COUNTY OF KENDALL, ILLINOIS
Health & Environment Committee
County Office Building
County Board Room 210

Monday, August 20, 2018 – 8:30a.m.
MEETING AGENDA

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call: Judy Gilmour (Chair), Elizabeth Flowers (Vice Chair), Tony Giles, Matthew Prochaska, John Purcell

3. Approval of Agenda

4. Approval of Minutes from July 16, 2018

5. Status Reports
   - Board of Health
   - Health Department
   - Soil & Water
   - Water Related Groups
   - Other Reports

6. Old Business

7. New Business

8. Chairman’s Report

9. Public Comment

10. Questions from the Media

11. Action Items for the County Board

12. Executive Session

13. Adjournment
CALL TO ORDER
The meeting was called to order by Chair Judy Gilmour at 8:35 a.m.

ROLL CALL
Committee Members Present: John Purcell – yes, Tony Giles – here, Judy Gilmour – here, Member Flowers - present

Member Prochaska was absent

Others Present: Megan Andrews, KC Soil & Water District Resource Conservationist, Steve Curatti, Kendall County Health Department Program Administrator, Aaron Rybski, Kendall County Health Department Environmental Health Director, Dr. Amaal Tokars, Kendall County Health Department Executive Director, Hannah Weaver, KC Soil & Water District Education Coordinator, and Jenny Wold, outgoing KC Soil & Water District Education Coordinator

APPROVAL OF AGENDA – Member Giles made a motion to approve the agenda, second by Member Purcell. With four members present in agreement, the motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES – Member Giles made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from June 18, 2018, second by Member Purcell. With four members present voting aye, the motion carried.

STATUS REPORTS

➢ Board of Health – Member Giles had nothing to report. Member Gilmour reminded the committee about the Committee of the Whole/Board of Health meeting on Tuesday, July 17th at the Health & Human Services Building beginning at 6:00 p.m.

➢ Health Department – Dr. Tokars updated the committee on the Detention Basin located on the Northeast corner of the Health & Human Services Building, stating that she recently contacted Kluber Architects and Engineers, the designers of the HHS building and landscape areas, with several questions and concerns about mosquitoes in the pond that tested positively for West Nile. Kluber reviewed the project specifications and then contacted the original landscape designer who offered the following thoughts for the Detention Basin:

“To stop a wet pond from being a mosquito concern, there needs to be a high quality ecosystem including native vegetable buffers, fish, aeration and nutrient/fertilizer management to control the levels that feed into the pond. Native areas require maintenance companies that understand native ecosystems, and the best way to get the situation under control is to bring in an aquatic ecosystem specialist to get algae levels
under control, and to stabilize the ecosystem to simplify ongoing maintenance. The pond originally had fish and aerators that helped with the situation initially."

Dr. Tokars reminded the committee that West Nile virus was first identified in Uganda in 1937, and is commonly found in Africa, West Asia, and the Middle East, and is carried from infected birds to humans by mosquitoes.

Symptoms of West Nile virus as fever, headache, body aches, skin rash and swollen lymph nodes. Additionally, Dr. Tokars stated that severe signs and symptoms may include a stiff neck, sleepiness, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, and paralysis.

A key feature of neuro-invasive West Nile virus is encephalitis, an inflammation of the brain. Although there is no specific treatment for West Nile virus infection, over the counter medication and rest can be used for non-severe cases.

Dr. Tokars also updated the committee on the Zika virus stating that the number of cases has dropped dramatically in the last two years, there are currently no cases in Illinois, but none that have been contracted in the state. The “hot” state for Zika cases is Florida, which is now doing mass inoculation.

Aaron Rybski, Environmental Health Director, updated the committee on Lyme Disease, the two types of ticks, Dog Tick which are not Lyme Disease carriers, and Deer Ticks which are carriers. Mr. Rybski said that ticks do not fly or jump, but “quest”, by living on the tops of tall prairie grasses and attaching themselves to anything that comes by. Ticks can live up to 11/2 years, and are of the Arachne (spider) family. Anyone suspecting they have been bitten by a tick is asked to place the tick in a closed container, and to contact the Health Department at www.kendallhealth.org/tickid

Knott County Soil and Water District – Jenny Wold introduced her replacement, Hannah Weaver, who will now lead the Ag in the Classroom program. Jenny has taken a teaching position in Ottawa Illinois.

Water Related Groups – Member Gilmour shared that Matt Asselmier from PBZ has attended and will continue to attend the Northwest Planning Alliance meeting in Elgin when he is available.

OLD BUSINESS – None

NEW BUSINESS - None

CHAIRMAN’S REPORT – None

PUBLIC COMMENT – None
ITEMS FOR COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – None

COUNTY BOARD ACTION ITEMS - None

EXECUTIVE SESSION – Not Needed

ADJOURNMENT – Member Flowers made a motion to adjourn the meeting, second by Member Giles. With no objections, the meeting was adjourned at 9:29 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Valarie McClain
Administrative Assistant and Recording Clerk
National Prescription Drug Take Back Day

DEA's next Prescription Drug Take Back Day is October 27, 2018

The National Prescription Drug Take Back Day aims to provide a safe, convenient, and responsible means of disposing of prescription drugs, while also educating the general public about the potential for abuse of medications.

Law Enforcement Agencies Only!

For law enforcement agencies that wish to host a collection site, please call the POC in your area.

Drug Disposal Information

News Releases

National Prescription Drug Take Back Day Collection Results

April 2018 15th National Take Back Day
October 2017 14th National Take Back Day
April 2017 13th National Take Back Day
October 2016 12th National Take Back Day
April 2016 11th National Take Back Day

Get Email Updates:

Cases Against Doctors
Chemical Control Program
CMEA (Combat Meth Epidemic Act)
Controlled Substances Schedules
DATA Waived Physicians
Drug Disposal Information
Drug and Chemical Information
E-commerce Initiatives
Federal Agency & National Sales
Federal Register Notices
National Prescription Drug Take Back Day
NFPLIB
Publications & Manuals
Questions & Answers
Significant Guidance Documents
Synthetic Drugs
Title 21 Code of Federal Regulations
Title 21 USC Controlled CSA

National Prescription Drug Take Back Day

Report Illicit Pharmaceutical Activities

RX Abuse Online
15th National Take Back Day
April 28, 2018

DEA NATIONAL Rx
TAKE BACK

DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION DIVERSION CONTROL DIVISION
15th National Take Back Day: April 28, 2018
Total Law Enforcement Participation: 4,683

Drug Enforcement Administration
Diversion Control Division

*American Indian and Alaskan Native Communities: 80 Partners
15th National Take Back Day: April 28, 2018
Total Collection Sites: 5,842

*American Indian and Alaskan Native Communities: 142 sites

Drug Enforcement Administration Diversion Control Division
15th National Take Back Day: April 28, 2018
Total Weight Collected: 949,046 lbs. (474.5 Tons)

*American Indian and Alaskan Native Communities: 2,270 lbs.
National Take Back I-XV Totals:
Total Weight Collected: 9,964,714 (4,982 Tons)

Drug Enforcement Administration
Diversion Control Division
National Take-Back Initiative

DEA's next Prescription Drug Take Back Day is October 27, 2018

For law enforcement agencies that wish to host a collection site, please call the POC in your area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>DEA POC</th>
<th>Main Group #</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>JS Justin Wood</td>
<td>803-321-8601</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alaska</td>
<td>HS Heath Edwards</td>
<td>802-271-2754</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>GS Mike Grafton</td>
<td>602-664-5526</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>GS Travis Reaves</td>
<td>501-217-5212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California (Middle)</td>
<td>GS Spencer Shellen</td>
<td>831-328-5201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California (Northern)</td>
<td>DPM Steve Ruzio</td>
<td>615-436-7463</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California (Southern) San Diego &amp; Imperial Counties</td>
<td>Robert J. Harkins</td>
<td>858-614-4100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean</td>
<td>DJ Carlos Nazario</td>
<td>787-277-4535</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>LA Tiffany Seaborn</td>
<td>720-992-4231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>IA Karina Hernandez</td>
<td>860-297-2979</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delaware</td>
<td>DJ Lynda Sneak</td>
<td>302-995-4626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District of Columbia</td>
<td>DJ Carol Wedelberger</td>
<td>202-207-2288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>Nicolle Raudale</td>
<td>855-506-6355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>SJ Lydell Badley</td>
<td>404-893-7191</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guam</td>
<td>JUC Edward Talbot</td>
<td>671-642-7194</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hawaii</td>
<td>DJ Yeasthe Damon Blair</td>
<td>213-293-5778</td>
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<tr>
<td>Idaho</td>
<td>KS Kevin Stiften</td>
<td>502-721-6548</td>
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<tr>
<td>Illinois (Northern half)</td>
<td>GS Jim Pohner</td>
<td>612-381-5983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois (Southern half)</td>
<td>GS Charles</td>
<td>708-536-4603</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indiana (Northern half)</td>
<td>DJ Jennifer Tucker</td>
<td>719-681-7000 ext. 147</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indiana (Southern half)</td>
<td>SJ Gary Whitepand</td>
<td>617-223-7897</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iowa</td>
<td>NJS Skidinos</td>
<td>718-284-4709</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>JCS Chester</td>
<td>316-558-4601</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>DJ Jerry Adair</td>
<td>606-868-3004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky (Boone, Campbell and Kenton Counties)</td>
<td>IA Randy Bramos</td>
<td>513-246-1608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>DJ Alan Chead</td>
<td>504-940-3073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maine</td>
<td>RAC Mike Wardrop</td>
<td>207-780-3331 ext. 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>DJ Sharon Rees</td>
<td>510-244-3886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>IA Angela &quot;Christine&quot; Martin</td>
<td>617-833-2391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>CS Chris Crush</td>
<td>313-442-1220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>IA Andrew Enzweuski</td>
<td>632-344-4202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>GS Kerry Gilbert</td>
<td>601-806-2940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>GA Chester</td>
<td>314-538-4600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montana</td>
<td>DJ Matt Connolly</td>
<td>406-655-2944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nebraska</td>
<td>NJS Salcedo</td>
<td>515-284-7209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nevada</td>
<td>DJ Charles Pierce</td>
<td>702-691-2511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td>DJ Erin Radebeau</td>
<td>603-626-7411 ext. 168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>DJ Michael Smilak</td>
<td>873-776-1182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Mexico</td>
<td>IA Andrew Ochoa</td>
<td>520-452-4640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York City, Long Island, &amp; Surrounding</td>
<td>DWM Susan Baker</td>
<td>212-274-4520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York Upstate</td>
<td>DWM Susan Baker</td>
<td>212-274-4950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>GS William Stockmann</td>
<td>336-856-7855</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Dakota</td>
<td>IA Matthew Enzweuski</td>
<td>617-344-4103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio Central - Columbus</td>
<td>IA Randy Bramos</td>
<td>513-243-3006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio Southern-Cincinnati</td>
<td>IA Randy Bramos</td>
<td>513-243-6008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio Northern - Cleveland</td>
<td>SS Stephen Robuser</td>
<td>216-274-3609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>DWM Cynthia Valenzpez</td>
<td>214-362-6600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oregon</td>
<td>KE Kevin Sheren</td>
<td>503-721-6545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania (Eastern)</td>
<td>DJ Safia Thomason</td>
<td>215-238-5178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania (Western)</td>
<td>JS Pauline Robison</td>
<td>612-337-1870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennslyvania (Middle)</td>
<td>JS Evangaila Parra</td>
<td>817-259-4922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>IA Heather Carra</td>
<td>401-772-8053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>IA Nick Waterl</td>
<td>803-253-3443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Dakota</td>
<td>NJS Salcedo</td>
<td>515-284-4730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>DJ Kendra Toussaint</td>
<td>855-772-7168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas (North)</td>
<td>DWM Cynthia Valenzpez</td>
<td>214-362-6600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas (South)</td>
<td>DWM Cynthia Valenzpez</td>
<td>713-693-3491</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Get Email Updates:

- Cases Against Doctors
- Chemical Control Program
- CMEA (Combat Meth Epidemic Act)
- Controlled Substance Schedules
- DATA Waived Physicians
- Drug Disposal Information
- Drug and Chemical Information
- E-commerce Initiatives
- Federal Agencies & Related Links
- Federal Register Notices
- National Prescription Drug Take Back Day
- NPLSW
- Publications & Manuals
- Questions & Answers
- Significant Guidance Documents
- Synthetic Drugs
- Title 21 Code of Federal Regulations
- Title 21 USC Codified CSA
Safe Medication Disposal Kiosks

MEDICATION DISPOSAL LIST

Accepted items

- Prescription medications, ointments & patches
- OTC medications, ointments, lotions & liquids
- Pet medications
- Vitamins

Restricted items

- Needles, inhalers & thermometers
- Aerosol cans
- Hydrogen peroxide
- Illegal drugs

FACT

Who's taking your pills?

- 1 in 4 teens has misused or abused prescription drugs. Most get them from the family medicine cabinet.

Help stop prescription drug abuse. Drop off your expired, unused or unwanted medications for safe disposal.
1) Grundy County Coroner
   1320 Union Street, Morris Il. 60450
   815-941-3355

2) Joliet Police Station
   150 W. Washington Street,
   Joliet, Il. 60435
   815-726-2491

3) Kendall County
   Corrections Division:
   1102 Cornell, Yorkville Il.
   60560, 630-553-7500

4) Minooka Police Station
   121 McEvilley Rd., Minooka, Il. 60447
   815-467-2298

5) Plainfield Police Station
   14300 S. Coil Plus Dr.
   Plainfield, Il. 60544
   815-436-6544

6) Walgreens:
   ➢ 30 W. Church St. Sandwich, Il. 60548  815-786-8653
   ➢ 100 W. Veterans PRWY. Yorkville, Il. 60560  630-553-3769
   ➢ 1799 Douglas Rd. Montgomery, Il. 60538  630-896-6960
   ➢ 1221 N. Lake St. Aurora, Il. 60506  630-254-6269
   ➢ 1801 Ingalls Ave. Joliet, Il. 60435  815-729-1680

❖ For further information Call: Kendall County Health Department 630-553-9100

DO NOT FLUSH MEDICATIONS DOWN THE SINK OR DRAIN; DO NOT PLACE MEDICATIONS IN THE TRASH; DO NOT GIVE OR SELL MEDICATIONS TO OTHERS.
Do you have a drug take-back location nearby?

Yes

No

Is it on the FDA flush list?

Yes

No

Drugs are not flushed and recyclable on the pot, so flush out all prescription medicine in the toilet immediately. Follow the FDA instructions for household medicine disposal. Is your local pharmacy interested in the DEA dispose-to-go program?

Do you have medication you want to get rid of?

Drug Disposal Options

Check the DEA website as well as your local drugstore and police station for possible options.
List of medicines recommended for disposal by flushing

This list from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) tells you which medicines you should flush when they are no longer needed. Links in the list below direct you to medicine information for consumers that includes specific disposal instructions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Active Ingredient</th>
<th>Found in Brand Names</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benzhydrocodone/Acetaminophen</td>
<td>Apadaz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buprenorphine</td>
<td>Belbuca, Bunavail, Butrans, Suboxone, Subutex, Zubsolv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fentanyl</td>
<td>Abstral, Actiq, Duragesic, Fentora, Onsolis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diazepam</td>
<td>Diastat/Diastat AcuDial rectal gel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hydrocodone</td>
<td>Anexia, Hysinge ER, Lortab, Norco, Reprexain, Vicodin, Vicoprofen, Zohydro ER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hydromorphone</td>
<td>Dilaudid, Exalgo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meperidine</td>
<td>Demerol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methadone</td>
<td>Dolophine, Methadose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methylphenidate</td>
<td>Daytrana transdermal patch system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morphine</td>
<td>Arymo ER, Embeda, Kadian, Morphabond ER, MS Contin, Avinza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxycodone</td>
<td>Combunox, Oxydo (formerly Oxecta), OxyContin, Percocet, Percodan, Roxicet, Roxicodone, Roxybond, Targiniq ER, Xartems XR, Xstampza ER</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oxymorphone</td>
<td>Opana, Opana ER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tapentadol</td>
<td>Nucynta, Nucynta ER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium Oxybate</td>
<td>Xyrem oral solution</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FDA believes that the known risk of harm, including death, to humans from accidental exposure to the medicines listed above, especially potent opioid medicines, far outweighs any potential risk to humans or the environment from flushing these medicines. FDA will continue to conduct risk assessments as a part of our larger activities related to the safe use of medicines.

For disposal information, specific to another medication you are taking please visit Drugs@FDA. Once there type in the medication name and click on search. Then click on the label section for that specific medication. Select the most recent label and search for the term "disposal."

Updated: April 2018
Sharps: is a medical term for devices with sharp points or edges that can puncture or cut skin. They may be used at home, at work, and while traveling to manage the medical conditions of people or their pets, including allergies, arthritis, cancer, diabetes, hepatitis, HIV/AIDS, infertility, migraines, multiple sclerosis, osteoporosis, blood clotting disorders, and psoriasis.

Examples of sharps include:

- **Needles** – hollow needles used to inject drugs (medication) under the skin
- **Syringes** – devices used to inject medication into or withdraw fluid from the body
- **Lancets, also called “fingerstick” devices** – instruments with a short, two-edged blade used to get drops of blood for testing. Lancets are commonly used in the treatment of diabetes.
- **Auto Injectors**, including epinephrine and insulin pens – syringes pre-filled with fluid medication designed to be self-injected into the body
- **Infusion sets** – tubing systems with a needle used to deliver drugs to the body.
- **Connection needles/sets** – needles that connect to a tube used to transfer fluids in and out of the body. This is generally used for patients on home hemodialysis.

How to Dispose of Sharps

Used sharps should be immediately placed in a sharps disposal container. FDA-cleared sharps containers are generally available through pharmacies, medical supply companies, health care providers and online. These containers are made of puncture-resistant plastic with leak-resistant sides and bottom. They also have a tight fitting, puncture-resistant lid.

If an FDA-cleared container is not available a heavy-duty plastic household container, such as a laundry detergent container can be used as an alternative.

Importance of Safe Sharps Disposal

Used needles and other sharps are dangerous to people and pets if not disposed of safely because they can injure people and spread infections that cause serious health conditions. The most common infections are:

- **Hepatitis B (HBV),**
- **Hepatitis C (HCV), and**
- **Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV).**

Safe sharps disposal is important whether you are at home, at work, at school, traveling, or in other public places such as hotels, parks, and restaurants.

- Never place loose needles and other sharps (those that are not placed in a sharps disposal container) in the household or public trash cans or recycling bins, and never flush them down the toilet. This puts trash and sewage workers, janitors, housekeepers, household members, and children at risk of being harmed.
- Pet owners who use needles to give medicine to their pets should follow the same sharps disposal guidelines used for humans.
U.S. Drought Monitor

August 14, 2018
(Released Thursday, Aug. 16, 2018)
Valid 8 a.m. EDT

Drought Impact Types:

~ Delineates dominant impacts
S = Short-Term, typically less than 6 months (e.g. agriculture, grasslands)
L = Long-Term, typically greater than 6 months (e.g. hydrology, ecology)

Intensity:

- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Moderate Drought
- D2 Severe Drought
- D3 Extreme Drought
- D4 Exceptional Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.

http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/
August 14, 2018
(Released Thursday, Aug. 16, 2018)
Valid 8 a.m. EDT

Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>D0-D4</th>
<th>D1-D4</th>
<th>D2-D4</th>
<th>D3-D4</th>
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<td>Last Week</td>
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<td>08-07-2018</td>
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<td>3 Months Ago</td>
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<td>Start of Calendar Year</td>
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<td>01-02-2018</td>
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<td>Start of Water Year</td>
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Intensity:

- **D0 Abnormally Dry**
- **D1 Moderate Drought**
- **D2 Severe Drought**
- **D3 Extreme Drought**
- **D4 Exceptional Drought**

"The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements."
DO YOU USE NO-TILL PRACTICES?

Some landowners like the look of a clean tilled field in the springtime. That "nice look" is short lived, though. The reality is a field that has bare soil is subject to erosion and loss of organic matter, since it no longer has the protective cover from the crop residue on the surface, Fisher says. "No-till farming utilizes the crop residue to blanket the soil surface to protect it from the forces of intense rainfall and summer heat. This protective blanket will conserve moisture for the crop and prevent loss of soil from wind erosion, water erosion and carbon that could be burned off by summer heat."

DO YOU USE COVER CROPS?

"Like no-till, cover crops provide a green, protective blanket through the winter months or fallow times. The green-growing cover is collecting solar energy, putting down roots and providing habitat when the soil would otherwise be lifeless and barren," says Fisher. This habitat provides food and shelter for a broad population of wildlife above ground and beneficial organisms below ground. As the new life emerges, cover crops hold onto the nutrients left from the previous crop and in turn release them to the next crop. The solar rays these plants catch are powering photosynthesis, taking in carbon dioxide from the atmosphere to produce food for the plant and the organisms living in the root zone. This same process also releases clean oxygen to the air and builds nutrient rich organic matter in the soil.

WHAT CAN WE DO TOGETHER TO IMPROVE SOIL HEALTH ON MY LAND?

To improve soil health, landowners and tenants need to think long-term. According to Fisher, the duration of the lease agreement is perhaps the most critical matter in encouraging the adoption of these soil health management systems. Farmers can actually build the production capacity and resiliency of their landowners' soil, but it may take several years to realize the full benefits of doing so, Fisher says. He suggests that landowners consider multiple-year leases that provide tenure security for the tenant. Longer tenures give both landowners and tenants more opportunities to improve soil health and realize the resulting long term production and profitability gains through sustainable conservation practices.

LEARN MORE

"Improving soil health can provide long-term, stable dividends for you, your family and your farming partner," Fisher says. "Improving soil health also can decrease the effects of flooding, make food production more resilient to weather extremes, and improve the health of water and wildlife, as well," he adds.

Fisher encourages landowners to learn more about the basics and benefits of soil health management systems and to begin the soil health discussion with their farming partner right away. "Even if you're not a farmer or landowner, everyone has a great stake in improving the health of our soil," he says.

Landowners can also learn more about the benefits of soil health by visiting the "Unlock the Secrets in the Soil" section of the NRCS website at [www.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov).

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More farmers, ranchers and others who rely on the land are taking action to improve the health of their soil. Many farmers are actually building the soil. How? By using soil health management systems that include cover crops, diverse rotations and no-till.

When they're building the soil they're doing something else – they're also building the land's production potential over the long-term.

But how do landowners know if their tenants are doing everything they need to do to make and keep their soil healthy? Barry Fisher, an Indiana farmer and nationally recognized soil health specialist with the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, recommends that they ask their farming partner these five questions.

1. DO YOU BUILD ORGANIC MATTER IN THE SOIL?

   Organic matter (carbon) may be the most important indicator of a farm's productivity. The amount of soil organic matter often determines the price farmers will pay to rent or buy land. Finding a farmer who is interested in building organic matter by using practices like no-till and cover crops is like finding a bank with a better rate on a Certificate of Deposit, Fisher says.

2. DO YOU TEST THE SOIL AT LEAST ONCE EVERY 4 YEARS?

   Fisher says maintaining fertility and pH levels are important to your farm's productivity. Regular soil testing can give an indication of trends in soil fertility, pH and organic matter levels in each field. These tests will determine the amount of fertilizer each field needs. If a field has a history of manure application and very high fertility, a farmer could save money by planting cover crops to keep those nutrients in place rather than applying more nutrients that may not be needed.