

STOKES SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT (SWCD)
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NC CONTINUES TO PREPARE FOR POSSIBLE AVIAN INFLUENZA OUTBREAK

RALEIGH – State Veterinarian Doug Meckes announced additional precautions that are being put in place to help North Carolina prepare for a possible introduction of highly pathogenic avian influenza.

The NC Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services (NCDA&CS) is requiring all poultry owners, regardless of the number of birds, to register for an **NCFARMID number**, Meckes said. This will facilitate the department in alerting poultry owners about an outbreak, especially owners in close proximity to a positive farm. Poultry owners can also sign up for a national premises ID number, but it is not required. Anyone already part of the National Poultry Improvement Plan is exempt from this requirement. An online sign-up form was made available on August 1.

“In planning our response for highly pathogenic avian influenza, one problem we’ve come across is that we can’t protect birds that we don’t know exist,” Meckes said. “We need to know where poultry are located so we can properly protect commercial and backyard flocks.”

Information gathered through NCFarmID registration is used solely for animal health purposes. This critical data will provide animal health officials with necessary contact information in case of an animal health concern, and help identify animals and premises that may have been affected.

The NCDA&CS is also requiring any commercial poultry grower with 200 or more birds to submit a HPAI outbreak plan. A commercial poultry grower would be any grower under contract with an integrated company.

“It is very important that growers think through the worst-case scenario, because a confirmation of high-path avian flu would certainly be a worst-case scenario,” Meckes said. “We want each grower to consider their resources and location to determine how they can best handle an outbreak in a way that is environmentally sensitive and gets them back online as soon as is feasible.”

An HPAI Outbreak Plan template was made available on the department’s website on August 1. Growers will need to submit the plan to the Veterinary Division no later than September 15. While only commercial growers will be required to submit the plan, all flock owners are encouraged to plan ahead and consider how they would respond to a confirmed positive.

Last month, Meckes and Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler announced that bird shows and sales would be halted from August 15 to January 15, 2016. The intent is to prevent birds from commingling and spreading the HPAI virus. Individual sales are still allowed to take place. For more information go to www.ncagr.gov/avianflu ♦

COST SHARE ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE FOR LANDOWNERS

If you have erosion problems or water quality issues on your farm, you may be eligible to receive cost share assistance through the NC Agriculture Cost Share Program, the Dan River 319 Grant Program, and/or the Environmental Quality Incentives Program. All of these voluntary programs have proven successful in addressing agricultural non-point source pollution problems. Eligible participants may receive up to 75% cost share funding on practices such as riparian buffer restoration, excluding livestock from streams, installing alternative watering systems, heavy use area protection, converting croplands to permanent perennial vegetation or trees, and long term no-till planting to name a few. If you are interested in applying for any of these programs, please call the Stokes SWCD office at 336.593.2846 ext. 3 for an application and information on program eligibility. Approval of applicants are based on highest need of water quality improvement. Contracts must receive final approval before the practices are installed. ♦

FREE EROSION SOLUTION GUIDE FOR STREAM OWNERS

Do you have a stream on your property that is eroding land during or after storm events? Maybe the stream has started cutting deeper into the channel, creating more of a gully. What kind of solutions are available? *Small-scale Solutions to Eroding Streambanks* gives you the tools to choose the best option for your situation. Get a free copy of the publication at the following URL: <http://forsyth.ces.ncsu.edu/2015/07/new-guide-for-stream-owners-with-erosion-issues/> What’s inside the guide? Options including: Do nothing ▪ Plant vegetation without grading ▪ Grade banks to a stable slope and vegetate! ▪ Step by step instructions for the option you choose ▪ Who to call for advice ▪ Materials needed and where you can get them ▪ What plants are proven to work ▪ Example planting guide design ▪ and Maintenance tips. ♦

DISTRICT BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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2015 CONSERVATION FARM FAMILY OF THE YEAR

Congratulations to Cheryl Ferguson and Ray Tuegel of Plum Granny Farm in King for being selected as our 2015 Conservation Farm Family of the Year. Plum Granny Farm was chosen due to the sound conservation measures implemented on the 54 acre organic family farm in the Flat Shoals community. Products grown on the farm include many different varieties of garlic, as well as raspberries, blackberries, strawberries, potatoes, tomatoes, beans, cabbage, onions, salad greens and lettuce, specialty peppers, swiss chard, kale, ginger, turmeric, and cut flowers to name a few. They also produce and sell many different jams made from their own organic farm-grown products. Cheryl & Ray follow stringent USDA certified organic standards on the farm as well as an approved conservation farm plan that ensures conservation measures are implemented to protect the natural resources. Best management practices installed and maintained on the farm include field borders, cover crops, crop rotation and grassed waterways. Drip irrigation is also used to water and fertilize all cropland in order to reduce runoff and conserve water. Cheryl & Ray were honored at the Stokes SWCD banquet on May 21 with a prestigious plaque for their outstanding devotion to conservation and the preservation of our natural resources. *Pictured to the left (top) is Cheryl & Ray receiving their award at the banquet; (bottom) is Cheryl & Ray working in their greenhouse.* ♦



2015 CONSERVATION EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR

Leslie Nichole Smith, an 8th grade science teacher from Southeastern Middle School, was recognized as the 2015 Conservation Educator of the Year by the Stokes SWCD at our banquet on May 21. Ms. Smith is a devoted teacher that incorporates hands-on activities in her classroom so that students can receive a better understanding and appreciation of our natural resources. Students in her classes participate in experiments and activities involving water conservation, water treatment and testing, renewable energy exploration, and environmental scavenger hunts to name a few. Ms. Smith says that she considers teaching her “calling” which is evident in her commitment to her students. By creating these hands-on experiences for the children many have confessed that they’ve made changes at home to be more environmentally conservative. Congratulations Ms. Smith and thank you for all your hard work and dedication! *Pictured to the right (top) is Ms. Smith receiving her award; (bottom) is Ms. Smith’s students conducting a water filtration experiment.* ♦



SOIL & WATER BOARD MEMBERS TO RECEIVE “YEARS OF SERVICE” AWARD

Stokes SWCD Board Members James Booth and Johnny East will both receive service awards from the NC Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts at their Area Meeting in West Jefferson, NC on October 8, 2015. Mr. Booth will receive his 15 year service award while Mr. East will receive his 10 year service award. Thank you both for your commitment to soil and water conservation over the years! ♦

STOKES SWCD SPONSORS LOCAL STUDENT TO ATTEND CONSERVATION WORKSHOP

On June 21-26 the NC Association of Soil Conservation Districts sponsored the annual Resource Conservation Workshop held at NC State University in Raleigh. Soil & Water Districts across the state were asked to select one high school student from their county to attend. The Stokes SWCD chose Hailey Ramey, a Stokes Early College High School student, as our 2015 student delegate due to her outstanding application and expressed interest in natural resource conservation.

At the workshop Hailey learned about soil characteristics, soil conservation, nonagricultural uses for soils, wildlife, fisheries management, forest management, air quality, water quality, and watershed management. *Pictured to the left (standing) is Hailey receiving forestry training while at the workshop.* ♦



NC FOREST SERVICE RECEIVING ORDERS FOR TREE SEEDLINGS

If you need native, NC-sourced hardwood, cypress, cedar or pine seedlings, you can now place your order and make purchases from the NC Forest Service for the 2015-16 season. A new website and seedling catalog have been developed to make it easier to order at www.buynctrees.com; or if you know exactly what you need, you can call the tree nursery direct, toll-free at 1-888-NCTREES! The seedling catalog is available at http://ncforestservice.gov/nursery/pdf/NCFS_Tree_Seedling_Catalog.pdf. And don't forget native, warm-season grasses. There are multiple grass species available for sale from the NC Forest Service as well. ♦

STOKES COUNTY FAIR EXHIBIT

Make plans to attend the Stokes County Fair being held on September 15-19 in King. While there check out the Stokes SWCD exhibit that will be displayed in the American Legion building (upstairs). Brochures, educational pamphlets and conservation program information will be available at our exhibit. ♦

Visit our website at www.stokesswcd.org to view our 2014-15 Annual Report