

CONSERVATION CATCHALL

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AISWCD Staff:

Richard Nichols,
Executive Director

Sherry Finn,
Administrative Assistant

Kelly Thompson,
Program Coordinator

NEW IDOA DIRECTOR NAMED

On February 15, 2012 Governor Pat Quinn named former Representative Bob Flider Director of the Illinois Department of Agriculture. While explaining his appointment, Governor Quinn stated that "It is important that our Agriculture agency is led by someone who understands the key role of agri-business in our economy. Throughout his career, Bob Flider was a tireless, effective leader for rural farming communities and global agri-business leaders. He served his district with distinction, and I am pleased he will continue to serve all the people of our state."

Bob Flider served in the Illinois House of Representatives from 2003 through 2011. As a legislator, Flider worked on a number of agricultural issues, serving on the House Agriculture & Conservation Committee, the Energy & Environment Committee and the Ethanol Production Oversight Committee. Flider also served as chairman of the House Electric Generation & Commerce Committee and vice chairman of the House Renewable Energy Committee. He was named an "Agriculture Certified Legislator" by the Illinois Farm Bureau in 2004, and he was named a "Friend of Agriculture" by the Illinois Farm Bureau in 2006, 2008 and 2010.

"After spending the last several years advocating for people in our farming communities and agribusiness, I look forward to continuing that work on a statewide level," Flider said. "I appreciate the opportunity to serve in this important position and I look forward to working closely with our state's agriculture and agribusiness leaders to help Governor Quinn double Illinois' exports by 2014."

Acting Director Flider brings a variety of management, agriculture and economic development experiences to the Department of Agriculture. Since March of 2011, he has been Director of Broadband Impact -- promoting technology access in rural Illinois communities -- at the not-for-profit Partnership for a Connected Illinois. He also serves on the board of directors for United Way of Illinois and is an associate member of the Macon County Farm Bureau. He is a past board Director of the Decatur-Macon County Economic Development Corporation and member of the Mt. Zion Chamber of Commerce. He served as mayor of Mt. Zion from 1995 until 2003, and started his career as a news reporter with the Mattoon Journal Gazette and Charleston Times-Courier.

Flider received a bachelor's degree in Journalism from Eastern Illinois University in 1979. He resides in Mt. Zion with his wife, Jean. They have three adult children and one grandchild.

The Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) regulates Illinois agribusiness to protect both producers and consumers of raw and processed agricultural products from mislabeled, contaminated or diseased commodities. Agency programs help to protect our state's natural resources through regulatory oversight and financial incentives. The department also promotes Illinois agriculture by conducting state fairs, providing grant assistance to soil and water conservation districts and 4-H clubs, funding county fairs, marketing Illinois agricultural products and providing assistance to develop new, value-added agricultural ventures.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - JAMES TODD

jtoddfarm@gmail.com

I want to thank all of you for your kind thoughts and good wishes during my recovery from knee surgery. I am feeling much better and anxious to get back into the swing of things. I feel like I've been out of the loop for a while but it shouldn't take me too long to get going. I am very thankful that the other officers were able to step up and fill in for me. I was under my doctor's orders to not bend the knee which made it very hard to get into a vehicle and impossible to drive. For all practical purposes I was homebound. It was difficult for me to just sit knowing that we had a lot going on legislatively but Lonnie took over and did a great job of representing us along with Mike and Rich.

One of the first meetings I was able to attend after being released to drive was the Council 5 meeting in Manito. The agenda included discussion on the Farm Family Award and council activities. There was quite a bit of discussion on the Farm Family Award but it was felt that few of the SWCDs had the time to prepare for the award this year. I would like to remind everyone that past entries can be submitted again with some minor updating. Anyone is eligible to be submitted again unless they have won the Governor's Award. Recipients of the Governor's award are not eligible to compete for the award again. There are also other awards that can be supported by the councils and by the SWCDs, including the Outstanding District Employee Award, the Outstanding Forestry Contribution Award, the Conservation Teacher of the Year Award and the McKibben Scholarship. These awards don't take a lot of time and often mean a great deal to the winners.

There are many other ways that the councils can be active beside the awards. We have been suggesting that each council form a legislative action group to call upon and work with your local legislators. Such groups can have a significant impact when a large number of people show up at a legislator's office to stress the importance of one or more particular issues. The legislative action group can also do much to teach legislators the importance of the SWCDs and the work they do by hosting a multi-county tour or some other function that highlights the various practices and projects that the SWCDs utilize to protect our natural resources.

Plans for the Summer Conference and Annual Meeting are progressing. I'm sure we will have some challeng-

es as we move to a somewhat smaller but less expensive location. Because we are moving to a smaller location and because we are changing from a three-day to a two-day conference schedule we will have to do some things a bit differently to try to accommodate everyone. Meeting rooms are smaller than we are used to at the Hilton so we will be using registration tickets to try to allow as many people as possible to attend the sessions of their choice. The purpose of the tickets will be to place the more well attended sessions in the larger rooms. Please be sure to register with your choice of session as soon as you are notified that registration is available. As always, we will do as much as we can online. We appreciate your comments on ways we can make the conference more meaningful to you and to accommodate your needs to the extent possible.

Friday March 23th USDA will host one of only three nationally scheduled Farm Bill Field Hearings at Carl Sandburg College in Galesburg. The purpose of the meeting is to hear testimony from a limited number of farmers and agribusiness people who are affected by Farm Bill Policy and to accept written comments from all interested individuals.

Tuesday, March 27th is the AISWCD's scheduled Legislative Day event. Over the past couple of years there has been a good deal of discussion and some criticism of the AISWCD for not having a Legislative Day event. Part of the reason for not hosting the event the past two years was because of the expense. However, a resolution was passed at the 2011 Annual Meeting that we have that event this year and that attendees pay their own expenses. We will fulfill that resolution on the 27th. We hope you will be able to attend. We will have materials for you to use as talking points and the Illinois Soil and Water Conservation District Employee Association will be participating this year. A parking lot has been reserved for our use at a cost of \$5 per car per day. The lot is located at 220 East Washington on the south east corner of the Washington and Second Street intersection. The lot is just two blocks north of the Capitol. A map will be sent later this week along with the talking points. We hope to see a large number of you there!

James H. Todd



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S NOTES - RICH NICHOLS

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One of the things I do when I am working on the *Conservation Catchall* and sometimes when I am writing the legislative newsletter is perform an Internet search to see if there is something I can use that will save me some time and also provide some up-to-date, interesting or useful information to those who read the newsletters. One such site I found while I was looking for information for this issue of the *Catchall* was the University of Illinois' Soil Quality web page. I had not been to the site before and found it quite interesting as well as useful. The presentation of the materials on the site also lends itself to use in the classroom. If you haven't seen the site, I would encourage you to take a look. The following link will get you there or just copy it into your web browser. <http://soilquality.org/home.html>

The site and the information are the result of a collaboration between the NRCS East National Technology Support Center, NRCS National Soil Survey Center, ARS National Laboratory for Agriculture and the Environment, NCERA-59 Scientists, and Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Another site I found is maintained by the University of California at Davis. The site provides a listing with links to a large number of groups, organizations and agencies that provide information about soil quality along with other agricultural and natural resource topics. The link to that web site is <http://www.sarep.ucdavis.edu/soil/websites.htm>.

I am always amazed at what can be found on the Internet. Much of it is worth while but there is also a lot of "stuff" out there that is not fit for anyone to read or view. I try to stay with only those things about which I would have no concerns if someone else knew what sites I was visiting—probably because I'm sure someone does know and does keep track.

Oh well, enough of that. The General Assembly comes back to town this week after the primary election. It will be interesting to see who will be planning on participating in the general election this fall and who will be looking for other employment. This is a good time to take advantage of the circumstances brought about by the spring primary. Those legislators who were not chosen to represent their party in the fall may be more open to supporting legislation that may be unpopular with their constituents such as the gaming bill.

We believe that the gaming legislation will be brought forth as a bill within the next two to three weeks. We have been assured that the Ag groups who were included in the original gaming bill will remain in any version that is introduced. While we are devoting a lot of energy looking for other potential sources of funding, the gaming legislation remains as the one piece of legislation that may provide the most money for the SWCDs.

Regardless of the piece of legislation that we are eventually able to support for SWCD funding, we will have to be politically active to assure that something will pass.

We are a small group that needs to become very vocal. The downstate legislators pretty much know who the districts are but they really don't have a firm grasp of what you do. They need to be educated and one of the best ways to do that is to talk with them one-on-one, talk with them as a large group like the Land Use Council Legislative Action Group or take them on a tour to see conservation practices and to learn what those practices do as well as what would happen if those practices were not in place.

Educating downstate legislators can have an impact on the Chicago area legislators as well. More than 60% of the members of the General Assembly represent urban constituents. They do not understand agriculture nor do they have a good grasp on damage that poor management and no conservation practices can have on the environment. Most urban legislators are strongly supportive of the environment and those programs that improve the environment but they don't necessarily make the connection between improving the environment and applying conservation practices to the land. They see most conservation practices as something you put on ag lands to make the crops grow better or to make it easier to farm the land.

These are the misconceptions we need to address. I hope that we will have many directors participate in the legislative day event this year and I hope that we will have many directors and SWCD staff who will use the opportunity to talk with urban legislators as well as their own.

Rich



ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT'S UPDATE - *SHERRY FINN*

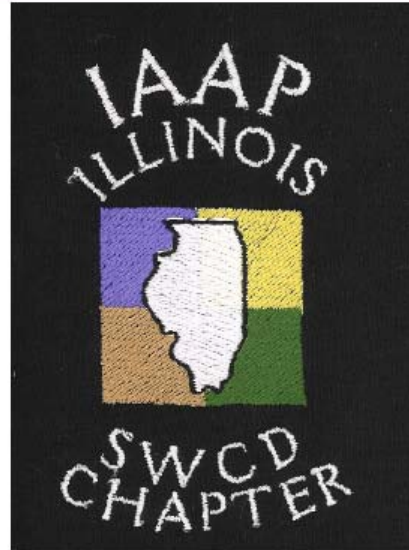
sherry.finn@aiswcd.org

Sherry will not have a report this month. In place of Sherry's report we will insert the notice for IAAP's 70th anniversary.

Date: 04/25/2012

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Join
Us!



The members of the SWCD Chapter of the International Association of Administrative Professionals cordially invite you to attend our next meeting. It will begin at 10:00 a.m. on April 25, with our regular meeting business, followed up at noon by a luncheon to celebrate Administrative Professional's Day. Lunch will be catered by Subway and will be followed by a presentation given by Office Team of Springfield.

Location: Illinois Department of Agriculture Building in Springfield
Room—G.O.

RSVP: Melissa Cauble

Montgomery County SWCD

217-532-3610 or by e-mail

Melissa.cauble@il.nacdnet.net

70th Anniversary Dues Special, This year only!
70/70 Promotion. Join in 2012 for only \$70.00!!



PROGRAM COORDINATOR'S PAGE - *KELLY THOMPSON*

kelly.thompson@aiswcd.org

Hello, I am Kelly Thompson. I am pleased to be the new Program Coordinator for the Illinois Urban Manual (IUM). Please allow me to introduce myself. I earned my bachelor's degree in geography from Eastern Illinois University and a master's degree in environmental studies from University of Illinois at Springfield. For the past three years I worked for a company in the Metro-East area working with geographic information system (GIS) and AutoCad. I genuinely love working in the environmental field and am absolutely thrilled to be working in the world of conservation. I am truly grateful for this opportunity to serve the AISWCD and am eager to begin working with both the Technical Review Committee (TRC) and Steering Committee (SC).

Thank you for this opportunity and I look forward to meeting many of you in July at the summer conference.

Kelly



Illinois Envirothon

2012 Current Issue Information Available

The 2012 Current Issue - "**Nonpoint Source Pollution/Low Impact Development**" study packet is posted on the AISWCD web site. Please access the information and distribute it to teachers in your district/Land Use Council who are interested in participating in the Envirothon.

Special thanks to the staff at the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency for their assistance in developing this material.

Date: May 10 & 11

Location: Allerton Park, Monticello, IL

Study Packet Information: www.aiswcd.org/programs/envirothon.htm

ISWCDEA CORNER - *MEGAN POLACEK, ISWCDEA REGION FIVE REPRESENTATIVE*

website: <http://www.il.ncdea.org>



The ISWCDEA had their first meeting of the year February 9, 2012. It was an action-packed meeting with much on the agenda. Some of the highlights discussed included Summer Conference, Legislative Day, and the IL SWCD Handbook.

Summer Conference training ideas were suggested - particularly out-in-the-field technical training for employees. If this is something that you would be interested in, or if you have other ideas and suggestions for training, please let your ISWCDEA representative know ASAP.

Legislative Day 2012 is a result of the success of last year's event. Everyone that attended the 2011 event had very positive reviews of the experience. Please contact Debi Slade if you are planning on attending March 27, 2012.

It is common knowledge that the IL SWCD Handbook is out of date. Since there are so many new employees and employees working both positions, the ISWCDEA thought it would be a good idea to work on updating it. To that end, if you have any homemade "cheat sheets" or guides that you use to make your job with the SWCD easier, forward those on to your ISWCDEA representative.



EARTHWORMS TO BLAME FOR DECLINE OF OVENBIRDS IN NORTHERN MIDWEST FORESTS

A recent decline in ovenbirds (*Seiurus aurocapilla*), a ground-nesting migratory songbird, in forests in the northern Midwest United States is being linked by scientists to a seemingly unlikely culprit: earthworms.

A new survey conducted in Minnesota's Chippewa National Forest and Wisconsin's Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest by a research team led by Scott Loss of the University of Minnesota and the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center has revealed a direct link between the presence of invasive European earthworms (*Lumbricus* spp.) and reduced numbers of ovenbirds in mixed sugar maple and basswood forests.

The results are detailed in a paper published online in the scientific journal, *Landscape Ecology*.

European earthworms are invading previously earthworm-free hardwood forests in North America the scientists say, and consuming the rich layer of leaf litter on the forest floor. In turn, herbaceous plants that thrive in thick leaf litter and provide cover for ground-nesting birds are thinning out, replaced by grasses and sedges.

As a result, ovenbird nests are more visible and vulnerable to predators and ovenbirds searching for nesting sites reject these low-cover areas outright. Areas of reduced leaf litter also contain fewer bugs for the ovenbirds to eat, requiring them to establish larger territories, resulting in fewer birds over a given area.

The worms invading northern Midwestern forests (and forests in the northeastern U.S. and Canada) have been in the U.S. since soon after the first European settlers arrived. Loss explains the worms were brought over inadvertently in the ballast of ships, in the root balls of agricultural plants or on purpose for use in gardening. Only now is the leading edge of their continued invasion, caused mainly by logging activities and fishermen dumping their bait, reaching interior wilderness areas such as parts of the study site in the remote forests of Wisconsin and Minnesota.

"Night crawlers [*Lumbricus terrestris*] and the slightly smaller red worms [also called leaf worms or beaver tails, *Lumbricus rubellus*], have the most damaging impacts to the soil, litter layer, and plants in forests that were historically earthworm-free," Loss says.

"Everyone has probably heard at one time or another that earthworms have really positive effects in breaking down soil and making it more porous," Loss explains. "This is true in agricultural and garden settings but not in forests in the Midwest which have developed decomposition systems without earth worms."

Because the forested areas of the Midwest U.S. were once covered in glaciers, there are no native earthworm species present in the soil. "These earthworm-free forests developed a slow fungus-based decomposition process characterized by a deep organic litter layer on the forest floor," Loss says.

Earthworms feed on this layer of leaf litter and make it decompose much faster, Loss explains. "As a result, we see the loss of sensitive forest-floor species such as trillium, Solomons seal, sarsaparilla and sugar maple seedlings and a shift in dominance to disturbance-adapted species like Pennsylvania sedge."

One result is reduced nest concealment for the ovenbird and increased predation by squirrel and bird predators.

The researchers found no decline in three other species of ground-nesting birds included in their survey -- the hermit thrush (*Catharus guttatus*), black-and-white warbler (*Mniotilta varia*) and veery (*Catharus fuscescens*) -- nor did they find a correlation between ovenbird decline and invasive worms in other forest types, such as red oak, paper birch and aspen.

"Our results suggest that ovenbird density may decline by as much as 25 percent in maple-basswood forests heavily invaded by invasive earthworms," the researchers conclude. "Maple-basswood forests are among the preferred ovenbird habitats in the region, comprise a considerable portion of the region's woodlands...and are experiencing *Lumbricus* invasions across most of the northern Midwest." Previous studies have demonstrated that invasive earthworms also are harmful to other native North American species, such as salamanders.

There is reason for concern that the overall population of ovenbirds could decline, Loss points out. "Ovenbirds migrate to Central America and the Caribbean and back every year -- a trip during which they can fly into buildings and towers or get nabbed by a cat as they rest on the ground -- and they also face loss of habitat on their breeding and wintering grounds. Now, here is yet another potential threat to their survival. For more information, go to: http://www.sciencedaily.com/news/earth_climate/forests/ or <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/02/120229142225.htm>



President's Proposed FY 2013 Budget Has Zero Funding For USDA Watershed Program

Reprinted from National Watershed Coalition Publication

We will again resist the temptation to point out the folly in rationale presented in the President's proposed justification for zeroing out the entire USDA Watershed Program. Be aware that Watershed Operations and Watershed Surveys and Planning funds for the program *have now completely disappeared* from the Administration's budget proposal. The full creative writing skills of the budgeteers have now been turned to the elimination of the Watershed Rehabilitation portion of the USDA Watershed Program. Their justification for eliminating the program demonstrates a complete lack of regard for life and property as well as no understanding of natural resource conservation.

The use of flawed logic to spin the elimination of Watershed Rehabilitation funding into an unimportant local responsibility that has no national benefit would be laughable if it were not for the serious impacts to both project sponsors and the protection afforded natural resources, life and property. With the laws which created the program still on the books and the thousands of binding agreements that were signed in good faith by project sponsors still in force it is not a huge leap in logic to view the abandonment of the program at the Federal level as a breach of contract. All this while a bill authorizing more than \$500 million for the purchase of sandbags to combat flooding bounces around in various congressional committees. Is it just us... or is there something seriously wrong with this picture?!

We would call your attention to the Administration's current complete reversal of direction in calling for zeroing out elements of the program which were held up by the Administration a few short months ago as key efforts to stimulate the economy. We remain perplexed and frustrated with the disconnect between the Administration's goals for improving the economy, creating private sector jobs and enhancing the quality of life in rural America and the many positives of the USDA Watershed Program.

The President's budget proposal coupled with the current financial fray in Congress makes this absolutely the most critical, challenging and Brightening time that Watershed Project sponsors have ever faced!!

Please Act Now

By omission, the President's FY2013 budget proposes to eliminate funding for Watershed Surveys and Planning and Watershed Operations. The President's FY 2013 proposal also directly and actively proposes elimination for the rehabilitation of aging USDA assisted Watershed dams.

The reality for Sponsors of existing projects is a further major reduction in technical assistance and a major increase in liability not to mention the potential for loss of both short and long term economic and environmental benefits. For those with short budgets who are struggling to meet their responsibilities and fulfill their obligations under binding agreements with USDA it means absorbing the additional costs of replacing essential technical services which were previously promised through various MOU's and O&M agreements.

In short, the Administration's words and their budget proposal represent the wholesale abandonment of the protection, people and *partnership* represented in the Watershed Program.

The need for watershed projects remains and the need for watershed program work is also increasing. We are keenly aware of needs for planning, construction and rehabilitation from North Dakota and Minnesota to Texas. We know that there are projects planned or in various stages of completion from Massachusetts to West Virginia, to Missouri and on to California...projects that have major environmental and economic benefits that only need the promised USDA technical and financial assistance to begin greening both the environment and the economy.

The current annual funding needs for the Watershed Program are:

- \$35 million for Watershed Surveys & Planning;
- \$100 million for Watershed Operations;
- \$75 million for Watershed Rehabilitation of Aging Watershed Dams.

Editor's Note: Illinois does not currently have any contracted watersheds under this USDA Watershed Program. We do, however, have several completed watershed projects that have been implemented through the USDA Watershed Program. The MRBI Watersheds are authorized and funded through EQIP. The purpose for this article is to point out that the administration is proposing to cut important programs that can and do have significant impacts on people's lives, jobs and property. We have two choices. We can stand silently by and watch things happen to us or we can take an active role and make things happen for us. The choice is ours. Congress will not act unless Congress has a clear understanding that the issue is IMPORTANT! For more information go to: <http://www.watershedcoalition.org/>

FIRST COMPLETE FULL GENETIC MAP OF PROMISING ENERGY CROP

Researchers in Wales and the United States have collaborated to complete the first high-resolution, comprehensive genetic map of a promising energy crop called miscanthus. The results -- published in the current edition of the peer-reviewed, online journal *PLoS One* -- provide a significant breakthrough towards advancing the production of bioenergy.

The breakthrough results from the long-term collaboration between energy crop company Ceres, Inc., based in Thousand Oaks, California, USA, and the Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences (IBERS) at Aberystwyth University in Wales. The IBERS team created the collection of genetically related plants and Ceres then sequenced and analyzed the DNA. In other crops, this type of comprehensive genetic mapping has significantly shortened product development timelines.



As published in the journal article, Ceres researchers mapped all 19 chromosomes of miscanthus, a towering cane-like grass that can be used as a feedstock for advanced biofuels, bio-products and bio power. The multi-year project involved generation and analysis of more than 400 million DNA sequences creating a blueprint of the genetic alphabet of the plant.

Among the massive volumes of data, researchers found 20,000 genetic differences, called markers, that allow geneticists to differentiate individual plants based on small variations in their DNA. More than 3,500 of these markers were used to create the genetic map, and are valuable for crop improvement purposes. In contrast, previously announced mapping projects discovered only about 600 markers and did not fully characterize the structure of all the miscanthus chromosomes, a necessary step in establishing a high-tech plant breeding program.

Ceres Chief Scientific Officer Richard Flavell, PhD, FRS, CBE says that the rapid improvements in breeding made possible by this mapping project are needed for miscanthus to be more widely used as an energy crop. While it has been grown on a small scale across Europe for two decades, primarily for electricity generation, large-scale commercial production is not economically viable at this time due to high production costs and few commercially available miscanthus cultivars.

"By defining the genetic diversity in our germplasm collections with the new DNA markers, we can more rapidly introduce important crop traits into our new, seed-propagated miscanthus products," said Flavell. He explained that unlike the most popular current miscanthus that is vegetatively propagated, Ceres' seeded types are expected to require significantly less time, effort and money to be bred for different environments and to be established by growers. Ceres is currently evaluating its improved seeded miscanthus varieties in multiple locations.

(Continued on Page 9)



FIRST COMPLETE FULL GENETIC MAP OF PROMISING ENERGY CROP

(Continued from page 8)

Iain Donnison, PhD, head of the bioenergy team at IBERS, notes that, in addition to its use in developing new products, the mapping project has provided greater insight into how the miscanthus genome compares to other well-understood crop plants. Previously, most miscanthus research had been focused on field trials, and little was known about its genetics.

"The joint miscanthus development programme with Ceres has provided new insight into the evolution of the species as well as the similarities and differences in populations across different countries and environments," said Donnison. "This rich library of information took decades to produce in other crops, but with modern biology and genomics technology Ceres and IBERS have put together what I believe is one of the world's most comprehensive marker-based breeding programs in miscanthus."

The collaborative research received funding as part of the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council Sustainable Bioenergy Centre (BSBEC). This innovative academic-industry research partnership underpins development in the important and emerging bioenergy sector. Both Ceres and IBERS are contributing members of BSBEC.

Professor Douglas Kell, Chief Executive of the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council, noted: "This partnership between academia and industry makes a significant contribution towards achieving sustainable feed-stocks for renewable energy and other bio derived products. A genetic map paves the way toward breeding improvements to increase the amount of sunlight captured, the amount of carbon that can be assimilated over a growing season and the partitioning of the carbon in harvested biomass. This research is an important step towards improving yields for bio feed-stocks without increasing inputs."

"The collaboration between IBERS and Ceres is a great example of how industry and academia can work together to increase the commercial potential of the UK's research resources, both at home and internationally," **said Kell.**

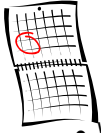
Source: Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council. "First complete full genetic map of promising energy crop." *ScienceDaily*, 19 Mar. 2012. Web. 20 Mar. 2012.

Editors Note: Miscanthus is one of two grass crops being considered for use as bioenergy stocks. The other, Switchgrass, is native to the US but is not as productive as Miscanthus. University of Illinois researchers have shown that Miscanthus can gain greater amounts of photosynthetic carbon per unit of leaf area, has a greater leaf area and has a longer growing season than Switchgrass.

The study completed in 2007 by Frank Dohleman of the Plant Biology Department at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and his colleagues, is the first to compare the productivity of the two grasses in side-by-side field trials. Results from trials throughout Illinois show that Miscanthus is more than twice as productive as switchgrass.

Miscanthus' thick, heavy growth qualities, also make it a good ground cover for holding soil in place and slowing down and filtering stormwater runoff.

The biggest problem with Miscanthus, as with any other bioenergy crop, is the ability to transport sufficient quantities to make it economical for use in producing energy. It is believed that as technology improves for using the bioenergy stocks for ethanol production or mixing the chopped dry matter with coal to increase BTU production, we will see more demand for these crops. If that is the case, soil and water conservation districts will have one more tool to offer farmers for use in protecting their land and water resources.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

- World Water Day - March 10th
- First Day of Spring - March 20th
- SWCD Legislative Day - March 27th
- Easter April 8

2012 QUARTERLY BOARD MEETING DATES

- June 2012 Quarterly Board Meeting - June 11th/12th, Northfield Inn - Springfield, IL
- September 2012 Quarterly Board Meeting - September 11th, Teleconference 8:00 am (Only if Needed)
- December 2012 Quarterly Board Meeting - December 10th/11th, Northfield Inn - Springfield, IL

march is:

- National Irish American Heritage Month- designated by Congress in 1995.
- National Craft Month
- National Frozen Food Month
- National Peanut Month
- National Women's History Month
- Red Cross Month

march dates of note:

- Employee Appreciation Day (first Friday of month)
- Hug a G.I. Day - March 4th
- Dentists Day - March 6th
- Popcorn Lover's Day (second Thursday)
- Girl Scouts Day - March 12th
- St Patrick's Day - March 17th
- International Earth Day - March 20th
- National Doctor's Day - March 30th

april is:

- National Humor Month
- Keep America Beautiful Month
- Lawn and Garden Month
- Stress Awareness Month
- Sexual Assault Awareness Month

april dates of note:

- April Fool's Day - April 1st
- National Peanut Butter and Jelly Day - April 2nd
- World Health Day - April 7th
- Easter - April 8th
- Barbershop Quartet Day - April 11th
- National Pecan Day - April 14th

AISWCD Mission: *To represent and empower Illinois' SWCDs*

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