

# Conservation Conversation

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## Conservation Farm Family Named

By Tony Pals

The Fayette County Soil & Water Conservation District has announced their Conservation Farm Family for 2008. It's the Lee Stokes family from Bozeman, Montana. Lee is a lawyer there (he

knows lots of lawyer jokes) but has a farm by Ramsey. He does an excellent job of protecting the natural resources he has stewardship over. Several years ago, he repaired some of the first tile outlet terraces constructed in the county. He has also installed CRP waterways, field border strips, and water and sediment control basins. One of the Stokes family farms



Lee Stokes and his mother Mary

was signed up for assistance through EQIP (Environmental Quality Incentives Program) in 2005. EQIP funds are being used to develop a managed grazing system on the farm. Benefits of a managed

grazing system include increased grazing efficiency, decreased need for application of nutrients, decreased soil erosion, improved water quality, and better water and forages for cattle.

The first projects were installing stream crossings, building fence along the stream to limit access by cattle, and stabilizing gullies on one part of the property. Additional fences were built to divide paddocks and to exclude cattle from a wooded area of springs. A well

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## We Are on the Web!

By Tony Pals



We are on the web, and I'm not talking about spiders here. The Fayette County Soil & Water Conservation District has a web site on the internet. You can get there by going to [www.fayettecountyswcd.com](http://www.fayettecountyswcd.com).

We have a page on the Annual Meeting (with pictures and MaryAnn and my presentation). There is information on all the cost share programs. We have minutes from board meetings, animal pictures to download for little ones to color and lots and lots of other stuff. We've even got links to the weather forecast and the markets. One of the items that some of you might be interested in is this newsletter – and previous newsletters back more than a year. If you use the internet, and get plenty of mail, email us that you would

just like to be notified when the new newsletters hit the web page, rather than get a copy in the mail (you can contact us through the web site). That does many things – all of them good. First, it will reduce wear and tear on your

mail box (not to mention your mailman). Second, it could save trees, and trees help take the carbon out of carbon dioxide. And, finally, it can save the district postage. When postage went up recently, our bulk mailing rates went up also. So, if you let us know, we'll put you on the list to contact with an email when the newsletters get placed on the internet. Go to the web site and look it over. Karen did a really good job putting it together, but any ideas on how to improve it would be greatly appreciated. Again, you can contact us through the web site.



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### Nelsie's News

By Nelson Torbeck

How about this cool weather we are having the first part of July? Usually it's hot as the dickens around the fourth of July. The crops are looking good now that we had a good rain. We wound up with five inches in a bunch of showers. We needed it bad. It was dry, the corn was rolling, and the beans were just holding on - not growing much. The ground was really cracking open. The first rain we had was a half inch, and I don't think it got to the bottom of the cracks! Wheat harvest came and went in a hurry, as usual. The good thing was that the yield was a lot better than any one expected. How about the price! I don't think I've ever saw it that high at harvest. It was hot at the elevator; I didn't have to wait very long, except a couple, three times. One thing for sure is there's more and more semi's in line, and it seems they're always ahead of me. There's an airplane spraying the crops around here for something or other. It seems like there's always something to spray for. We went up north to see Janice's sister a couple of weeks ago. Our crops looked as good as theirs did for size. We got into the fields a little earlier than they did. Well, better catch you folks up on the grandkids. Jordy went to two basketball camps this year. One was in Flora. Jo's sister teaches school there so she took him every-day for the week. Then there's another week in Salem. He got the Hot Shot Trophy there - did really good. Jordy isn't playing baseball this year. He said that he wasn't having any fun, so... He likes basketball, he practices shooting every day. Jaron had their band concert a month or more ago. It was going to be outside, but it showered that evening so they had it in the gym. Jaron and a group of young people formed a band, Hoots



Chapel. It's a soft rock band. I offered to play with them but they didn't think a mandolin would fit in with their type of music. They played for the Fayette county Relay for Life, the Marion county Relay for Life, and their church's Summer Fest. They do fine. Travis is still on Kelly's pit crew. They race a couple of times a week, one week they locked up the motor - not

good. I think they sent it some place to have it repaired. Usually, the crew fixes what they tear up. Travis and a deer had a difference of opinion the other night. They both wanted to use the road at the same time, so they did. I think the deer won, he left the scene of the accident. Travis did too, but his truck was damaged some. The Church's bowling team finished their season a few weeks ago. They all went out for supper. I wonder if that's not why some of them are on the team. Anyway, now Tim's on a team in Taylorville for the summer. One has to like bowling to do that. Oh well, there are worse things to do. The Fayette County Relay for Life was a success, they went over their goal. They had a racing theme this year. Scott's family put in a lot of time on that. Tim made the flashing lights that he controlled with his laptop - racing flags. Travis had Kelly's race car there. There is a lot of work done to put on the Relay. There are a lot of people involved, and they all did an excellent job. Granny and I took Jaron and Jordy to Olney to see some white squirrels. After about forty-five minutes, we thought they had left town. We did see a couple, so it was worth it. It's time to quit. Question, "What is the speed of dark?" The thought for the day, "If it is to be it is up to me."

### It's Been 20 Years

By Mary Ann Hoeffliger



A few thousand tracts in Fayette County have fields that are classified as HEL (Highly Erodible Land,) and have wetlands or areas that could contain wetlands.

Farmers became familiar with these two terms beginning in 1986, after passage of the 1985 farm bill. Over a period of years conservation plans were written on HEL for everyone who wanted to stay eligible for USDA programs. Even though more than 20 years have passed, these issues are still part of the USDA scene.

I think it's best to approach all this in a positive way. You can **stay eligible** for USDA benefits with these steps:

1. Periodically review your conservation plans. Revise them if your crop rotation or tillage patterns have changed. Can't find

your plan, or don't remember writing one? You're not alone, so come into our office to get a copy.

2. Check the HEL and wetland determinations on any new land you buy or rent, and follow up with our office if you have questions or to develop a new plan.

3. Ask for wetland determinations before doing any clearing, tiling, or filling of low areas.

4. Practicing good conservation will keep you eligible for USDA benefits!

Each spring randomly selected tracts are reviewed for compliance with HEL and wetland provisions of USDA.



Also, wetlands can be checked at any time of year. Start planning now for next year's compliance.

Non Profit Organization  
Permit #53  
Vandalia, IL

Conservation Conversation  
FAYETTE COUNTY SWCD  
301 South Third Street  
Vandalia, IL 62471  
618-283-1095, Ext. 3  
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# Label Box

## Conservation Calendar

### August 2007

10 -19 - IL State Fair - Springfield  
15 - Dale Jahraus Birthday  
23 - Board Meeting  
28-30 - Farm Progress Show - Decatur

### September 2007

3 - Labor Day  
9 - Grandparents Day  
18-19 - Conservation Field Days  
13 - Autumn Begins  
27 - Board Meeting

## Well Sealing

*By Tony Pals*

## Conservation Farm Family Named

*By Tony Pals*

At the time of this writing, we have no idea what our budget for 2008 is going to be. But, if we get money for cost share (and there's a good chance we will) we are allowed to seal ten wells with a portion of those funds. That isn't as good as we were doing about three years ago, but it's a start again. So, if you have a well on your property you are no longer using, this is an opportunity to get it sealed. By getting it sealed, you are eliminating a source of ground water pollution, as well as a possible safety hazard for livestock, wildlife, and people. With a maximum of eight wells that we can seal, we will take a concentrated sign up from now through September. Then we will prioritize that sign up to determine which ones will be funded. Cost share is 60%. Stop by and see us.



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was drilled and pipeline installed to provide water to all the paddocks. Hydrants, tanks, and rock pads will complete the watering system. In addition to existing pasture, highly erodible farm land will be seeded to permanent grasses and legumes. Plans are to help extend the grazing system through the use of native warm season grasses, by grazing corn stalks, and possibly using winter annuals.

Through the use of rotational grazing and rest periods for pastures, the farm will have high quality forages and will be more productive.

His operators are Brad Lay for his cropland, and David Marley for his pasture and hay ground. Congratulations to the Lee Stokes family.

The Fayette County Soil & Water Conservation District does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender, age, marital status, veteran status, or disability. This policy covers all programs, services, and procedures of the district, including employment.