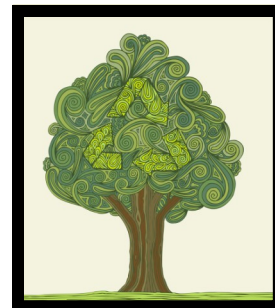


NDASCD

N.D. Association of Soil Conservation Districts

CONSERVATION NEWS

To advance the interests of North Dakota Soil Conservation Districts



NDASCD/LON CEO

Brian Johnston

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PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

By LeAnn Harner



On behalf of your Board - we're delighted to welcome Brian Johnston as our Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and look forward to working with him. We've combined the Executive Director and Nursery Manager position into one job, so Brian has a large task ahead. He's already diving into nursery operations and getting familiar with those activities as quickly as possible so we're ready for spring sales and distribution.

Looking ahead - there's still a lot of things that need to be done to make our nursery profitable. Of course, Districts have a large role to play. You are our primary sales force. We can't rely just on district employees for sales. Supervisors need to visit with neighbors and landowners and encourage planting. While we as supervisors don't necessarily sell trees or programs - we can open doors for our staff.

Does your District have problems selling trees? What about your neighboring Districts? I know when we hire District Technicians, a sales background isn't usually in the job description. We don't need to turn those technicians into used car salesmen, but perhaps we can come up with a way for an experienced technician in your area who has learned how to approach landowners to come into your District and make a few farm visits with your staff. Would your District be interested in participating?

Your Board intends to strengthen our marketing efforts - especially out-of-state. As other nurseries begin closing down, or tightening their operations, we believe opportunities exist for Lincoln-Oakes to pick up sales. Do other states have tree promotion workshops? Do we need to participate in such seminars? Do we need to reach out to state forestry agencies in other states? We need to do more research. Your ideas are welcome. In fact, if we end up going to other states - it might be nice to involve district employees so you can talk one-on-one with your peers.

The North Dakota Forest Service is seeking grant funds for promoting tree planting. If those funds are received, the ads, promotional materials, etc. that will be developed could easily be used by other states.

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WELCOME
 Brian Johnston
 NDASCD/LON CEO



Hi Everyone. My name is Brian Johnston and I am the CEO of the North Dakota Association of Soil Conservation Districts and Lincoln-Oakes Nursery. I am very excited to begin this new journey with all of you.

I bring a wealth of business experience and education to the job. I plan on using it to return the nursery to a great financial position and provide the Association with a steady hand. I was the CEO of a Utah corporation for 18 years. The corporation was a lean, aggressive entrepreneurial company always looking for new ventures to capitalize on. I have bought or started six businesses, five of which were very profitable. One was a humbling experience and taught me many great lessons.

I am a Certified MBA with a Master's degree from Western Governors University with a concentration in Management and Strategy. I am also a Certified Fraud Examiner and love dissecting companies looking for misallocation of company resources. I am an adjunct professor for the University of Mary and Dickinson State University. I teach a variety of business classes ranging from Small Business Management to Fraud Examination. I have built two e-businesses that I operate from home, but I will be putting them on hold to concentrate on the Association and Nursery duties.

My wife and I have lived in rural Burleigh County for eight years. Beverly is an accounting professor at Dickinson State University, and she is currently working on her Ph.D. in accounting. We have five children; four boys and a girl. Two of the boys live and work in Bismarck and another is a sophomore at Iowa State University. He runs track for the university and he is also the North Dakota state record holder in the 800 and the 1600 track events. We also have a son who is a freshman at North Dakota College of Science. He is a total gearhead. Our daughter attends elementary school in Bismarck. We have one granddaughter and we hope for more.

I look forward to meeting everyone in person and I am looking forward to working with each of you.



NACD CONVENTION - What's in it for me?

How about workshops, motivational speakers, or a tour of conservation in the desert? Or meeting fellow supervisors and district employees from across our nation and hearing their stories? This year, the convention will host a "Share Fair" with districts putting up displays that showcase their activities and accomplishments. One general session will include a weather workshop that discusses disaster prevention and restoration as well as the services they provide to districts.

There are breakout sessions on water management, partnerships to control invasive species, urban conservation, getting your conservation message to the public, and funding...and that's just a start.

Some districts send representatives every year. Ask Stutsman or Barnes County SCD supervisors how much they learn.

The National Association of Conservation Districts Convention is January 29 - February 1, 2012 in Las Vegas.

Full details, including registration and hotel information are available online at: www.nacdnet.org

Hope we see you there.



President's Comments continued from page 1

Looking back for a minute - thanks to everyone who participated in our Annual Meeting. Our District Employees Association, NRCS, and Extension staff were wonderful about helping to develop sessions, handle AV, take minutes and just lend a hand wherever and whenever needed. The partnership worked GREAT! I appreciate all the feedback we received during and right after the convention. Keep sending in those evaluations, as they help us plan next year's meeting.

Merry Christmas!

Soil Health - Food Health - People Health
By Jay D. Fuhrer, District Conservationist

The Menoken Farm is owned and operated by the Burleigh County Soil Conservation District (BCSCD). The goal of the Menoken Farm is to restore Soil Health while moving high diversity cropping systems toward sustainability. In 2011, the decision was made to add a garden, but not just any garden!

The sideboards included:

- * The garden would use soil health principles including minimal soil disturbance, cover crops, surface armor, crop diversity, compost and compost tea.

- * The garden would not use commercial fertilizer or any pesticides.

- * All fresh produce would be donated to the Bismarck Food Pantries.

- * The garden would support the USDA People's Garden and the Hunger Free North Dakota Garden Project.

A team consisting of the BCSCD, NRCS, and the First Presbyterian Church – Bismarck, came together to plan, plant, and harvest the garden. The crops included potatoes (without soil disturbance to plant or harvest), sweet corn plus pole beans plus squash/pumpkin (the three sisters), and dwarf sunflowers to attract pollinators.

During the summer the Menoken Farm enjoyed visitors from four countries and 12 states, and all found the garden to be a tour highlight. That fall during harvest, the team found out what happens when soil health is applied to a garden. The yields included:

- * Sweet Corn – 1,500 ears
- * Pole Beans – 360 Lbs.
- * Potatoes - 1,500 Lbs.
- * Squash & Pumpkin – 1 Pickup Load
- * Sharing Soil Health with others – *Priceless*

The garden brought all age groups together from 5 years old to 75 years old; offering opportunities for team members across generations to work and learn side-by-side. Planting ideas and discussions about our need as a nation to foster garden fresh food for all.



Menoken Garden



**WHAT'S GOING ON AT
THE NURSERY?**



In our last newsletter, we gave you a glimpse into activities at Lincoln-Oakes during the summer and fall months. Here's a quick peek into Nursery activities for November and December:

Harvesting – After a hard frost, when seedlings go dormant, they need to be lifted, graded (sorted by size), tied into bundles and put into cold storage.

Seedlings produced in Oakes need to be transported to Bismarck.

Whips are cut from certain species, then divided into shorter lengths and planted or sold.

Inventory of seedlings in cold storage, plus in the field at both locations, so orders can be confirmed and spring lifting planned.

Some seedlings need to be shipped to warmer locales.

Seeds – both those for sale and those for Nursery use – are being cleaned (a multi-step process) and stored or sent to customers. Seed also needs to be inventoried.

Seed is still being collected from certain species that holds onto its seed.

Maintenance of buildings and equipment.

There's always something happening at Lincoln-Oakes.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JANUARY 2012

- 9-11 2012 Manitoba-ND Zero Tillage Farmers Assn Annual Workshop
and Trade Show, Minot, ND
- 18 Burleigh County SCD Soil Health Workshop
Ramkota Hotel, Bismarck, ND
- 29–February 1 NACD Annual Meeting
Las Vegas, NV

FEBRUARY

- 21 Research Results & Technology Conference sponsored by Area IV
Research Farm and ARS, Seven Seas, Mandan, ND
- 29 Area II Annual Meeting hosted by James River SCD

MARCH

- 21-22 Tree Promotion Workshop, Bismarck, ND

APRIL

- 2 Area I Annual Meeting hosted by North Central SCD

JUNE

- 17-19 NACD Northern Plains Regional Meeting
Helena, MT
- 20 Area IV Meeting hosted by McIntosh SCD

JULY

- 19 Friends and Neighbors Day (100th Anniversary)
ARS and Area IV Research Farm, Mandan, ND

NOVEMBER

- 18-20 NDASCD Convention and Annual Meeting
Ramkota Hotel, Bismarck, ND
(please note change of location!!)

Happy Holidays

AWARDS GIVEN AT THE 2011 STATE CONVENTION BANQUET

Two of our staunchest legislative supporters happen to serve as Chair and Vice-chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee. Through their efforts over many years, the District Assistance Program has grown to the point where nearly all grant requests can be met. We were all pleased to honor Senator Bill Bowman, Bowman and Senator Ray Holmberg, Grand Forks for their consistent support of soil conservation districts. Senator Bowman accepted both awards.



Rodney Howe, Hettinger, was recognized for his voluntary advocacy for soil conservation—outside our conservation district group. Rodney chairs SBARE—the State Board of Ag Research and Education. SBARE is responsible for listening to agriculture and Extension research requests, prioritizing those requests, submitting them to the State Legislature and then lobby for their passage. When NDASCD proposed research and outreach on soil salinity issues, Rodney Howe quickly became our advocate. He helped develop the final proposals and made sure he had enough information to answer any questions. During the Legislative Session, he made countless trips from his Hettinger home to Bismarck to lobby for these initiatives.



LAYPERSON AWARD

Layperson Award winner Rick Mittleider operates R & C Mittleider Farm, Inc. and organic crop and seed farm at Tappen, ND. He raises a variety of organic crops, both for cash and for seed production including wheat, barley, dry pea, flax, soybean, oats, buckwheat, sorghum, rye and hairy vetch. He uses cover cropping in an excellent rotation system; striving to improve soil health in order to increase production. He is always willing to try new ideas and to share the results of his conservation practices with producers in Kidder County and the organic crop industry.



COMMUNICATION AWARD

The Communication Award Winner was Shaun Sipma, a news anchor at KXMC-TV in Minot. Shaun does a regular segment called “Eye on Agriculture,” where many of the stories deal with conservation, either celebrating a local conservation achievement or addressing conservation issues facing the region. He has strongly supported Farm Rescue and has reported extensively on their activities and the families in crises they’ve aided. During the 2011 Mouse River Flood, Shaun was on-air continually, providing current information and reassurance to the people of Minot and surrounding communities.



PROFESSIONAL AWARD

Professional Award winner Garry Ottmar is the Dickinson Research Center’s Ranch Manager. He helped set up the original ranch and pasture units to facilitate research projects such as the Grazing and Range Study, the Four State Weaning Project, a Compost Methods study and the Southwest Soil Health Demonstration Project. He has worked closely with all three nominating districts and the Project Management Group to develop effective crop rotations for each of the eight different fields, as well as accomplishing the daily work of planting, spraying, harvesting and haying. Gary plays a key role in planning and organizing the tours and workshops for the project.



DISTRICT EMPLOYEE AWARD

District Employee Award Winner Rhonda Vetsch is the District Clerk for Emmons County. She organizes numerous school activities, producer events, Women’s Ag Night, and County Range Tour, among others. Rhonda is involved with all aspects of the District tree planting program, including getting down and dirty herself whenever necessary. Beyond her normal District Clerk functions, Rhonda has long been active in the North Dakota Conservation District Employees Association. She has supported district employee training throughout the state and co-authored, with Michelle Vetter, the NDCDEA Employee Reference Handbook. She also assisted NRCS office in developing and implementing the 2012 County Contribution Agreements and is currently working with the Brad-dock Dam Water Quality Assessment Project.

