

Field Day to Focus on Tillage Radish and Alfalfa Mulch

Join Rural Advantage and partners for a 2010 3rd Crop Walk-n-Talk focusing on cover crops and using alfalfa mulch for nitrogen credit before corn. The field day, "Cover Crops and Alfalfa Mulch" will be held August 23, 2010, near Madison, Minnesota. Start time is 1:00pm.

Crops need soils with adequate nutrients, especially nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium (N-P-K). But, how do you ensure your crops are getting enough nutrients if you do not use chemical fertilizers and do not have access to manure? Organic producer Carmen Fernholz is attempting to answer that very question.

With funding from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and consultants from the University of Minnesota, Fernholz will be starting his own on-farm research. He will be looking at obtaining enough nitrogen from alfalfa mulch and tillage radish to grow a healthy, high yielding corn crop next spring.

Attendees will hear an explanation of Fernholz's alfalfa mulch research and will learn about utilizing cover crops on their agriculture acres whether those acres are organic or conventional. Special attention will be paid to the tillage radish. Fernholz has used cover crops for many years and is a cooperator on Rural Advantage's NCR-SARE cover crop project. Jill Sackett, Extension Educator – Conservation Agronomist, will also explain to attendees the NCR-SARE cover crop project and the cost-share dollars available. A tour of the mulching process and the fields will also be included. Attendees will be able to view the alfalfa processor as well as a coulter cart for grain drills that Fernholz is using to get a similar result as a no-till drill, but without the cost. This is an outdoor event and will be held rain or shine. Please, dress accordingly.

Directions: 2484 Hwy 40 - Madison, MN 56256; From Madison, MN: Travel east on Hwy 40 for 1.0 mile. You will see an A-frame house on the north (left) side of the road. This is the field day site. The field day will be held in a field near the farmstead.

For more information or questions on this event, contact Jill Sackett at 507-238-5449 or by email at sacke032@umn.edu

Riverblast Volunteers Needed

Hello Minnesota River enthusiasts, Riverblast is right around the bend and we are in need of volunteers willing to put in 4 hours of time to help put the event on. We need ticket sellers and bartenders.

The shifts are as follows: Friday September 3rd 4-8PM and 8-midnight, Saturday September 4th from 11-3, 3-7, 7-10, and 10 to closing. If you can't help on the two days of the event we can use help Thursday any time after 3 PM until 9 for setup and also for teardown on Sunday morning the 5th after 9:30 AM.

You can confirm a time by calling me at 507-276-2280 and leaving a message with your name and time you can help. The event is really growing and we need all the help we can get, so if you know of anyone else who can help please let them know ASAP.

Thanks much – Scott Sparlin.

Newcastle Disease Cause of Water Bird Die-Off in Big Stone County

Hundreds of double-crested cormorants and ring-billed gulls on Marsh Lake in Big Stone County have died from Newcastle Disease, according to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR). As of Wednesday, about 500 cormorants and 400 ring-billed gulls had been found dead at the lake, which is near Appleton in western Minnesota.

More testing is being conducted to determine the strain of Newcastle Disease. Avian influenza tests, however, were negative.

Newcastle Disease is a viral disease that most commonly infects cormorants, but has also been documented in gulls and pelicans. Clinical signs of infection in wild birds are often neurologic and include droopy head or twisted neck, lack of coordination, inability to fly or dive and complete or partial paralysis. Juveniles are most commonly affected.

Newcastle can rarely affect humans, generally causing conjunctivitis, a relatively mild inflammation of the inner eyelids. It is spread to humans by close contact with sick birds. Wild birds can be a potential source of disease if they have contact with domestic poultry.

Area farmers need to practice sound biosecurity procedures, including monitoring their poultry flocks for signs of illness and taking steps to prevent wild birds from having contact with their domestic birds. If birds show sign of sickness, producers should contact their veterinarian or the Minnesota Board of Animal Health at (320) 231-5170.

Another die-off of 50 of cormorants has been discovered on Wells Lake in Rice County. Samples are being tested, but the specific cause of the birds' illness is unknown.

DNR and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services staff are conducting site clean-ups and collecting swab and carcass samples for lab analysis at both locations.

Newcastle Disease is not new to Minnesota. The last outbreak covered a seven-county area in 2008, when about 2,400 birds died. In 1992, multiple mortality events affected double-crested cormorant colonies across the Great Lakes, upper Midwest, and Canada, with more than 35,000 birds estimated dead.

Minnesota has about 39 nesting colonies of double-crested cormorants, 87 percent of which occur along with other colonially nesting water birds. Most active nesting sites have a long history of use, dating back to the 1960s and 1970s.

Events:

August 16th (Monday) is a **Field Day at EcoSun Prairie**. 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. near Colman, South Dakota. Members of EcoSun Prairie Farms will be sharing their experiences growing and managing grassland on former corn and soybean land and marketing a range of grassland products including: hay, grass-fed beef, native plant seed, biofuel feedstock, and carbon credits. A tour of the farm will be included. For more information on EcoSun Prairie Farms, visit their website at www.ecosunprairiefarms.org. The day will also highlight research being conducted by Dr. Susan Rupp and colleagues from nearby South Dakota State University. Their research is looking at how harvesting the prairie as a feedstock for potential biofuel development affects prairie wildlife and plant/animal diversity. For more information on this event, contact: Jill Sackett, UM Extension / Rural Advantage by phone at 507-238-5449 or by email at sacke032@umn.edu, Craig Novotny by phone at 605-695-0090 or Kurt Reitsma by phone at 605-688-4594 or by email at kurtis.reitsma@sdstate.edu

August 18th (Wednesday) is **RiverNight 2010**. 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Harriet Island in St. Paul, MN. Join us as we honor individuals and groups have achieved great things for their lake or river. Help celebrate Minnesota's spectacular and unique waterscape with great food, great company, and a sunset cruise down the Mississippi. For more information or to request an invitation call 800-515-5253.

August 20th (Friday) is the **Agroecology Summit**. Come and enjoy speakers on the topic of "Farming for Ecological Services and Maximum Yield". Stay for lunch and tours. For more information and the times of this event, contact Tony Thompson at 507-831-3483.

August 23rd (Monday) is **Cover Crops and Alfalfa Mulch**. 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. in Madison, MN. Attendees will hear an explanation of Fernholz's alfalfa mulch research and will learn about utilizing various cover drops in organic or conventional agriculture systems. For more information contact Jill

Sackett at 507-238-5449.

September 3rd & 4th (Friday & Saturday) is **Riverblast 2010** in New Ulm, MN (Center and Front Streets). For more information visit www.riverblast.org

September 10th (Friday) is **Waterfest** at Barsness Pak in Glenwood. An event for 6th grade students from Pope and Stevens Counties. For more information visit <http://www.popeswcd.org/>

September 14th, 16th, 21st, 23rd, 28th & 30th (Tuesdays and Thursdays for two weeks) is **Outdoor Education Days** located in the Bisek Woods near New Prague. For more information visit <http://www.scottswcd.org/>

September 16th (Thursday) is **U of M – Waseca SROC Open House**. 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. in Waseca, MN. Visit the Rural Advantage booth! Learn more about 3rd crops, the Madelia Model, cover crops and more. For more information contact Jeanette Williams at 507-837-5612.

September 20th (Monday) is a **Minnesota River Board Meeting** in Montevideo, MN. Executive Committee meeting at 8:00 a.m. and Full Board meeting at 9:00 a.m.

September 22nd (Wednesday) is **Perennials for Biomass**. 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. in Waseca, MN. Attendees will watch short videos of the biomass harvests from fall 2009. We will then drive to the demonstration site from last fall to view the re-growth of the hybrid poplar and hybrid willow after a year of growing time. Landscape position plots will also be available for viewing as well as other close by biomass plots utilizing grass species. For more information contact Dr. Gregg Johnson at 507-837-5614 or Jill Sackett at 507-238-5449.

September 23rd (Thursday) is **Conservation Day** at SWELL located in rural Cyrus. This even is for 5th grade students in Pope and Stevens Counties. For more information visit <http://www.popeswcd.org/>

October 2nd (Saturday) is a **Minneopa State Park Prairie Restoration** from 12:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. Harry Meyering Center staff and individuals served invite the public to gather, sort, and scatter the seeds of wild flowers and grasses at Minneopa State Park in a project to restore areas of prairie land. For more information go to <http://www.greatermankatoevents.com/event-details.php?id=9881>

October 5th & 6th (Tuesday and Wednesday) is a **Nobel Conference - Making Food Good** at Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter. For more information visit <http://gustavus.edu/events/nobelconference/2010/>

November 2010 are the **Prairie Harvest Field Days**. 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. in Waseca, Morris and Windom, MN. Learn about research being done by Dr. Clarence Lehman and colleagues, discuss benefits of using prairie plants for renewable fuels, view the harvest plots, hear about fall 2009 results and observation. For more information contact Jill Sackett at 507-238-5449 or at sacke032@umn.edu

November 15th (Monday) is a **Minnesota River Board Meeting** in Gaylord, MN. Executive Committee meeting at 8:00 a.m. and Full Board meeting at 9:00 a.m.

Check out additional upcoming events and workshops on the Minnesota River Calendar at: <http://mrbdc.mnsu.edu/calendar/index.html>

Environmental/Conservational Articles:

[At Farmfest, major gubernatorial candidates emphasize links to the land](#) (MinnPost). Some had voiced concern that all of the major gubernatorial candidates have metro roots.

[Gubernatorial candidates talk turkey at Farmfest debate](#) (MinnPost). The candidates for governor dressed down and boned up on their farm-speak at Farmfest.

[Candidates tout farm roots and policy](#) (Star Tribune). Minnesota candidates for governor dripped sweat as they battled each other in front of a lively, sometimes skeptical crowd of about 1,000 farmers Wednesday, just days before voters decide who will survive until November.

[Safe at home: Minneapolis-St. Paul ranks tops in pedestrian safety](#) (MinnPost). Maybe it's because we retain that still small voice inside of us, the one that sounds a lot like our mom's quiet reminder: "Look both ways!" "Don't run in the street!"

[Oberstar schedules hearing on Michigan oil spill](#) (MinnPost). House Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman Jim Oberstar has scheduled a promised hearing on the Michigan oil spill and the safety of similar pipelines owned by Enbridge Inc., including nine in Minnesota.

[Environmental officials stop in St. Paul for listening tour](#) (MPR). Several Obama administration officials came on Wednesday to the Twin Cities for meetings designed to set a new national agenda for conservation.

[A River Runs Through Us](#) (Star Tribune). A great river is the reason why the Twin Cities were founded here. Navigation and mill power anchored St. Paul and Minneapolis. Yesterday that river was the centerpiece of a public meeting in Minneapolis called by the Obama Administration's Great Outdoors initiative.

[Rebuilding our link with nature](#) (Star Tribune). Mai See Khang has never seen Minnesota's pine-studded north country, its western prairies or its bluffs in the southeast.

[Time to take your kids outdoors](#) (Star Tribune). Getting more kids into the outdoors has become such an important national concern that President Obama is sending his top managers around the country looking for the best ways to do it.

[Oberstar plans probe of pipeline company's safety record](#) (MinnPost). Rep. Jim Oberstar has now laid the groundwork for a congressional investigation of Enbridge Inc.'s pipeline maintenance and safety record, set to begin once Congress returns after Labor Day.

[Youth Farm & Market Project's gardens bloom -- and enrich the lives of urban children](#) (MinnPost). It's not unusual to see children splashing in lakes and pools this time of year, but on St. Paul's West Side, they're also romping through gardens yanking out weeds and harvesting onions and basil.

[Residents of St. Paul's Mac-Groveland neighborhood object to removal of ash trees](#) (Pioneer Press). As city crews started clear-cutting ash trees on St. Paul boulevards in anticipation of the all-but-inevitable spread of the emerald ash borer beetle, one neighborhood demanded they hold off — for now.

[Deal could bring Iron Range 600 new mining jobs](#) (MPR). A deal between Chilean and Canadian mining companies could bring as many as 600 new jobs to northeastern Minnesota in the next decade.

[Jeff Brown: It's time to reclaim that gas tax money](#) (Star Tribune). The gas tax is for roads and bridges. Yet \$18.5 million in public gas tax revenue is annually diverted from the maintenance of Minnesota's ailing roads and bridges to motorized recreation. In all, \$350 million in this revenue has been pumped into facilities for snowmobiles, ATVs, dirt-bike motorcycles, four-wheel drive trucks and motorboats.

[3M, Cottage Grove have incinerator deal](#) (Star Tribune). A tentative agreement has been reached at defusing more than a year of discord between Cottage Grove residents and 3M Co. over plans to burn hazardous waste from other firms at its plant near the city.

[Determining dangers of DEET](#) (Star Tribune). DEET may be safe to spray on your skin, but not to swallow in drinking water.

[U of M graduates launch water filtration business](#) (MinnPost). Two College of Science and Engineering graduates from the University of Minnesota plan to use a microbe developed by professors at the school to launch a [new water filtration company](#).

[Minnesota lakeshore lawsuit sends message](#) (Star Tribune). As more homes creep closer to Minnesota's environmentally sensitive lakeshore, the state Department of Natural Resources is pushing back by suing a western Minnesota township that allowed a property owner to build a house 14 feet from Ida Lake.

[Should anglers get lead out?](#) (Star Tribune). The question of whether lead should be banned for use in fishing weights and lures of certain sizes is being raised again.

[Outdoors report: Gubernatorial candidates to attend Game Fair forum](#) (Pioneer Press). Have questions for Minnesota candidates running for governor? The conservation group Sportsmen for Change and the weekly newspaper Outdoors News are sponsoring a candidate forum Saturday at Game Fair.

[Disease kills 900 birds on Marsh Lake in western Minn.](#) (MPR). The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is blaming a large bird die-off in western Minnesota on Newcastle disease, a viral disease that commonly infects cormorants.

[Massive muskies — and lots of 'em](#) (Pioneer Press). Could Lake Mille Lacs be primed to produce a state-record muskie this summer or fall? Two recent catches of unusually large fish and changes in the lake's fish-prey community suggest it might be.

[Cleaner and greener: A private 'takeover' transforms downtown streets](#) (MinnPost). Minneapolis' Downtown Improvement District marked its first anniversary last month with little fanfare. That's too bad because it deserves a standing ovation. After only 13 months on the job, the DID has become an indispensable presence on downtown sidewalks.

[A business boost for Central Corridor](#) (Star Tribune). An estimated 2,000 businesses line the 11-mile stretch of University Avenue between downtown Minneapolis and St. Paul. Most are small firms, accessible only by foot or by parking along the avenue.

[Buying waterfront land? Be sure](#) (Star Tribune). A year after he moved to Brooklyn Park, Don Radzak wanted to make sure the picturesque little pond outside his townhouse stayed wet.

Between Earth and its atmosphere, the amount of water remains constant; there is never a drop more, never a drop less. This is a story of circular infinity, of a planet birthing itself. -Linda Hogan

The Minnesota River Watershed Alliance (Watershed Alliance) is an organized network of citizens, public agencies, and private organizations dedicated to communicating the benefits of an ecology healthy Minnesota River Watershed to others and are actively working towards its improvement and protection. We meet four times a year and encourage landowners and recreational users of the river to be part of the effort. For more information on the Watershed Alliance:
<http://www.watershedalliance.blogspot.com>

Please register at the Minnesota River Watershed Alliance's bulletin board at <http://mail.mnsu.edu/mailman/listinfo/mrwa> to receive regular updates on what is happening in the Minnesota River Watershed.

Thanks,

Scott

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