There is never a lack of things to do in the winter, and that is especially true for Iowa farmers. Planning for crop year 2015, marketing crops, attending your annual training (see lists below), caring for livestock during brutal temperatures, the list goes on and on. One thing to add to your "to-do" list is to consider updating yields and reallocating base acres. The deadline to do this is February 27th and remember FSA offices ask that you don't wait until the last moment. Those offices are also closed on Monday, February 16, in observation of President's Day.

Prepping for the Growing Season in the Middle of Winter

Soil Conditions
Give some thought to your fields that may have experienced wind erosion this winter. Are there areas in the field that would benefit by leaving the crop residue? Would the field or even part of the field benefit from a cover crop? See the article on wind erosion impacts in Iowa.

Once the snow cover is gone it is a good time to also evaluate rill and gully erosion in the field that has occurred since last fall. Spring rains tend to cause these areas to show up more strongly, but often we can determine these areas before spring planting.
Would a grassed-waterway be beneficial in reducing the formation of those deep rills or gullies that show up every year?

Events

Private Pesticide Applicator Training

Feb. 19, 9:30 a.m., at the Lion's Community Center in Kamrar.

Feb. 20, 9:30 a.m., at the Heartland Museum in Clarion.

Feb. 24, 7:00 p.m., at the Bethel United Methodist Church in Manly.

Feb. 26, 1:30 p.m., at the Windsor Theater in Hampton.

March 10, 7:00 p.m., at FC Co-op in Farnhamville.

March 12, 7:00 p.m., at Hamilton Auditorium, Ellsworth Community College, Iowa Falls.

March 26, 7:00 p.m., at Memorial Hall in Eagle Grove.

Confinement Site Manure Applicator Training

Feb. 11, 1:30 p.m., Webster County Extension Office in Fort Dodge.

Feb. 12, 1:30 p.m., Hamilton County Extension Office in Webster City.

Feb. 24, 1:30 p.m. Cerro Gordo Extension Office in Mason City.

Feb. 26, 9:30 a.m, Hampton State Bank in Hampton.

Other Events

March 2-3, 2015 Iowa State Center, ISU Iowa Water Conference

March 7, 2015 Scheman Building, ISU ISU Field Crop Scout School

Soil, Water and Wind

Congratulations to Greg McClunahan who submitted an entry to name this newsletter space for water quality and conservation articles. Thanks to everyone who submitted ideas.

Our article this week will focus on wind erosion. We often think of erosion caused by water, but soil movement and loss can also occur by wind when soils are left unprotected during the winter and early spring months. We had one of those significant wind events in January when we had no snow cover and strong winds. This leaves us with soil in our road ditches, in our window sills, and in our fence lines- all just a nuisance right? Well, not really, this mechanism of loss impacts our nutrient supply and organic matter levels for crop production. It also impacts our water sources.

The USDA NRCS 2010 National Resources Inventory estimated wind erosion in Iowa for 2010 to be 0.45 tons/acre on average. That number might not seem like much, but on an 80 acre field that is potentially 36 tons of soil that has been moved offsite (recognizing some windblown soil will
March 12, 2015, Duncan Ballroom, Duncan, IA
North Central Iowa Research Association and
ISU Northern Research Farm Annual Meeting.
Persons who plan to attend are encouraged to
pre-register by calling either the Hancock
County Extension Office at 641-923-2856 or the
Wright County Extension Office at 515-532-
3453. This year’s research highlights will include
nitrogen management, the use of unmanned
aerial vehicles (UAVs) and a grain market
outlook. In addition, information about current
research activities at the farm will be shared.
Registration starts at 9 a.m., the meeting starts
at 9:30 and concludes at 2 p.m.

A report from the University of
Minnesota, *Reduce Wind Erosion for Long
Term Productivity*, indicates that flat, wide
open areas of NW and NC Iowa can average
1-3 tons/acre loss of soil due to wind erosion. This report
also reports the loss of total N, total P, and
total K in lbs/acre due to wind erosion. Loss of
these nutrients means more dollars from your pocket to
replace them for crop production.

Please see the *Integrated Crop Management* article
written by Mahdi Al-Kaisi, dated January 27, 2015,
*Wind Erosion in Iowa* as to the method of soil
erosion by wind forces.

Thanks to Richard Schultz for the use of the photo.