

THE FARMER'S REPORT

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Wednesday, April 27, 2022



National and state soybean organizations announce upcoming 2022 board elections

BLOOMINGTON – The American Soybean Association (ASA) is now accepting applications for four director positions. ASA directors may serve a maximum of three, three-year terms. Three of the four directors are eligible for additional terms.

ASA Director eligibility requirements indicate that candidates:

- Must be a member of the Illinois Soybean Growers, an affiliate of the American Soybean Association (Visit www.ilsoygrowers.com to join)

- Must be a producer of soybeans as a farm owner, farm manager, or farm operator

- May not be an officer or director of any other national soybean policy organization

- Must be elected by the Illinois Soybean Growers Board

All eligible candidates will be invited to interview with the ISG Board of Directors during their July 2022 Board Meeting in Champaign, prior to the election being conducted at the same meeting. Seating on the ASA Board will take place during ASA's December 2022 meeting in St. Louis. No write-in provision exists for the ASA director elections.

Interested applicants



should complete the online application by 4 p.m. CST on Friday, July 15, 2022.

Additionally, the Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) seeks qualified candidates to fill board seats representing six districts that are up for election in 2022, including:

- District 3: Henderson, Henry, Mercer, Rock Island, Stark, Warren, Whiteside counties

- District 4: Bureau, Grundy, Kendall, LaSalle counties

The ISA board is comprised of 18 district directors and six at-large directors. Board members serve a term of three years and are eligible for up to three terms. Directors currently seated in all six districts are eligible for additional terms.

Eligibility to serve requires candidates be Illinois residents of legal voting age that contribute to the soybean checkoff. Candidates

must also be residents within the district and maintain eligibility during their term(s). The time a director devotes to the organization depends on their level of leadership and representation needs.

To be placed on the ballot, petitions must be completed and filed with the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) in Springfield no later than 5 p.m. CST on May 15, 2022.

A candidate's petition must carry the signatures of at least 250 of the qualified producers from the district where the candidate seeks office, or 5 percent of farmers within the district, whichever is less. Petitions are available by contacting Dustin Scott, ISA Director of Operations, at scottd@ilsoy.org or 309-808-3603.

Those wishing to run as a write-in candidate must also meet the eligibility requirements and submit a Dec-

laration of Intent to IDOA no later than 5 p.m. CST on June 25, 2022. This form is available through IDOA in Springfield by contacting Rachel Hettrick at rachel.hettrick@illinois.gov. Elections will be held on July 7, 2022, at the University of Illinois County Extension Offices in each district.

Please contact ISA Director of Operations, Dustin Scott, at scottd@ilsoy.org or 309-808-3603 with questions or for additional information.

The Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) checkoff and membership programs represent more than 43,000 soybean farmers in Illinois. The checkoff funds market development and utilization efforts while the membership program supports the government relations interests of Illinois soybean farmers at the local, state, and national level, through the Illinois Soybean Growers (ISG). ISA upholds the interests of Illinois soybean producers through promotion, advocacy, and education with the vision of becoming a market leader in sustainable soybean production and profitability. For more information, visit the website www.ilsoy.org and ilsoygrowers.com.

Sundberg joins membership of American Angus Assoc.

MENDOTA – Keri Sundberg, of Mendota, is a new member of the American Angus Association®, reports Mark McCully, CEO of the national breed organization headquartered in Saint Joseph, Mo.

The American Angus Association, with more than 25,000 active adult and junior members, is the largest beef breed association in the world. Its computerized records include detailed information on over 19 million registered Angus.

The Association records ancestral information and

keeps production records and genomic data on individual animals to develop industry-leading selection tools for its members. The programs and services of the Association and its entities—Angus Genetics Inc., Angus Media, Certified Angus Beef LLC and the Angus Foundation—help members advance the beef cattle business by selecting the best animals for their herds and marketing quality genetics for the beef cattle industry and quality beef for consumers.

For more information, visit www.angus.org.

Soy Envoys selected for '22 growing season

BLOOMINGTON – The Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) has named its IL Soy Advisor Soy Envoy class for the 2022 growing season.

Funded by the Illinois Soybean checkoff program, the Soy Envoys represent a partnership between ISA and Illinois Certified Crop Advisers. The Soy Envoys commit to a one-year term to contribute actionable information, advice and in-season updates via the IL Soy Advisor blog to support Illinois soybean farmers in their goals of increasing yields and profits while minimizing environmental impact.

“The ISA agronomy team is excited to work with the new class of Soy Envoys across the state,” says Director of Agronomy Abigail Peterson. “Each one of them will provide new insights that will help our farmers with best management practices, regionally.”

This year the program has expanded to include more than just Certified Crop Advisers (CCAs) and now includes a wide variety of agricultural professionals to bring a broader array of information to Illinois soybean growers through IL Soy Advisor.

Among the 2022 Soy Envoys is Weston Olson of Peru. He is an agronomist with BioLumic, which treats soybean seeds with UV lights to increase yield and vigor performance. He specializes in treating seeds, maintaining field trials, advising his company on best agronomic practices, working closely with trial providers, and collecting vital data from field trials. He manages and runs a multi-generation farm in Bureau County, and holds a bachelor's degree in agronomy management from Illinois State University. The farm manages no-till planting and cover crops on limited acres. Over the past two years, their soybean yield has increased by 28 percent using up-to-date farm practices.

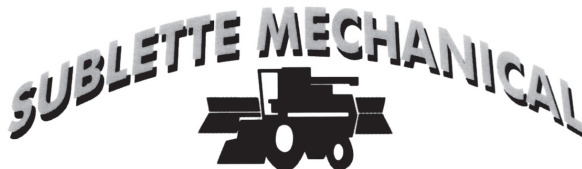


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Farmers invested in efforts to improve nutrient uses, reduce losses

By **KAY SHIPMAN**
FarmWeek

Illinois farmers are invested in tackling one of agriculture's biggest challenges — nutrient management.

Mercer County farmer Jeff Kirwan, chairman of the Illinois Nutrient Research and Education Council (NREC), discussed the importance of farmers' dollars funding research and education ahead of a recent NREC meeting on research updates.

Farmers fund NREC by paying 75 cents per ton on bulk fertilizer bought in the state. Since 2012 when it was formed, NREC has invested \$31 million into

research and education. "We are unique in the United States," Kirwan told FarmWeek. "Our state has a source of funding coming from farmers for nutrient research. Other states legislate dollars toward that."

Not only do farmers invest in the work, but a broad spectrum also plays a role in directing research, according to Kirwan.

Farmers representing farm organizations and commodity groups from different parts of the state along with representatives of the fertilizer industry, environmental community and state agencies determine research priorities. When research proposals are submitted, NREC members evaluate those and determine funding.

The search for answers

remains fluid, Kirwan noted.

"It's living research," he said. "It seems like we're always learning new things from every project. We continue coming up with new things to study and questions we hadn't anticipated."

Those research questions are added to needs along with potential issues that surface during growing seasons.

As NREC work produces results, that information is evaluated for possible inclusion in the statewide Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy (NLRS). "We find new information and keep that goal of addressing accurate assumptions" of nutrient losses, Kirwan said.

In the most recent NLRS biennial report, two new conservation practic-

es were added to options available to reduce losses. Those were saturated buffers and terraces.

Not only is NREC funded by farmers across Illinois, but "all this (NREC) information is available to everybody," Kirwan said. "It's presented for everyone to use." Farmers may apply NREC research information to their farm-

ing operations, he added. Any solutions to improve fertilizer use are timely given the high costs of inputs.

"We're providing research practices to help you (farmers) with nutrient efficiency," Kirwan said. "We have the research backing up these strategies and helping you make decisions. In

these economic times, we (NREC) have the research to provide farmers with support in these times we are dealing with."

(This story was distributed through a cooperative project between Illinois Farm Bureau and the Illinois Press Association. For more food and farming news, visit FarmWeekNow.com.)



Kirwan

Five things to know about working with your local USDA Service Center

By **JUSTIN CARTER**
*Senior project associate
Center for Rural Affairs*

1. Every county has a U.S. Department of Agriculture Service Center that houses Farm Service Agency (FSA) and National Resource Conservation Services (NRCS). This is where farmers and landowners go to access their programs. As a renter you can still work with these agencies.

2. With FSA and NRCS, you can access financial assistance through conservation programs, farming loans, and disaster assistance.

3. What are farm numbers? As a farmer, renter, or landowner, you need a farm number to access NRCS or FSA programs. Farm numbers are free, there is no minimum acreage requirement, and they allow you to vote in county FSA elections or serve on the FSA county committee. Farm numbers stay with the land, not the farmer.

4. How to prepare for your first meeting and what to expect. Determine which office you want to meet with first. Do you need

financial assistance or are you interested in conservation programs? This will help decide what office to meet with first.

Next, think about your farm and your goals. Be prepared to answer questions about your farm, a business plan can help you be prepared. Research programs that might be a good fit, and write down any questions that you have.

For your first meeting, you will want to bring: ID, proof of farm ownership or a rental agreement, and financial and production records, if you have them.

5. Always request a receipt for service following your visit. These are important for your records and the office is required to provide you one for any phone, email, or in-person interaction.

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Illinois researchers find exotic sources of resistance to tar spot in corn

URBANA – When tar spot – a fungal disease of corn capable of causing significant yield loss – popped out of nowhere in 2015, Midwestern corn growers were left scrambling to manage the outbreak with few effective tools. The industry has since made some progress toward management with fungicides, but many researchers agree resistance is the path forward for living with tar spot.

“There are people looking at using mixed-modes-of-action fungicides, but more research is needed to optimize the timing for that. Ultimately, I think having resistant hybrids is the key to managing this disease long term,” says Tiffany Jamann, assistant professor in the Department of Crop Sciences at the University of Illinois and co-author of a new study suggesting certain tropical corn germplasm may provide good sources of tar spot resistance.

Jamann and her collaborators grew 25 corn lines from the USDA’s Germplasm Enhancement of Maize (GEM) project in nine locations across four states. Two accessions

derived from germplasm from Cuba and Brazil – GEMS-0066 and GEMS-0226 – showed promising levels of tar spot resistance, regardless of where they were grown.

“They consistently performed among the top of all the lines in each environment. Showing similar levels of resistance across locations is a really good indicator they’re reliable,” says Sarah Lipps, doctoral student and lead author on the study. “And because these lines are available to the public, anybody can use them in a breeding program to develop resistant hybrids.”

Jamann notes, “These two accessions weren’t perfect. There was still a little bit of disease on them, but I think it’s a good starting point. There are definitely improvements to be made, but they were consistent across a lot of environments for us.”

In addition to identifying two promising sources of resistance, the study offers a new method of scoring tar spot incidence and severity in the field.

“Generally speaking,



when we rate foliar diseases, we use a 0-100% scale,” Lipps says. “But with tar spot, because it makes these small dots on the leaf, it’s really difficult to accurately estimate 5% versus 20%, etc. It’s also hard to estimate disease on a percentage scale across thousands of plants for this disease.

“Looking in the literature, we found a rating scale used for anthracnose – another fungal disease – that considers incidence as well

as coverage in the plot. So we developed a one-to-nine rating scale for tar spot. It is somewhat similar to what is being used in Latin America to score tar spot and works well for our purposes.”

Scoring methods make a big difference in breeding programs. When breeders evaluate dozens or hundreds of lines at a time, they need an efficient and reliable system to gauge resistance.

Although they figured out a scoring system, the researchers struggled to inoculate test plots with tar spot. That’s because the fungus causing the disease can’t be cultured in labs. Instead, they scattered infected plant

residue into plots or grew corn in fields that had been infected the previous year.

With the pathogen left to its own devices, the researchers recognized just how much of a role the environment plays in its development.

“We show very clearly in this paper there are a lot of environmental variables important for this disease. Unfortunately, only about half of our locations wound up having enough infection for us to use the data,” Jamann says.

Previous studies suggest ideal conditions for the disease include humidity above 75%, wet leaves during the

nighttime hours, and temperatures between about 61 and 73 degrees Fahrenheit.

As a next step, Jamann says she plans to look for the genes controlling tar spot resistance. Other researchers have made progress on that in Mexico, but Jamann says the pathogen in Mexico is slightly different from the one corn battles in the upper Midwest. It’s possible the same genes in corn activate to resist in both cases, but that still needs to be determined.

Meanwhile, Jamann thinks seed companies could start screening GEMS-0066 and GEMS-0226 against other materials and potentially cross them into their elite lines.

“Companies have been interested in where we should look for resistance and what might be useful for their breeding programs. That’s why it was important for us to show there is some resistance in these lines,” Jamann says. “So, it’s not like a farmer can go out and plant these lines right away, but they can be useful for breeding.”

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European farmers aren't that different from American producers

By **TIMOTHY EGGERT**
FarmWeek

Standing in front of a decades-old stand of 6,500 apple trees, Vianney Pelletier is content with his family's orchard, cider mill and dairy in northern Normandy.

Pelletier doesn't plan to expand the current production of apple juice, ciders, Calvados and jams. He's not even sure if he will re-establish parts of the orchard after they age past maximum production life or eventually take over the business.

"We are OK with the farm," Pelletier recently told a Market Study Tour delegation of Illinois Farm Bureau members, staff and agribusiness representatives. "Our life is good... we would not want to (expand) and give up the happy, the good life."

Apart from rolling views of the French countryside and a loyal farm dog named Sheepy, life here hasn't always been ideal. The business has had to lean on farm tours, on-farm lodging and other agritourism efforts to boost revenues.

There's also the constant pivoting around variations in yields and returns caused by environmental and economic factors.

That tension — balancing an agricultural livelihood with the quality of rural life — is just as ubiquitous in European agriculture as it is in American agriculture.

And similar to American farmers, 34% of whom are 65 years or older, European farmers are also aging, with 57.9% of European Union farmers 55 years or older and 36% of UK farmers 65 years or older.

European farming operations are also mostly multi-generational, with the total number of people

farming declining, too.

What their farms look like, however, is much different than in the U.S., which has an average farm size of 485 acres. The United Kingdom's average farm size is 200 acres, while only 3% of European Union farms are more than 250 acres.

Government ag subsidies

All those demographics were on display at a 120-head, 345-acre dairy and beef farm near La Carrel in northern Normandy, where the family had recently transitioned their operation, started in 1985, to their son.

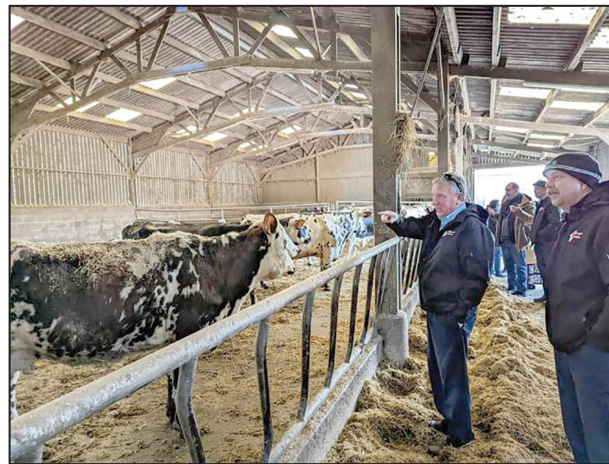
Through an interpreter, he said small farms in the area are consolidating and large farms are growing. Those changes have shifted the price of milk and meat sold to the local cooperative. He'd like to expand his own operation to remain competitive with the larger farms, but "it would be complicated" because of environmental and other ag-related regulations.

Much like American farmers, French farmers also face pressure, and in some cases mandates, from the government and consumers to move toward environmentally friendly farming practices, according to Sénateur de l'Aisne Antoine Lefèvre.

That pressure, Lefèvre added, collides with a producer's bottom line.

"It's all about finding a sweet spot between sensible (organic) farming and conventional farming," Lefèvre said. "It's all about supporting farmers through that transition. We have to transition but that transition has to make sense economically."

Since 1962, the EU has attempted to balance the



Illinois Farm Bureau Vice President Brian Duncan, left, and former IFB Director Brad Temple, right, inspect milking cows at a multi-generational dairy farm in Le Carrel, France. (Photo by Timothy Eggert of FarmWeek)

ag scales in its member countries through a range of financial and legislative support under the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP). It includes direct payments to farmers to help offset a

loss of farm income due to disruptions in markets and other factors.

In 2003, the CAP program's direct payments were reformed, with officials tying them to manda-

tory conditions that farmers practice specific land conservation and animal welfare practices.

Ten years later, CAP payments were again reformed to establish a minimum national average per hectare payment across all member countries. The program was also expanded to include significant funding for rural development. In 2020, CAP totaled nearly 60 billion euros, or 35% of the entire EU budget.

The United Kingdom, which left the EU in 2020, distributes a similar subsidy. Each country — England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland — administers the payment alongside tailored environmental regulations.

Lefèvre, the French senator who represents a rural area in the northern region of France, near the Belgium border, said the CAP pay-

ments are crucial for French farmers. In 2017, 20% couldn't make ends meet on production income alone.

But with EU subsidies becoming increasingly more intertwined with environmental regulations and the French government passing more rules limiting what producers can do on their land, Lefèvre said farmers are worried about competitiveness distortion.

"EU laws and national rules can have a big impact on local farming," Lefèvre said. "They could have strong impact on competitiveness (and) make French farmers less competitive than other European farmers."

(This story was distributed through a cooperative project between Illinois Farm Bureau and the Illinois Press Association. For more food and farming news, visit FarmWeekNow.com.)

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The USDA is keenly interested in understanding the stressors that impact pollinators, including climate change, pests, pathogens and reduced forage.

USDA takes action to strengthen its pollinator research support

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced its strengthened commitment to advancing research and programmatic priorities that support pollinator health by soliciting nominations for members to serve on its newly formed USDA National Pollinator Subcommittee.

The subcommittee will be part of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics (NAREEE) Advisory Board, which

“USDA takes very seriously our duty to protect pollinators so that they can continue to play a critical role in our food production system.”

—Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack

provides feedback to the Secretary of Agriculture, USDA’s science agencies and university collaborators on food and agricultural research, education, extension and economics priorities and policies.

“USDA takes very seriously our duty to protect pollinators so that they can continue to play a critical role in our food production system,” said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. “Pollinator species help produce more than 100 crops grown in the United States. We are keenly interested in understanding the stressors that impact pollinators, including climate change, pests, pathogens and reduced forage. We strive to ensure our research and data in this area are meeting the needs of bee managers and the farmers that rely on pollinators.”

The NAREEE Advisory Board’s Pollinator Subcommittee will provide input on annual USDA strategic pollinator priorities and goals and will make pollinator health-related recommendations to strengthen USDA pollinator research efforts. USDA is both a major funder and conductor of pollinator research, with research initiatives spanning across five USDA mission areas.

NAREEE Board members play an important advisory role for USDA’s science agencies as they shape and advance the large-

scale, collaborative research initiatives needed to address tough challenges that our nation’s farmers, ranchers and consumers face.

USDA is seeking nominations for subcommittee members from individuals with diverse expertise in pollinator health. USDA’s research is organized by five major study areas: Status and Trends (e.g., pollinator inventory and monitoring, economics and social sciences); Pests and Pathogens (both established and emerging); Environmental Stressors (e.g., weather stress, pesticide exposure, migratory and stocking density stress); Forage, Habitat, and Nutrition; and Genetics and Breeding.

USDA expects to appoint seven new Pollinator Subcommittee members in accordance with the federal statute. Candidates selected to the Pollinator Subcommittee may serve 1–3 years with terms anticipated to start in July 2022.

NAREEE is accepting nomination packages from now until May 31, 2022, and should be sent by email to nareee@usda.gov. The Federal Register Notice is available online. For information on how to apply visit the NAREEE website.

To learn more about USDA pollinator activities and research efforts visit USDA’s Pollinator website

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Soy checkoff releases 2021 sustainability overview report

ST. LOUIS — The soy checkoff released its inaugural U.S. Soy Sustainability Overview, which outlines key environmental achievements made by U.S. soybean farmers. Their ongoing commitments will help optimize their efforts to continue providing the most sustainably produced soy to domestic and international customers.

The U.S. Soy Sustainability Overview, developed by the checkoff on behalf of U.S. soybean farmers, details the modern practices and advanced technologies deployed by farmers in recent years to conserve land, water, energy and other natural resources. With the U.S. soybean industry progressing toward its 2025 sustainability goals to reduce land use, soil erosion and greenhouse gas emissions while increasing energy efficiency, significant progress has also been made in the past four decades. Between 1980 and 2020, conservation efforts by U.S. soybean farmers have improved:

- Land use efficiency by 48% per bushel.
- Irrigation water use efficiency by 60% per bushel.
- Energy use efficiency by 46% per bushel.
- Greenhouse gas emissions efficiency by 43% per bushel.
- Soil conservation by 34% per acre.
- Soy production by 130%, using roughly the same amount of land.

“With the world demanding sustainably sourced food, feed, fuel and thousands of other nonfood products, we know that U.S. Soy plays

an outsized role in delivering solutions in the U.S. and around the globe,” said Polly Ruhland, USB CEO. “Continuously improving is at the heart of our work in optimizing sustainability throughout the value chain. Our soybean farmers are committed to sharing the progress we have made and how we’re looking ahead to contribute in solving some of society’s biggest challenges, such as food security and sustainable energy.”

U.S. farmers realize these gains by employing a range of sustainability best practices, including cover crops, crop rotation and conservation tillage, to maximize yields while also capturing carbon from the atmosphere and conserving soil, water and other precious natural resources. Advances in technology, such as precision farming equipment and drones, also support more sustainable farming.

These efforts advance the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which provide a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. U.S. Soy initiatives directly support SDG Goal 2: Zero Hunger and intersect with other goals such as Clean Water and Sanitation, Responsible Consumption and Production, Climate Action, Life on Land, and Partnership.

“When my father started farming in the ‘60s, 30-bushel-an-acre soybeans was a good yield. When I started in the ‘90s, it was 45,” said Tim Bardole, USB farmer-leader and soybean farmer from

Iowa. “Today, if we don’t grow 70-bushel-an-acre soybeans, it’s considered a disappointment. To me, that proves sustainability. If we are damaging the land, it would not produce the way it does, all while implementing practices like no-till to strengthen our soil’s resiliency, preventing runoff and erosion.”

Looking beyond the farm, USB spurs innovation to develop new uses for soy’s meal and oil components, in many cases advancing solutions that provide renewable and more climate-friendly alternatives to fossil fuels and carcinogens. For example, USB fostered advances in biodiesel, which uses soy oil to provide fuel that has the potential to reduce greenhouse emissions by up to 86% compared with petroleum diesel. Additionally, U.S. soybeans are increasingly used as a sustainable alternative to chemicals found in plastic, paints and adhesives and helps support 4.6 million American biobased jobs, according to a 2019 U.S. Department of Agriculture report.

The U.S. Soy Sustainability Overview highlights climate-smart farming practices stimulating results, shares the stories of farmers across the country like Bardole who have driven dramatic improvements simultaneously in sustainability and productivity, and establishes a benchmark for U.S. Soy, setting the foundation for broader measurement and reporting in the years ahead. For regular updates about U.S. soybean sustainability, please visit ussoy.org.



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SOIL & WATER STEWARDSHIP WEEK

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“THE LIVING SOIL”

While most of us seldom come in daily contact with soil, we all depend on soil for our daily survival, according to organizers of the Soil and Water Stewardship Week observance. In generation after generation, it is important to bring full attention back to the central theme - the living soil sustains all life on earth. Without the soil, nothing lives. Conservation districts work to protect healthy soils that in turn support a healthy environment, and healthy environments support healthy life.

We eat the food, drink water, breathe the air, and enjoy the views, but only a few of us walk the fields and forests on a regular basis and understand what those lands need from us in order to sustain the living soil. However, the local district has suggested three things each of us can do in our own backyards to be better stewards of our soil resources:

1. Protect the soil from wind or water erosion by keeping healthy plants growing on the surface.
2. Restore & maintain organic matter in the soil, such as grass clippings or tree leaves (compost).
3. Protect soil life by using the least amounts and least toxic materials to control pest problems.



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