



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 65 Issue 4

Drills for Sale!

Coles County Soil and Water is looking to sell both of our no-till drills. These drills were used as rentals. Both are in the office parking lot if you would like to view them. To make an offer on either drill, sealed bids will be accepted at our office from Wednesday, October 1st to Friday, November 14th at 4 pm.



15' John Deere 1590 Drill

Our John Deere drill is great for no-till planting small grains (soybeans, wheat, etc.)

It can also be used for larger grass applications (hayland, waterways, meadows, etc.)

Minimum bid- \$15,000



6' Truax Flex II Drill

Our Truax drill is best for conservation plantings, such as grass seedings.

There are multiple seed boxes to give the ability to plant different seed types simultaneously.

Minimum bid- \$5,000

Upcoming Events:

October:

1st— Fish Pickup
13th— Columbus Day (Office Closed)
14th— Board Meeting

November:

11th— Veterans Day (Office Closed)
14th— Sealed Drill Bids Due
18th— Board Meeting
27th— Thanksgiving (Office Closed)

December:

9th— Board Meeting
25th— Christmas Day (Office Closed)

Charleston Field Office Staff and Directors

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Kellie Diveley
Education Coordinator
Malina Przygoda
Resource Conservationist

NRCS Employees

Andy Brantner: District Conservationist
Stephen Head: Soil Conservationist

IDOA Employees

Shannon Kuffel: Conservation Planner

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 at (217) 353-6651 directly. 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.

Education Corner

Misti, our previous Education Coordinator, is moving on to her next adventure. Below is an introduction from Kellie Diveley, our new EC!

“Hi! I have been the Administrative Coordinator for the past seven months and I am excited to announce I am now the Coles County Education Coordinator. I am more than ready to hit the ground running as I am very passionate about teaching and educating the minds of children. I was born and raised in Florida and moved to Illinois some time ago from Georgia. My husband, Marc, and I, along with our ten-year-old twins live just seven miles north of the SWCD office. Together we have ten children, and eleven grandchildren. My family is my pride and joy. I enjoy spending time with them and love the outdoors. I graduated Lake Land College in 2008 and have a degree in Early Childhood education. As I take on this new role, I will be going to various schools in our County educating our youth on natural resource issues and conservation practices with the focus being ‘Clean Waters and Healthy Soils’ and concentrating on the efforts and parameters of our organization, along with the key areas of soil, aquatics, forestry, and wildlife.

Please share my contact information with any teachers in our area. I would love to visit their classroom and teach a lesson. “



Kellie Diveley

kellie.diveley@il.nacdn.net

217-345-3901 (ext 3)

Fall Fun: Pumpkin Pie in a Bag!

Items needed

- Gallon Ziploc freezer bag
- 2 2/3 cups cold milk
- 2 packages (4 serving size) instant vanilla pudding mix
- 1 can (15 oz) solid-pack pumpkin
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp ground ginger
- Graham cracker crumbs
- 25 small cups
- 25 spoons
- Scissors
- 1 can whipped topping

Directions

makes 25 classroom servings!

1. Combine the milk and instant pudding in the Ziploc bag
2. Remove the air and zip the bag shut
3. Squeeze and kneed the bag until blended (about 1 min)
4. Add the pumpkin, cinnamon, and ginger
5. Remove air and zip the bag shut
6. Squeeze and kneed until blended (about 2 min)
7. Place 1/2 tsp of graham crackers in the bottom of the small cups
8. Cut the corner of the bag and squeeze pie filling into cups
9. Garnish with whipped topping, add spoon, and enjoy!



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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 1, 2025, 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 30, 2025.

Cost-Sharing on Sealing Abandoned Wells

Abandoned wells provide a direct path for contaminants to enter local groundwater. Groundwater is a source of drinking water for thousands of the people in the area, making abandoned wells a public health concern.

Additionally, abandon wells are dangerous! When they are left open, children, animals or even adults can fall into them, causing injury or death.

The Coles County SWCD is currently accepting applications for financial assistance to help offset the cost of having a well sealed. Got an open well on your property? Give us a call! All residents within the Coles County Soil and Water Conservation District who have a well that is no longer in use are eligible to apply. Contact our office at 217-345-3901 (ext. 3) or email info@colescountyswcd.org



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Resource Spotlight: Farm Legacy Assistance

Coles County Soil and Water wants to make you aware of resources in the area. Below is an article written for us by Anna Sekine, a member of the American Farmland Trust team who handles farm legacy in the Midwest.

Across the country, many farmers and landowners are nearing retirement and asking: What will happen to my land? Who will care for it? With over 40% of U.S. farmland expected to change hands in the next 20 years, equivalent to nearly 300 million acres, the future of American agriculture is uncertain. If this land is sold for development, we risk losing not only open space and natural resources, but also local knowledge, rural economies, and opportunities for aspiring farmers to secure land.

American Farmland Trust (AFT) has a program to help ensure your farmland stays in farming and in the hands of responsible stewards. Through its Land Transfer Navigator Program, AFT connects farmers and landowners with skilled professionals who provide one-on-one support. Navigators assist with succession and land transfer planning, guide goal setting, prepare participants for complex conversations, connect them to local service providers, and support them throughout the transition.

In addition, AFT's Farm Legacy Initiative offers landowners without identified successors the peace of mind that their land will remain in agriculture forever. If interested, landowners can donate their farmland to AFT, knowing each donation is carefully managed to permanently protect the land, ensure it is farmed using sound practices, and, whenever possible, transfer it to next-generation farmers.

Interested in learning more? Contact Anna Sekine, Midwest Farmland Associate, at asekine@farmland.org or visit farmland.org/midwest-land-transfer-navigators



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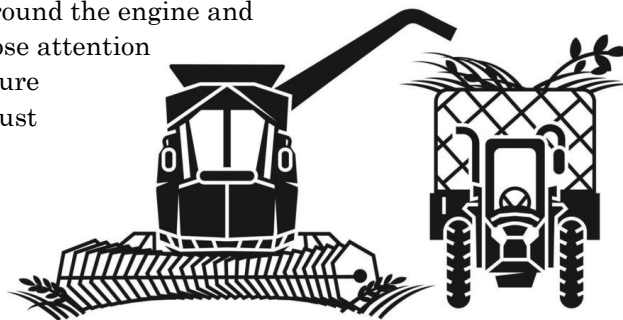


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Fire Prevention and Safety Tips During Harvest

Harvest season is here again and it is DRY! These abnormally dry conditions enhance the potential for combine and field fires. Below are reminders of how to keep you, your crew, and your property safe this harvest season.

- **Two ABC-type fire extinguishers are recommended**— A smaller 10-pound unit in the cab and a larger 20-pound extinguisher at the ground level attached to the equipment. Invert and shake the extinguishers once or twice a season to ensure machine vibrations don't compact the powder inside and ensure they are properly charged and not expired. It can also be beneficial to keep a pressurized water extinguisher (class A) on equipment. These can help extinguish fires, cool hot surfaces, and serve as a water source to clean hands or rinse off after fuel or chemical spills. Keeping a shovel on the combine to throw dirt on a fire is also helpful.
- **Prior to refueling, turn the combine off and wait 15 minutes**— This helps reduce the risk of a spill volatilizing and igniting. Keep machinery clean, particularly around the engine and engine compartment. Check coolant and oil levels daily. Pay close attention to engine and hydrostatic pump parts as well. Use a high pressure washer or compressed air to remove caked-on oil, grease, dirt/dust and crop residue. In the field, using a leaf blower to clear away leaves, chaff and plant material works well. Doing this at the end of the day is better than in the morning when dew or overnight rain can make residue harder to remove.
- **Field fires are often ignited by the earlier passing of a piece of equipment**— Not just combines, but also trucks, tractors, or UTVs. Be mindful of non-ag equipment vehicles that may be in your fields. UTVs or passenger vehicles often sit closer to the ground and can be more prone to causing field fires. Residue buildup in UTVs engine compartment are an often overlooked source of fire ignition.
- **Fires may start from plant materials that have smoldered unnoticed**— Sometimes plant material can quietly smolder for 15-30 minutes or more. Flames aren't apparent until additional oxygen is supplied, perhaps by a gust of wind. A fire can double in size in less than a minute. Burning embers blown downwind can spread a fire well beyond the control of your fire extinguishers in just seconds. Be aware of possible additional fires.
- **In case of fire, turn off the engine, get away from the machine, and call 911 FIRST**— Attack with fire extinguishers only if it is safe to do so. Try to fight from the "black," the area already burned. Attacking a fire from areas with combustibles (e.g. dry corn stalks) is much riskier. Always stay upwind of a fire to minimize the risk of exposure from smoke, heat, and possible flames.
- **Have a list of the "911 addresses" for fields on hand**— This can help save time and expedite the response from emergency responders. When a fire is called in with a 911 address, dispatch can more readily identify the incident location and relay this information to the fire department.
- **Harvest crews and neighbors may want to discuss a plan for emergency tillage of a firebreak**— Making a tillage pass along the outside edge of a field (especially a corn field that can provide ample fuel for a fire due to high amounts of residue), has been a proven preemptive strategy to help prevent fires from spreading into a field. If safe to do so, making a firebreak with a tillage pass can help stop an active, out of control fire from spreading. The goal is to create an area that won't fuel the fire, so the fire will eventually burn itself out.
- **Create a fire break**— Firebreaks should be 2-3 times wider than the vegetation is tall (for example: 8 ft tall corn = 16-24 ft tilled break). Depending on wind, the radiant heat and embers can "reach out" sometimes twice as far as normal. Consequently, a fire break may need to be wider to ensure proper containment.



Remember—Personal safety is ALWAYS far more important than property loss. Attempting to fight a fire should only happen after calling 911 and determining that it's safe to do so.

Note: Information compiled from Illinois Extension, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and Iowa State Extension resources. For more information, visit

https://extension.illinois.edu/sites/default/files/farm_fire_risks_and_prevention_fact_sheet.pdf



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