Hardin Field Day Tackles Ag Issues

*Hardin County* – ‘Agricultural Conservation, Protecting Water: Keeping Soil and Nutrients in the Field’ will be the theme of the Hardin County Field Day on September 18. The event will start out at the Jerry McBride Farm, 11312 County Road 60, Dola, Ohio at 8:30 am and will end at 1:30 pm with complimentary lunch. The field day is being presented by the Hardin SWCD, USDA-NRCS, The Nature Conservancy, Findlay Implement Company, John Deere, and OSU Extension. The field day addresses several ag conservation and water quality issues.

Wagon tours will transport attendees to three different farms in addition to a Corn Response to Nitrogen plot where OSU Extension Agronomic Field Specialist Harold Watters and Hardin County Extension Educator Mark Badertscher will discuss common myths about choosing a nitrogen rate. They will also discuss ways nitrogen is lost to the environment. The focus will be on maximum economic yield being the goal with minimal loss to the environment. Attendees will also get to see aerial images of the plot treatments and find out about use of a handheld crop sensor in the Corn Response to Nitrogen plot.

Justin Leader of the Findlay Implement Company will demonstrate a soil moisture probe with John Deere’s Field Connect System. He will explain the soil moisture probe, Field Connect Gateway and attachments. Field Connect gives users the opportunity to remotely monitor soil moisture, rainfall, soil radiation, and other environmental conditions within a field from any device that is capable to connect to the internet.

Concurrent sessions will be offered on nutrient management with a demonstration of injecting liquid manure into a growing crop by OSU Extension Manure Nutrient Management Field Specialist Glen Arnold. His on-farm research focuses on the use of livestock manure as a spring top-dress fertilizer on wheat and as a side-dress fertilizer for corn. Arnold’s research goal is to
move livestock producers toward applying manure during the crop growing season instead of late fall application window.

Wetland and Soil Consulting Services and retired USDA soil scientist Frank Gibbs will describe the essential components to your Soil Health Tool Box and the results the Arden Good family has achieved with a Soil Pit discussion and a Smoking Tile demonstration called ‘making your soil smoke.’ Gibbs has an extensive background in Water Tables in the Soil, Soil Compaction, Soil Health, Cover Crops, Manure Disposal, Preferential Flow, and Drainage Problems.

Darke County Extension Educator Sam Custer will give an update on the current legislation regarding nutrient management. Custer is the statewide leader of the Ohio State University Signature Program, “Nutrient Stewardship for Cleaner Water”. Fertilizer applicators in the Lake Erie watershed and the entire state are affected by Senate Bill 1 and 150, which have requirements for the application of nutrients on agricultural land.

Crosby McDorman from the Findlay Implement Company will conduct a field demonstration of incorporating commercial fertilizers using the John Deere 2510H with Montag Cart. This piece of equipment will be run to demonstrate minimal disturbance and the placement of fertilizer within the soil. McDorman will talk about the benefits with incorporating fertilizer into the soil profile and the benefits of using this tool bar. Equipment capabilities will be discussed.

Other concurrent sessions to choose from include Drainage Water Management by Nathan Utt from Ecosystem Services Exchange. Utt has travelled extensively throughout the Midwest to work with contractors, farmers, landowners, universities, and government agencies on the design and implementation of effective edge-of-field conservation practices. Is it possible to improve water quality at the same time you are improving your yields? With a little planning, your tile system can do more than just get rid of water. It can be managed to reduce nutrient loss, improve soil moisture, and even serve as an irrigation system. Come learn how a Managed Drainage System could be put to work on your farm.

Dr. Jon Witter, Assistant Professor in the Agricultural and Engineering Technologies Division at The Ohio State University - Agricultural Technical Institute will give an overview of the two-stage ditch design, potential benefits and costs, and a description of a process to determine if a two-stage ditch is potentially a good practice for you. He will be joined by Lauren Lindemann, Western Lake Erie Basin Conservation Director for The Nature Conservancy. Over the last three years, Lindemann has worked for the Conservancy across state lines on ag conservation and demonstration watershed work for healthy soil, slowing the flow, and Lake Erie. See a two-stage ditch that is installed at this site and find out how it works to filter nutrients out of the water.
Tile research and phosphorus will be the topic of Kevin King, who is a research agricultural engineer with the USDA-ARS. King is leading an effort in Ohio to assess the edge-of-field effects of different management practices on phosphorus movement in surface runoff and the drainage discharge. This Agricultural Research Service network consists of 20 paired fields in the Eastern Corn Belt region of Ohio. Hear about the updates on current edge-of-field research related to phosphorus movement in surface and tile drainage pathways.

Jamie Scott will lead a discussion of the pros and cons of 10 different cover crop plots. Each plot has different species that help do an array of things for the soil and nutrients. Learn how to choose the cover crop for your needs. The Scotts were named ‘Conservationist of the Year’ by The American Soybean Association in 2008. The Scotts have been using no-till for over 25 years to help increase oxygen content in the soils and increase earthworm populations as well as other biological activity. Bring your cover crops questions to this session and find out the answers from this recognized expert.

The Hardin County Field Day ‘Agricultural Conservation, Protecting Water: Keeping Soil and Nutrients in the Field’ requires participants to pre-register to ensure a lunch count for the event. Please call the Hardin Soil and Water Conservation District at 419-673-0456 extension 3 by September 10 to attend this free event. CCA and CLM credits are pending.

*Attached photo caption: A smoking tile demonstration will be a part of the 2015 Hardin County Field Day to demonstrate healthy soil and proper drainage.*