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Current Resident or:

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Issue  
**ONE**

Vol. 35

A Quarterly Insight into Conservation and Agriculture Today

Towner County Soil Conservation District

# by The Acre



**More Info >>>**

**Federal Shutdown**

- Ψ All USDA reports are ceased: exports, markets, production, etc.
- Ψ Rural Development, USFS, & RMA offices closed
- Ψ Market Facilitation Program extended
- Ψ NRCS State & Area staff may be furloughed
- Ψ Implementation of Farm Bill programs slowed
- Ψ FSA employees furloughed
- Ψ SCD would relocate during NRCS shutdown. Watch for emails.

Contact Info for TCSCD:  
 701.370.7764 cell  
[townercountysoil@gmail.com](mailto:townercountysoil@gmail.com)

"No civilization has outlived the usefulness of its soils. When the soil is destroyed, the nation is gone."

Lloyd Noble  
 (1896-1950)  
 oilman, philanthropist

## "What a Shutdown Means"

*NRCS and SCDs in North Dakota*

With the potential government shutdown, many people have questions about why certain offices are open or not. It varies on the fiscal year and the agencies financial and employee status. The NRCS employees are Federally employed. FSA employees can be a mix of Federal and Federal/County. For Soil Conservation Districts, they are county funded. Therefore still able to work as scheduled, whether the NRCS office is closed or open during shutdown. Many SCD's are in a contribution agreement with NRCS. Exchanged services such as rent, phone, internet, vehicle usage, and other necessities for assistance carrying out USDA programs and office work. If NRCS is shut down, the SCD's can't assist them with any work, therefore lose access to those things NRCS provides. Duties become strictly SCD related. A separate laptop, printer, phone, and non-government email are to used during that time frame. Once shutdown procedures are final, SCD's are not allowed into the office. They must transfer and take everything needed for the unknown length of time. Most SCDs work from home, but some

use their county courthouse or Extension offices as a backup. Map making, forms, and a variety of other files will be limited. Work hours and locations will vary between counties. If there is another full shutdown, we ask that you be patient and understand the situation is not ideal, nor permanent. State and Area staff will be furloughed first as to keep offices open that work directly with producers. An email will be sent out to our mailing list with more information if an NRCS shut down does occur. Notification will be sent again when we reopen and are fully functioning in the USDA offices. Thank you for your business and we look forward to working with everyone in 2019.



HOME TOPICS OUR AGENCY MEDIA

**Status:**

This website will not be updated during a lapse in federal funding. Content on this website will not be current or maintained until funding issues have been resolved.

## final thoughts...



"The health of soil, plant, animal and man is one and indivisible."

Soil Association founder, Lady Eve Balfour

**Supervisors & Staff >>>**

- Bruce Teubner
- Karl Solberg
- Sharla Henderson
- Kirk Larson
- Marty Amble
- Carie Moore-SCD Dist. Manager
- Brandon Meyer-SCD Biologist
- Brandon Schwab-NRCS District Conservationist
- Jesse Mastrian-NRCS Soil Con
- Ross Myers-NRCS Soil Tech
- Gina Beck-Office Asst.



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## Kids Corner: Conversation Hearts

For the first time in 153 years, we'll be celebrating Valentine's Day without Sweetheart's Conversation Hearts. The New England Confectionery Company (Necco) is no longer producing the classic Valentine's Day candy, which means you'll need to find another way to send sweet messages to your loved ones this year.

Sweethearts first began making conversation hearts in 1866. The operation was taken over by Necco in 1901 & since then they've become the most popular Valentine's Day candy in 21 states. Last year, The Candy Store reported that Sweethearts Conversation Hearts were the most popular Valentine's Day candy in America. So what happened? Until 2018, Necco was the oldest continually operating candy company—but in July, the company abruptly closed & announced they needed to sell. Someone either needed to buy all of Necco or purchase the brands individually. In September, Necco was purchased by Round Hill Investments, who then sold the Sweethearts brand to Spangler Candy Company. Because of the time it takes to create the supply of conversation hearts, Spangler Candy Company didn't have enough time to make the hearts for 2019. It took Necco 11 months to produce 8 billion conversation hearts—all of which would be sold in the 6 weeks leading up to Valentine's Day. Since Necco's factories were closed down in July & Spangler didn't take over until September, they weren't able to keep up with demand for 2019. The good news is, Spangler's CEO has already announced the hearts will be back on shelves in 2020. *(Better Homes & Gardens~Emily VanSchmus)*

## Sweethearts

- Necco produced about 100,000 pounds of SweetHearts every day.
- Necco produced about 8 billion conversation hearts each year.
- The full supply is sold within a 6-week period, right before Valentine's Day.
- It took Necco 11 months to produce that many SweetHearts.

## Your Voice >>> WOTF Workshop

Our initial meetings will be on Feb. 14th for our Women on the Farm Workshop and the county Ag Day so stay tuned for those upcoming spring dates. If you have an idea or suggestions for a topic, please contact Lindy at NDSU-Ext. or Carie at the TCSCD. We are excited these events are appreciated and attended!



## BlackGold Farms: Spuds are Buds

Humble potatoes are food waste reduction "Rock Stars". These starchy veggies store like a dream in cool, dark places, & leftover cooked potatoes can be repurposed in a variety of dishes from breakfast hashes to soups to burritos. Just ask farmer Gregg Halverson. Gregg is the president & chairman of Black Gold Farms. His farm, which has been in the Halverson family since 1928, grows & markets potatoes in 11 states, stretching from Florida to North Dakota. Black Gold Farms specializes in growing a variety of spuds including sweet potatoes, chip & fry processing potatoes as well as tablestock potatoes for the retail & food service trade. If you've eaten a bag of Lay's brand potato chips, you've likely tasted the handiwork of Black Gold Farms.

With the family operation spanning multiple generations & many states, it should come as no surprise that sustainability is a key focus contributing to the company's success. It all starts with people, community & transparency.

*"A farmer should be the ultimate example of sustainability," Gregg said. "Sustainability does not happen like a light switch, which may be turned on or off. It's how you treat the land & each other. I have eight granddaughters, & I want to make the land, my business & our world a better place so, they have something to work with for the long term."*

A few of the ways Black Gold Farms digs deeper for sustainability include harnessing next-generation technology that's more fuel efficient, soil testing for precise fertilizer applications & field rotations to protect the land while maintaining growth & quality. They also use practices to reduce soil compaction & manage water & wind erosion. Out of the field, their corporate headquarters is LEED

Gold certified, exemplifying their commitment to energy efficiency for the future.

Reducing global food waste is another element of being environmentally friendly that starts on the farm. Gregg & his family strive to grow the best quality crops possible & do their best to try to find a way for every potato to find a home in the marketplace. They use crop protection products, like herbicides & insecticides, to eliminate harmful weeds & bugs before they can damage the end crop. This helps every piece of produce they grow to make its way from their fields to your plate.

No matter how careful farmers are about applying crop protection products, there's always a small portion of produce that won't be fit for retail. Flawed produce can be used for other purposes, such as animal feed. So-called "ugly" potatoes can even be added to soups or other processed foods for a boost of nutrition.

*"We do try to collaborate with our customers to sell every ounce of product we have," Gregg explained. "We try to find a place in the food chain that will accept literally everything we produce."*

They also strategically select land throughout the U.S. in order to provide locally grown products. Growing potatoes closer to markets eliminates "food miles" or the need to haul them long distances. This helps products reach people sooner, enhancing freshness & naturally extending shelf life to reduce the amount of waste.

As for households reducing food waste, Gregg recommends keeping an eye on portion size & not cooking more than your family needs. Potatoes, he said, are the ultimate portion control food: ready for you in whatever size you need, from tiny fingerlings, to large red bakers, to frozen tater tots. *(No Taste For Waste~Black Gold Farms)*



## Soil & Water Conservation: Partnership With a Purpose



North Dakota Department of Health Environmental Health Section

### A Partnership for Improving Soil and Water Conservation

By Jim Collins, Jr., Environmental Scientist, North Dakota Department of Health

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines "partnership" as a relationship usually involving close cooperation between parties having specified and joint rights and responsibilities.

For the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) and soil conservation districts (SCDs) working on watershed projects, strong partnerships are critical.

NDDoH The NDDoH contributes both financial and technical assistance to the partnerships.

Financial assistance is primarily available for water quality projects through two sources:

- Section 319 nonpoint source pollution management funds
- Section 604(b) water quality management planning funds

These funds can be used for watershed assessments and help cover costs associated with staffing, water quality monitoring, watershed planning and best management practice (BMP) implementation. Since 1999, the NDDoH has allocated more than \$44 million in funding to SCDs. Depending on the source of the funds, there may be a requirement for local matching funds.

Technical assistance is also provided and may include:

- Analyzing sampling data
- Preparing summary reports
- Writing Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) reports
- Developing watershed restoration projects
- Scheduling and providing training for watershed staff

SCDs The SCDs, which are independent local units of government, have a very specific mission as set forth in North Dakota Century Code (NDCC) 4.1-20-01. As stated, "It is the policy of this state and within the scope of this chapter to provide for the conservation of the soil and soil resources of this state and for the control and prevention of soil erosion, and to preserve the state's natural resources, control floods, prevent impairment of dams and reservoirs, assist in



Dustin Krueger, Spiritwood Lake Watershed Coordinator, provides project update to residents of the watershed.

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maintaining the navigability of rivers, preserve wildlife, protect the tax base, protect public lands, and protect and promote the health, safety, and general welfare of the people of this state."

The SCD serves as the critical local point of contact with producers. SCD supervisors, many of whom are producers themselves, are expected to know the types and extent of natural resource concerns and needs in their districts.

Typically, the SCDs contributions to the partnership are:

- Housing watershed project staff
- Working with landowners to implement BMPs
- Tracking expenditures
- Providing public education
- Conducting monitoring activities to measure project success

To learn more about the NDDoH-SCD partnership or to partner on a water quality improvement project, please call the NDDoH Watershed Management Program at 701.328.5210.

## Food for Thought...

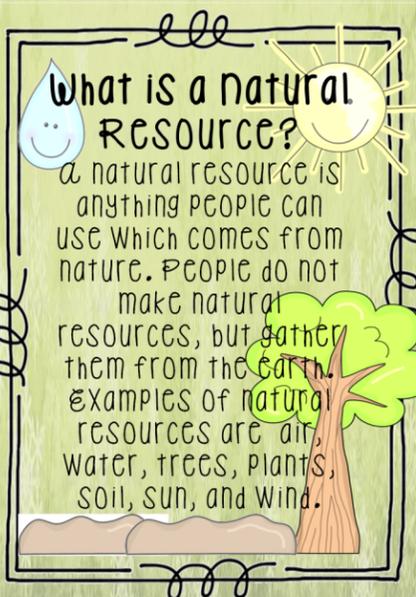
Palmer amaranth & houndstongue have been added to the state noxious weed list.

Palmer amaranth is an aggressive pigweed species similar in appearance to waterhemp & it has now been found in 5 counties. It may spread through multiple channels, including: contaminated seed mixes; equipment & machinery movement; animal feed & bedding; & wild birds. It grows rapidly at 2-3 inches per day in optimum conditions & is prone to herbicide resistance & multiple modes of action.

Houndstongue, does not spread as aggressively, but infestations have tripled since 2008. It is now found in at least 25 counties Houndstongue is toxic to livestock if ingested. *(ND Dept of Ag excerpt)*

## Tidbits...

Tree order forms were sent out. If you still need one please contact the office. Don't forget about the 10% off-if paid in full-by March 1st. There will only be 1 tree sale and a very limited amount of extra trees ordered.



## ask the experts >>>

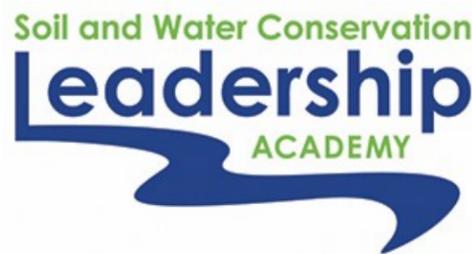
**Q:** Is the Superbowl important to ag?

**A:** Footballs which can be made of pig or cow hides are the key to the game. Secondly comes the food. Chicken wings, chips, pizza, and hotdogs are all produced by farmers & ranchers.



## On Location- Watershed Leadership!

Our District was able to be a sounding board for helping put together a new program for the SCDs and watershed boards/employees. The Watershed Leadership Academy has had a successful year. It is designed to build your skills and enhance your ability to lead watershed, conservation and community-based projects that will protect water quality for future generations. Many different agencies and groups have attended. Look for one in your area.



## Pollinator Habitat Vital to Upland Nesting Birds and You

Without pollinators our world's food supply would not exist, with 75%-90% of the world's flowering plants depending on them to reproduce. One of the most crucial pollinators, honey bees, has an estimated



habitat more diversity in plant species equals better habitat. To keep pollinators coming back you are going to want to plant a variety of forbs that will flower from a period of April to October, the diversity provides a broad range of

\$14-\$18 billion per year in economic benefit to agriculture. Honey bees and other pollinators are also vital to upland nesting birds such as Sharp-tailed Grouse and Ring-necked Pheasants, especially when they are in the early stages of their development. There are a few steps that can be taken to improve the pollinator habitat on your land, that will

cover for the chicks and a variety of flowering plants that cater to a wide range of pollinators, and being upland chicks survive almost entirely off insects after hatch, more pollinators visiting the flowers translates directly to more food for the young chicks.



not only benefit the bees, but also help with upland bird production. First off, when planning pollinator

If you are interested in pollinator habitat on a chunk of land visit your local USDA service center. Pollinators are an invaluable resource to agriculture and with a few small steps you can be part of helping them, and at the same time improve upland bird habitat and the look of the grassland acres on your property.

*(Brandon Meyer-SCD)*

## Conservation Helping Hands >>>

### Pigs~Pies~Sheep Oh My!!



It has been a busy fall around here since school started. We are fortunate to have struck a monthly time slot in 3 schools' various classrooms. Munich, Wolford, and Cando elementary schools are learning about agriculture and how everyday food and fiber products are traced back to a farm. Classes range currently from K-6th grades. Last quarter we did Pumpkins, Porktober, and Sheep to Sweater. The students have had fun

making pumpkin pies, Christmas ornaments, and "extra" - ordinary pigs. A book is read and donated to each school after the visit. "How Many Seeds in a Pumpkin", "From Sheep to Sweater", and few pig books were chosen to coordinate with the lessons.

This is an outreach effort between the schools, SCD, Farm Bureaus, and the City of Cando tax grant. Please ask your students about what they learned and go through the take home information. Let them teach you something new.

They are so excited to go home and tell their families.

We have done our January visit and we received donations from an out of state commodity crop and group. Stay tuned for that exciting visit recap!



If you have a group or an event you would like us to do a project with of any kind as it relates to agriculture, trees and forestry, or natural resources, don't hesitate to call us. We have a lot of resources, connections, and information on hand to cover most topics. Ag in the Classroom is an effective, fun way to get



kids hands on with agriculture. We post pictures of all the events on our FaceBook page and in the paper as well, so be sure and check it out.



Within this little  
miracle grows new



## Annual Report ~ 2018

### Jan-Feb-March

- ✓ Board elected Kirk Larson-Chairman & Bruce Teubner -Vice Chairman
- ✓ Annual meeting , audit, & re-organization
- ✓ Business plans & manuals updated
- ✓ Ladies Ag "From Our Roots We Grow Strong"
- ✓ Attended Lake Region round-up
- ✓ Attended Area 1 SCD meeting in Langdon
- ✓ Fourth Annual Towner County Ag Day
- ✓ Attended Tree Promotion Meeting
- ✓ Watershed Leadership Academy with NDSU & ND Dept. of Health
- ✓ "Who Grew My Soup" with Cando & Munich elementary schools
- ✓ Letter of support of SSCC & NDSU to ND Ag Committee
- ✓ Purchased cell phone for in the field

### April-May-June

- ✓ NRCS contribution agreement renewed
- ✓ Attended Farm Safety Day in Rugby with NDFB
- ✓ Assisted Farm Bureau with Special Assignment Pizza (SAP) in DL, Rolette, & Rugby.
- ✓ Third Annual Women on the Farm Workshop/ Annie's Project
- ✓ Community Garden projects with summer reading program
- ✓ Community Outreach Garden with FSA, NRCS, NDSU-Extension, & Towner County Veterans.
- ✓ Soil Stewardship materials distributed
- ✓ Keep ND Clean poster contest
- ✓ 19,905 ft. of trees/16,580 ft. of weed barrier
- ✓ Handplanted 600+ trees
- ✓ Sold cover crop & grass seed
- ✓ Sign for county line with Rolette County
- ✓ Grass seedings done with no-till drill
- ✓ New garage door on tree shed

### July-Aug-Sept

- ✓ Worked on tree shed cleanup
- ✓ Second Annual Progressive Ag Safety Day
- ✓ Purchased ATV for OHF/EQIP project
- ✓ Seeding of OHF "Give Me Back My Acres"
- ✓ Attended Big Sioux Nursery open house & tour in South Dakota
- ✓ Attended TCCIA annual plot tour
- ✓ Mill Levy & Budget approved

### Oct-Nov-Dec

- ✓ Attended NDASCD annual convention
- ✓ Held Eco-Ed at Tree Shed for 7th grade
- ✓ Started planning 2019 events
- ✓ "What's in my Lunchbox, PORKtober, Pumpkins & Pies, Sheep to Sweater" - Ag in the Classroom with Munich, Cando, & Wolford schools.
- ✓ Attended NRCS restructuring meeting

### Yearly

- ✓ Monthly meetings held with SCD staff, NRCS-DC, & supervisors
- ✓ Sit on Towner County Advisory Council with quarterly meetings
- ✓ Newsletters published quarterly
- ✓ Assisting NRCS with various program plans & contracts as well as office assistance
- ✓ Active cooperative partnerships with NDFS, NRCS, FSA, NDSU-Ext., City of Cando, USFWS, NDGF, Dakota Precision Ag Center, Pheasants Forever, Towner County officials & employees, local elevators & implement dealers, local businesses & many others. Please support our sponsors.
- ✓ Continued work on improving & increasing conservation in the county

*\* We are always striving for increased ways serve the county, your input & ideas are always welcome! \**