



Conservation News

Coles County Soil and Water Conservation District

6021 Development Drive, Suite 2, Charleston, IL 61920

Phone: (217) 345-3901 ext. 3

Email: info@colescountyswcd.org

<http://www.colescountyswcd.org>

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Volume 63 Issue 4

Safety Tips for Grain Handling Equipment:

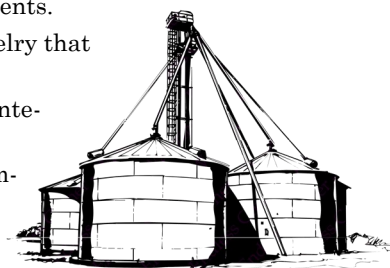
Helping keep farmers and their families safe around grain

By Kristina TeBockhorst, Agricultural Engineering Specialist, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach

AMES, Iowa—Harvest season can be hectic, but it is well worth taking the time to consider safety when operating grain handling equipment. Hazards abound when handling grain, such as equipment entanglement, grain entrapment and engulfment and dust explosions, among others. Agricultural confined-space related cases of injuries and fatalities saw a dramatic rise in 2022, including grain entrapment cases that rose nearly 45%, based on Purdue University’s annual report. Nearly all of these cases involved grain flow issues due to grain spoilage, which means that improved grain management could prevent cases in the future.

This fall, lower your risk of injury by using a safety checklist.

- Check that all exposed moving machinery parts have guards, shields or cages installed and are in good condition to prevent entanglement, including auger flighting, conveyers, belts and power-take-off (PTO) components.
- Don’t wear loose or baggy clothing, tie back hair and remove dangling drawstrings and jewelry that could get pulled into moving parts.
- Lock-out the power to augers, conveyers, belts and PTO components before performing maintenance or replacing parts so they can’t be accidentally turned on.
- Stay clear of flowing grain, which can trap a person knee-deep in a few seconds and can completely submerge them in less than 20 seconds.
- Work from outside of the bin whenever possible and use the buddy system and safe bin entry procedures when a bin must be entered.
- Check that everyone knows how to de-energize grain loading and unloading equipment and lock-out the power sources so that grain moving equipment can’t be turned on while someone is inside of a bin.
- Use hazard signage and teach kids and unexperienced people to stay out of stored grain, including bins, piles and grain transport vehicles.
- Keep the grain vacuum nozzle away from the area below your feet and keep an eye on the angle of the grain surface as you are removing grain. To prevent grain flow, the grain angle should be less than the grain’s angle of repose, which is around 21 degrees for corn and 23 degrees for soybeans.
- Check that fire extinguishers are easily accessible at the grain storage site. Grain handling facilities naturally collect dust, which can lead to explosions given the right conditions.
- Clean off dust accumulated in grain legs, elevators, service bearings, belts and motors regularly. Just a paper-thick layer of dust is combustible in a confined space. Overheated equipment parts or static electricity can be an ignition source.
- Recheck combine settings as grain condition changes to reduce kernel damage and collection of fines and trash. Dry conditions across Iowa may cause overly dry and brittle grain or uneven conditions across farms, making regular combine adjustments important.
- If excess fines and broken kernels are collected, either clean the grain before it goes into the bin or core the bin multiple times during filling to remove fines accumulated in the center of the bin. Removing the center core of fines and broken grain will improve aeration in the bin and reduce the risk of grain spoilage and unloading issues down the road.



Upcoming Events:

October:

4th, 11am—Fish Order Pickup
9th—Holiday (Office Closed)
10th, 7:30am—Board Meeting

November:

10th—Holiday (Office Closed)
14th, 7:30am—Board Meeting
23rd—Holiday (Office Closed)

December:

12th, 7:30am—Board Meeting
25th—Holiday (Office Closed)

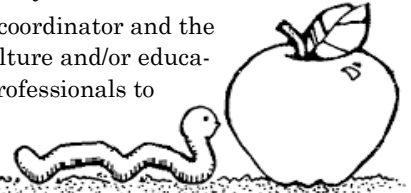
Education Update: New Education Coordinator

Coles County SWCD is pleased to introduce our new Administrative & Education Coordinator, Bryson Gibson! Mr. Gibson is a 2007 graduate of Tuscola High School and 2013 graduate from Eastern Illinois University, where he studied sociology. Prior to accepting the position with us, he had been substitute teaching around Coles County, primarily in the Oakland and Charleston school districts. Before that he worked in the youth mental health field for around 4 years, and also has experience in Special Education, which is a passion of his. He is looking forward to working with teachers throughout the county to help bring conservation and agriculture into classrooms with fun and educational programs!

In addition to offering classroom presentation on various topics, we have lots of resources available for check-out including numerous themed resource kits. These are available for classrooms, homeschool groups, etc. For October, our suggested activities revolve around pumpkins. We also have resource kits with themes related to Animals and Farms (check out the Turkey kit for November!), Plants, Soil, Water Cycles, Insects, Illinois, and even a very popular Farm-to-Pizza kit. Give Bryson a call at our office or email info@colescountyswcd.org for more information.

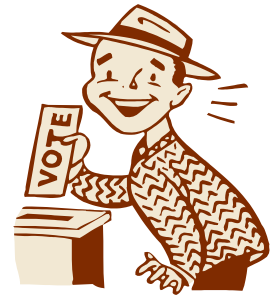
Coles County Illinois Ag in the Classroom Seeking Individuals to Serve on Local Advisory Council.

The local advisory council meets approx. 4 times a year to provide guidance and direction to the coordinator and the program so that local students receive the best ag literacy program possible. Anyone with agriculture and/or education experience can join but we are particularly looking for educators and agriculture industry professionals to help provide networking and volunteer opportunities to grow the program here in Coles County.



Notice of Acceptance of Nominations

To all persons of legal voting age who own or reside on land located within the boundaries of the Coles County Soil and Water Conservation District. Beginning on November 18, 2023, nominations will be accepted for the two year term of the office of Director of the Coles County Soil and Water Conservation District at the District's Office at 6021 Development Drive, Suite 2, Charleston, Illinois, during our normal business hours of 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. To be considered for nomination as a candidate for the office of Director, nominees must provide proof of residency or ownership of land located within the boundaries of the District. Interested persons must respond by 4:30 p.m. on December 28, 2022.

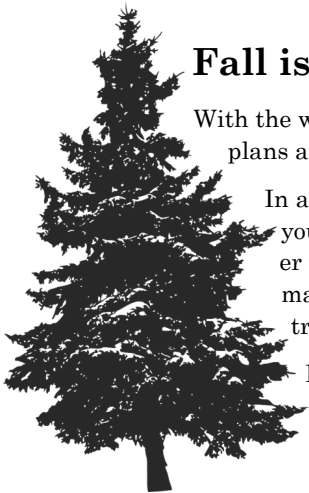


Fall is the Season for Forestry Plans

With the weather cooling down and the leaves dropping, it's time to start thinking about forestry management plans and this season's management goals.

In addition to potentially reducing taxes, a forestry management plan from a certified forester will provide you with information such as the species composition and condition of the trees in your woodlands, whether invasive species are present (and how to deal with them if they are), the current and potential future marketability of the timber, and recommendations on the management of the stand, such as planting new trees or thinning the ones you've got.

If you've already got a forestry management plan in place, this is the time of year to pull it out and see if any management activities are scheduled for the winter. Good work now can reap financial rewards at timber harvest down the road.



Charleston Field Office Staff and Directors

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As a cooperator of NRCS, SWCD must provide reasonable accommodations to USDA customers with disabilities, where appropriate. Individuals requiring reasonable accommodation for any NRCS or SWCD programs or services should contact Illinois NRCS' Disability Emphasis Program Manager directly, at (217) 353-6634. Determinations on requests for reasonable accommodation will be made on a case-by-case basis. USDA-NRCS/SWCD are an equal opportunity employer and provider.

Launch of National STAR Provides Nation’s Agricultural Producers a Straightforward Path for Conservation

Saving Tomorrow’s Agriculture Resources (STAR) is launching a national organization to guide, inspire, and standardize state and regional STAR Affiliate organizations as they address local resource concerns and empower local farmers and ranchers to make progress on their conservation journeys – wherever they currently are. The national organization will support STAR Affiliates, expand the STAR tool, and increase conservation practices across a variety of production systems on agricultural lands.

The STAR tool, developed by farmers for farmers, was created in 2017 with support from the Champaign County Soil and Water Conservation District in Illinois to inspire producers to contribute to the water quality goals outlined in the Illinois Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy. The tool evaluates conservation practices implemented on individual fields by generating a 1 to 5 STAR rating based on locally identified natural resource concerns and is now part of a standardized framework that connects producers to technical support and incentives. STAR has since been adopted by state Affiliates across the Midwest and the West, including county soil and water conservation districts and State Departments of Agriculture.

STAR co-founder, Steve Stierwalt, provided his perspective on why STAR was created and described its impact, “Our journey started with the firmly held principle that ‘locally driven conservation is the best path to success.’ Local people making local decisions on how to best address locally identified natural resource concerns instead of a complicated, top-down approach. The development of STAR met this need as a simple, locally led, practice-based, scientifically supported tool and framework that makes sense to us farmers and ranchers. STAR creates an easy pathway to grow conservation practices to effectively and efficiently scale grassroots conservation efforts by incentivizing and rewarding the adoption of practices that have relevance to producers and their supply chain partners.”

The national expansion is made possible by a recent \$3 million Climate Smart Commodities grant from the US Department of Agriculture, which was awarded to the Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA) in July to expand STAR in the western region – including creating STAR Affiliates in Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. Through this funding, STAR will leverage this momentum in the central U.S. to further support Affiliate development in Missouri, Iowa, Indiana, and other Midwestern states, ensuring consistency across all Affiliates and bringing broad-scale incentive opportunities to producers in all regions.

Cindy Lair, Deputy Director for Conservation Services Division and Climate Resilience Specialist at CDA, said “The STAR commitment to soil health and voluntary, incentive-based stewardship practices has been a key priority for the State of Colorado. STAR is an ideal solution for meeting our soil health goals because it is shaped from the ground up by farmers, ranchers, conservation districts, and other partners who helped CDA tailor it to work for different crops, range, and ways of farming and ranching across the state.”

The national STAR launch comes as leaders from producer groups, state and federal agencies, conservation organizations, academia, industry partners, foundations and NGO’s meet for a regional soil health event in Denver, CO.

STAR Executive Director Caroline Wade noted, “Working in partnership with STAR Affiliates and their producers, state agencies, conservation districts, universities, non-profits and other conservation focused entities, STAR has the potential to cost-effectively target a majority of production acres in the US. The standardized STAR framework provides producers a simple and straightforward entry into conservation practice adoption, which can then bridge the gap between producers’ perceptions of sustainability and the many outcomes-based market programs and supply chain initiatives.”

Read more at www.starconservation.org.



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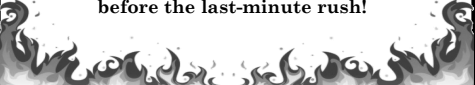
Auto Home Farm Business

217-345-6750
 TomcoAgency.com

Are Your Burn Plans Ready? 

Many programs require a burn plan and permit to be on file prior to a controlled burn. Coles County SWCD staff can help landowners obtain a burn plan and can assist with the application for an Illinois EPA open burning permit.

Give us a call today to get the process started, before the last-minute rush!



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