields, can be a greater expense. The results you get from a quality soil sample will either confirm you are already growing crops efficiently and productively (good for you!) or will indicate an area where some degree of savings/yield increases could occur.

This testing has historically been performed by Cornell University in New York, but as of last year this has changed hands. Dairy One, a private company that deals with dairy quality testing, has taken over the soil testing for New York. Cornell has provided Dairy One the field trial correlations for economic yields, so recommendations will still be calibrated for NY soils and weather. All the information you will need for quality soil testing can be found on the Dairy One website located at <http://dairyone.com/AgroOne/default.htm>

One interesting aspect to Dairy One is the availability of a pick-up point to leave samples in Middle Falls, very

near our office. This will save the postage cost, although it is still possible to mail the samples if traveling to Middle falls is not practical. Their website provides good details on this as well as all other pertinent testing procedures and paperwork. For convenience we have a supply of the sample boxes Dairy One utilizes here at our office.

Finally, enough could never be said about collecting the sample. Just as in forage sampling, that little 1 pound sample of soil you collected represents an equivalent of an acre furrow slice/acre which is defined as one acre of land X 6" deep, which is about 2 million pounds/acre. So for example, if one sample is sent for a 5 acre field, this will represent one ten millionth of the soil in the field! A lot is expected from that little bag of soil (profit vs. loss?) so take the time to do the best job possible to get quality test results which may improve your cropping system. Following the sample collection procedure outlined by Dairy One will help ensure a good representative sample for analysis. ■

Free AEM Farm Assessments

(continued from page 1)

actually save you money in the long run.

All farms in Washington County, regardless of size or type of operation, are eligible to participate. The SWCD staff will work with you through the entire process. It is more important than ever to employ every available opportunity to keep your farm operating environmentally sound and economically viable. Your AEM farm assessment can help you achieve these goals, and remember it's FREE!

To learn more or to schedule a free and confidential AEM assessment of your farm, please call the office at 692-9940, ext. 3. If you check out our website, washingtontcountyswcd.org, and click on programs, AEM, and scroll to the bottom of the page you will find the AEM Tier 1 inventory sheet. Fill this out and send it to us to start the free AEM farm assessment. ■



Trees, a beautiful addition to any landscape (Town of Argyle).

WASHINGTON COUNTY FSA NEWS

Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE)

USDA Farm Service Agency announces 2009 SURE sign up. The sign up began January 10, 2011 and will continue until July 29, 2011. SURE is a disaster program to assist producers who have suffered losses due to a natural disaster. In order to be eligible, the cropland must be located in a Secretarial Disaster declared county or a contiguous county. The producer will need to have suffered a 10 percent loss on a crop of economic significance and have either Crop Insurance or a Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) policy from FSA for all economically significant crops. A producer can still be eligible if they are not located in a disaster county by certifying a 50 percent production loss.

SURE is a revenue based program.

The program looks at the Total Farm Revenue which includes the crop value, crop insurance indemnities, NAP payments, Marketing Assistance Loan proceeds and Direct and Counter-cyclical Payments to determine payment. This program provides a tremendous amount of assistance to producers who have suffered from natural disasters, and is part of the 'safety net' designed to assist farmers and ranchers who feed America and the world.

Producers interested in signing up for 2009 SURE must submit a written application (FSA 682) to the Washington/Warren County FSA office by July 29, 2011. For more information contact the FSA office at 692-9940 ext. 2. ■

Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP)

Enrollment for the 2011 Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) has begun and will continue through June 1, 2011. There are two types of DCP payments – direct and counter-cyclical payments. Both are calculated using the base acres and the payment yields established for the farm. Direct payments provide income support to producers of eligible commodities based on production history (acreage and yields) and do not depend on the current production choices. Eligible producers receive direct payments at rates established by statute regardless of market prices. Counter-cyclical payments are made when the effective price for eligible commodities is less than the target price.

To be eligible for DCP payments,

owners, operators, landlords or tenants must share in the risk of producing and marketing a crop on base acres on a farm enrolled in DCP. The producer must also annually report the use of the farm's cropland acreage by July 15th of the program year. All of the land on the farm enrolled in DCP must comply with conservation and wetland protection requirements. Farms with 10 base acres or less are ineligible for DCP unless 50 percent of the farm ownership is held by a person considered to be socially disadvantaged.

For more information on 2011 DCP program, visit the Washington/ Warren County FSA office at 2530 State Route 40, Greenwich, NY 12834. Deadline to enroll is June 1, 2011. ■

Protected Streams and Wetlands: Do you need a permit?

(continued on page 3)

at least one every 10 years (restoring preexisting depths and widths, not increasing to new depths or widths not previously maintained).

- Excavation of an area of 5,000 square feet or less.
- Installation of rip-rap of less than 100 linear feet for each parcel of land.
- Repair or replacement, in-kind and in place, of existing structures.

All other projects are considered MAJOR.

Fortunately, DEC has issued the Washington County SWCD a General Permit which covers many of the activities and projects listed here. This means that a landowner or municipality can work directly through the SWCD to obtain the necessary permit. SWCD staff will also provide technical assistance in carrying out projects in accordance with permit requirements. Most SWCD General Permit work must be completed between May 1 and October 1, and there is a \$75 charge per permit to cover field visits and administration. Washington County municipalities are exempt from this fee. ■



USDA NRCS Conservation Programs Update - 2011

By Scott Fitscher

Below is a list of Conservation Programs offered by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. In an effort to be timely, heighten awareness and to make these programs more accessible to farmers and landowners, NRCS has now initiated what we call a “continuous sign up” process. You can sign up at anytime. Unfortunately many of the programs only fund applications one time per year. Signing up is a request indicating your interest in a program and your intent to sign a conservation contract when your application becomes approved for funding.

Farmers and landowners interested in these programs should contact the office to discuss the program that may be appropriate for their use. If you are not sure which program suits your needs we'll help you figure that out. Each program usually has a different application deadline. Each of the programs usually obligates funding to applicants one or more times during the year fiscal year. If your now confused, don't sweat it! We'll identify which program that is best suited to your needs and keep

you informed regarding important deadlines to get your application in the system.

What you need to do as a potential conservation program applicant is be able to identify your specific intentions or objectives. Ask yourself, what do I want to accomplish? With this information in mind contact the office and be ready to begin discussing the project with myself or Bill. We will discuss your objectives with you. This discussion is important. First of all you need a written conservation plan to be flagged as “a High Priority” application. Without a plan your application is a “Low Priority”. The conservation plan is important because it will identify what you want to accomplish and provide the road map and details to install the needed conservation practices that will be listed in your conservation program application and allow for an estimate funding.

So you don't have a conservation plan! What now? Refer to the table below for “Conservation Activity Plans”. NRCS will help you with the costs of having conservation plans

developed by private industry representatives for the resource concern identified referred to in the title.

The main points to remember in signing up for a conservation program is: (1) Is my conservation plan up to date and does it adequately describe (with details) the project? (2) If no conservation plan exists, is it likely that your application may not get ranked for funding considerations. (3) Does the conservation plan provide the environmental benefits the conservation program is intended to improve?

My take home message when considering signing up for a conservation program is: lets' have a plan which is realistic, practical and funded to the best the conservation program allows. If it means that we spend more time planning a good project and pursue a conservation contract at a later date , so be it!

For information about specific programs visit: <http://www.ny.nrcs.usda.gov/programs> ■

		Signup deadline Round 1	Signup deadline Round 2
Environmental Quality Incentives Program	- EQIP	January 14	none
Environmental Quality Incentives Program	- EQIP - Organic	March 4	none
Environmental Quality Incentives Program	- EQIP CAPS	Continuous signup	Continuous signup
CONSERVATION ACTIVITY PLANS			
- Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans		Continuous signup	Continuous signup
- Nutrient Management Plans	Continuous signup	Continuous signup	
- Integrated Pest Management Plans	Continuous signup	Continuous signup	
- AgEmp – Ag Energy Management Plan	- Headquarters	Continuous signup	Continuous signup
	- Landscape	Continuous signup	Continuous signup
- Conservation Plan Supporting Transition to Organic		Continuous signup	Continuous signup
- Grazing Management Plans	Continuous signup	Continuous signup	
- Spill Prevention, Control and countermeasure Plans		Continuous signup	Continuous signup
- Irrigation water Management Plans	Continuous signup	Continuous signup	
Wetlands Reserve Program	- WRP	Continuous signup	Continuous signup
Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program	- WHIP	January 14	none
Agricultural Management Assistance	- AMA	January 14	To be determined
Grassland Reserve Program	- GRP	none	none
Conservation Reserve Program-general	- CRP signup 41	April 15	-
Conservation Reserve Program-continuous	- CRP continuous sign up 42	Continuous signup	Continuous signup
Conservation Reserve Enhanced Program	- CREP	Continuous signup	Continuous signup
Conservation Security Program	- CSP	January 7	To be determined
Farm and Ranchland Conservation Program-	FRPP	None at this time	Continuous signup



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