

Wyoming County Soil & Water Conservation District



Celebrating 70 Years of Serving Wyoming County

December 2010



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New York's 5th Soil & Water Conservation District

Looking back at historical conservation milestones and ahead to the future of farming in Wyoming County.

70 years seems like a long time in human years, but in "soil time" it's only a blink of an eye. It takes thousands of years to create soil. In 1940, the devastating soil loss that occurred on "black Sunday" of 1935 and during the dust bowl era were still fresh in every farmer's mind. Wyoming County and the entire country had their eyes wide open and knew something had to be done to protect our nation's valuable top soil from erosion or problems would only get worse.

Wyoming County was at the fore-front of the conservation movement, establishing the fifth Soil and Water Conservation District in New York State on November 20th, 1940. 70 years later, the District is still working with farmers, along with county and town highway departments and all landowners, employing a wide range of conservation practices to help protect soil, water and other natural resources.

SWCD Calendar

- December 24 - Christmas Eve - Office Closed
- December 31 - New Years Eve - Office Closed
- January 17 - SWCD Board Meeting
- January 27 - Water Resources / RC&D Meeting
- February 21 - SWCD Board Meeting
- March 21 - SWCD Board Meeting

Conservation “Farm of the Year” & AEM Awards

2010 “ Farm of the Year “ & AEM Award - Friendly Acres - Sondericker’s, Attica, NY



Agriculture is the largest single land use in Wyoming County. Farmers are dedicated stewards of land and water resources. Many farmers are involved in the AEM Program to take their level of commitment to protecting the environment to a higher level. These farms are recognized with a “Farmers Partnering to Protect Our Environment” sign. Congratulations to all of our “Conservation Farm Families”.



AEM - Fitch Farms, Inc. - Perry , NY



AEM - Dueppengiesser Dairy Co. - Perry, NY



AEM - Breezyhill Dairy Farm - Sheldon, NY



AEM - Hi-Land Farms - Wyoming , NY

BF-300 Portable Plastic Baler



Preparing Plastics

At this stage of the game, it is important for producers to begin preparing and storing their plastics for recycling. It will be much easier on recycling day if plastics have been prepared in the correct way. Plastics need to be clean, dry, separated by type, and in “bundles” appropriately sized for the baler. The BF-300 Baler produces a 40” cube.

Clean means free of as much debris and dirt as possible and practical.

Dry means it must be stored under cover; In a shed or Under a tarp or plastic and Up off the ground so that runoff cannot collect while it is stored.

Bundles of plastic must be small enough to fit into the chamber Maximum 40”x40” square) and Light enough for one person to handle for loading .

Getting Ready to Recycle Agricultural Plastics

Agriculture has embraced the use of plastics for many purposes, whether it is for preserving silage, growing transplants or collecting maple sap.

The use of plastic has improved producers ability to generate quality products and reduce operating costs. However, the use of plastics in agricultural production has also created disposal challenges.

Recycling of agricultural plastics is becoming an option here in Western New York. The arrival of a new BF-300 Portable Plastic Baler will open doors, in term of recycling plastics being used on Wyoming County’s farms. The baler is being leased by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS-DEC) to the Wyoming County Soil and Water Conservation District (WCSWCD) for the purpose of baling agricultural and marine plastics. In order for recyclers to accept agricultural plastics, it is important for them to be segregated by type and be kept as clean and dry as possible.

Horticultural producers can recycle plastic row covers, high tunnel or hoop house covers, stackable pots and trays. Again, the cleanliness will impact how easy it is to find a handler once the material is baled. Loose soil must be knocked out. Each type of plastic must be segregated for baling. It is important to note that PVC is not accepted.

Maple producers can recycle tubing as long as it is dry and free of debris. All metal and wire must be removed but nylon fittings and spouts can be recycled along with the tubing. Tubing can be bundled and tied with tubing or cut into lengths, less than 40”, and boxed to keep it clean until it is recycled.

Recyclable - Volume

Typically, New York Dairies are using about eight pounds of plastic per cow annually. For large dairies with high density, tall forage piles it is likely to be a little less. Those who wrap bales or make ag bags utilize a little more than average. The bales produced by the compactor are generally, 1,000 to 1,200 pounds.

Recycle Agricultural Plastics *continued from page 3*

We can expect a dairy will generate about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a bale each year for every 100 cows. In Wyoming County, if all the plastic generated by dairies were recycled, we have the potential to generate seven truckloads of recyclable plastic each year.

Up to date Information

The Agricultural Plastics Recycling Project web site (<http://environmentalrisk.cornell.edu/AgPlastics/>) offers a wealth of information. Best Management Guidelines can be downloaded and printed for training farm staff. Videos describing the baler operations can be viewed.

What's the Game Plan?

By Spring, WCSWCD expects to take the baler around the county to bale plastic for agricultural producers. Practically speaking, it will be necessary for the Agricultural Plastics Recycling Project to collect the plastic at central locations throughout the county for baling. For marketability, all the plastics must be able to be traced back to the farm they originated. You can expect to be asked to complete an origination form when you bring plastic to be recy-

clered. Justin Schoff and Tim Terry, WCSWCD and Joan Petzen, Cornell Cooperative Extension recently became certified to operate the baler.

At this point, an advisory group is meeting to shape the logistics of baling plastic for agricultural producers in Wyoming County and Western New York. The steering committee includes:

Producers: Robert or Doug Calkins, Orangeville; Walt Faryna, Perry; Tom Kibler, Sheldon; Tom McCormick, Wethersfield; Joe Siler, North Java; Corinne Weaver, Castile

Ag-Business: Daryl Heiby, Lamb and Webster and WCSWCD Board

Town Supervisors: Joe Gozelski, Town of Castile; Agriculture Committee; Doug Patti, Town of Attica, Public Works Committee; Larry Rogers, Town of Pike, GLOW Solid Waste Management Group and Agriculture Committee;

Agency Staff: Jim Beitz, Wyoming County Correctional, Recycling Manager; Todd Gadd, Wyoming County Highway Department; Peggy Grayson, GLOW Solid Waste Management Committee; Lois

Levitan, Cornell University Recycling Agricultural Plastics Project; Greg McKurth, Tim Terry and Justin Schoff, Wyoming County Soil and Water Conservation District; and Joan Petzen, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Wyoming County

With markets for recycled agricultural plastic thin since the downturn in the economy, the goal is to find a recycler who is willing to pick-up and transport compacted plastics free of charge in truck-load lots. The advisory group is working to determine the most feasible way to support baler operation costs. We are awaiting a grant from the NYS-DEC and are seeking funding from alternative sources to support baler operations. The Advisory Group would be interested to hear from producers who have plastic they would like to recycle. Please contact Cornell Cooperative Extension WyomingCountyCE@Cornell.edu, 585-786-2251, or the Soil and Water Conservation District wcswcd@frontiernet.net, 585-786-5070, in Wyoming County to learn more about opportunities for recycling agricultural plastics in Wyoming County.

Filter Strips and Riparian Buffers by Mike Shaw

Do you have problems with stream bank erosion next to your crop fields? Do you farm right to the edge of the stream? Are you a Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) who is compliant with the land management guidelines under your Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) of manure application setbacks of 100 feet on land adjacent to perennial streams and water bodies? Or 20 feet on intermittent streams, unless the manure is immediately incorporated? Did you answer yes to any of these questions? If so, then Filter Strips and/or Riparian Buffers might be the answer for you.



Conservation buffers slow water runoff, trap sediment, and enhance infiltration within the buffer. Buffers also trap fertilizers, pesticides, pathogens, and heavy metals, and they help trap snow and cut down on blowing soil in areas with strong winds. In addition, they protect livestock and wildlife from harsh weather and buildings from wind damage. When properly installed and maintained, buffers also have the capacity to:

- Remove up to 50 percent or more of nutrients and pesticides.
- Remove up to 60 percent or more of certain pathogens.
- Remove up to 75 percent or more of sediment.

Conservation buffers are a source of food, nesting cover, and shelter for many wildlife species. Buffers also provide connecting corridors that enable wildlife to move safely from one habitat area to another. Buffers offer a setback distance for agricultural chemical use from water sources. As the

trim on a house makes the house look better, well-planned conservation buffers improve the appearance of a farm or ranch. If used as part of a comprehensive conservation system, buffers will make good use of areas that often should not or cannot be cropped.

Conservation buffers with trees and shrubs will provide the most stream stabilization benefits and shading, but all buffers do not necessarily need trees. Some buffers with herbaceous cover with certain grass species will trap and filter more nutrients and pesticides if properly maintained.

Federal financial assistance is available for installation of buffers. Our office can provide planning assistance and technical recommendations concerning filter strips or riparian buffers. Please feel free to contact the NRCS office at (585) 786-5070 to schedule a visit or discuss applying for financial assistance under various programs.

Agricultural Value Assessments

Agricultural Value Assessments for Tax Exemption

It's that time of year again! Applications for the Agricultural Value Assessment must be submitted to your Assessor by March 1, 2011. Applications must be renewed annually with the assessor – they are not carried over year-to-year.

The Agricultural Assessment Program provides a partial exemption from real property taxes for eligible farmland. Land is taxed based on its agricultural assessment rather than the fair market value. The landowner must apply each year.

If you are applying for the first time or if there

have been changes in your parcel, the first step in applying for an Agricultural Value Assessment is to have a RA-100 Soil Group Worksheet completed. You may call the Wyoming County Soil and Water Conservation District to make an appointment to assist with the completion of the worksheet.


If you need to update a Soil Group Worksheet or have purchased a new parcel, please call Nancy Herman at the Wyoming County Soil & Water Conservation District Office, 31 Duncan Street, Warsaw, NY, 14569, Telephone 786-5070 Ex. 119 for an appointment before March 1, 2010.




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Winter Pond Maintenance by Bethany Bzduch, Water Quality Technician

Winter pond preparation and maintenance is essential to preserving water quality. Taking a few simple steps to ready your pond for winter will help ensure that it remains healthy through the tough months. Most ponds have three main components; the inflow, outflow, and basin.

Pond Inflow and Outflow

Generally, all ponds have an inflow or source of water and an outlet where water drains out. These, except during

dry weather, maintain a constant flow of water throughout the pond. Ponds with consistent flow are less susceptible to algae blooms, excessive weed growth, etc. than ponds with stagnant water. In order to prepare for winter and to ensure that a steady flow is maintained, the inflow and outflow streams or pipes need to be cleaned. Any debris such as leaves or sticks in or around these areas should be removed. This will prevent the inflow/outflow from becoming blocked or plugged which can cause back up of water resulting in soil/bank erosion. If you have a pipe inflow or outlet, it is a good idea to make sure the pipe is not cracked or broken when cleaning up the debris. This will ensure that the pipe is working properly and allow for any last minute repairs to be made.

Basin

The pond basin is just as critical as the inflow or outflow. It is where fish and other aquatic species cohabitate. To prep your pond basin for winter, be sure to remove as much organic plant material as possible. This material is often dead or dying and if left in the pond over the winter it will begin to decompose. This process uses a lot of the dissolved oxygen in the water which depletes the available oxygen for fish and other aquatic animals.

During the winter, ponds tend to ice over which inhibits the dissolved oxygen from being replenished. If the plants are left in the pond and begin to deplete the oxygen supply this can cause early spring fish kills. To help with the low oxygen levels during the winter, in addition to removing dead plant material, keep the surface from icing over. If keeping your pond from developing a layer of ice is too difficult try to maintain a two to three foot hole in the ice. Both of these tactics will help keep oxygen levels at their highest throughout the cold months.

Pond maintenance is a year round process. No matter what you use your pond for whether it is for fishing, fire protection, animal water source, or recreation proper upkeep is key to a healthy, thriving, beautiful pond. For further assistance or if you have any questions regarding your pond please contact your local Soil and Water Conservation District.

Information for this article was found at:

Matson, Tim. "Maintaining Your Pond." *Mother Earth News* Apr.-May 1992. Web. 20 Oct. 2010.

<<http://www.motherearthnews.com/article.aspx?id=71464>>.

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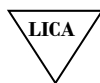
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