

Soil testing can save money

With the recent moisture, a slight amount of optimism has crept back into the minds of farmers.

However, with the losses incurred from last year's failed crops, farmers are looking for ways to cut costs. One item they may be thinking of bypassing is soil testing. This, however, would be a serious mistake for a couple of reasons.

Soil testing is a simple way to help producers manage yield potential for their crops. If a soil test is not taken, crop yield might be cut dramatically due to insufficient amounts of a nutrient. Testing can also decrease the potential for excess nutrients such as nitrogen or phosphorus being lost to leaching. Another reason soil testing is particularly important this year is the cost of an input such as nitrogen. Nitrogen prices are exceedingly high. A few dollars spent on soil testing may pay huge dividends by saving farmers from putting on unnecessary nutrients.

Producers still have time to take representative soil samples of their fields and get them analyzed before planting summer crops. They can pull the soil cores themselves or have an elevator or consultant do the job.

Following is an abbreviated list



Extension Lines

By Brian Olson
Extension Agronomist

of tips for pulling a representative soil sample from a field:

1) Gather necessary equipment, including a soil sampling tube, auger or spade, and a clean pail, as well as soil sample containers and field information forms, which may be obtained from your county extension office or fertilizer dealer.

2) Draw a map of the area to be sampled on the information sheet and divide your fields into uniform areas. Each area should have the same soil texture, color, slope, and previous fertilization and cropping history.

3) Take a sample consisting of 20 to 30 cores or slices from each area, mix thoroughly in a clean container, and then fill your soil container from this mixture. All row crops should be sampled to a 6- to 8-inch depth. If available nitrogen, chloride, or sulphur tests are de-

sired, a subsoil sample to 24 inches is necessary. On fields that have been reduced-tilled or no-tilled for several years, a split sample from the top 6 or 8 inches (i.e., 0 to 3 inches and 3 to 6 inches) is encouraged to assess pH and nutrient stratification near the surface.

4) Be sure to label the soil container plainly and record the numbers on the soil container and information sheet.

5) Air dry samples as soon as possible for the nitrogen test. Air drying before shipment is desirable, but not essential for all other tests. Do not use heat for drying.

6) Send the samples to a credible lab for analysis, such as the soils lab at K-State, Ward's, Olson's, Servitech, or Crop Quest Labs.

For information on soil testing, visit the Web site: www.oznet.ksu.edu/agronomy-block2. Click on the Pest and Production icon and view the Nutrient Management section, or visit your county extension office.

Brian Olson is multi-county extension agronomist for Decatur, Gove, Norton, Sheridan, and Trego counties. E-mail bolson@oznet.ksu.edu if you have any questions or would like to see a newspaper article on a specific crop production topic. For more information, contact the county extension office, 475-8121.

Cheap radon test kits available

K-State Research and Extension in Decatur County has been awarded a mini-grant to help 50 residents do radon testing in their homes at a reduced rate of \$2 per kit. Our goal is to have 50 homes tested by Aug. 31.

Unlike other environmental health risks, radon is in homes. Testing for it requires people to take action rather than rely on the government.

These do-it-yourself tests are economical, easy to use and reliable. We hope you will measure radon levels in your home.

A neighbor's reading cannot substitute for a reading in your home.

You will not be forced to make changes if your test level is high. You will have the information and then will be able to make the decision for yourself whether you would like to take further action.

Long-term tests give a better understanding of average radon levels. Short-term tests get results quickly. Testing begins with a short-term test of two to seven days. This is the type that will be available to you through the grant.

Test kit prices normally range from \$5 to \$35, but any radon detector you purchase will come with instructions on how long to use.

The most popular commercially available detectors are the charcoal canister and the alpha track detector. For the tests in Decatur County, the charcoal canisters will be used.

Testing your home will not disrupt your daily routine. However, for the 12 hours before and throughout a short-term test, keep doors and windows closed as much as possible. Locate test kits where you spend the most time on the lowest livable level of the home.

Testing your basement and first and second floors at the same time



Home Time

By Trena Watts
Multi-county Extension Agent

can help you relate radon levels to where you spend the most time.

Avoid testing in kitchens, bathrooms, drafts, heat and high humidity. Living rooms or bedrooms are good spots, especially if they are in the basement.

After exposure, canisters and detectors should be sealed and immediately returned to the lab for analysis to determine the radon level to which the device was exposed.

If your result is over 4 pCi/l, follow up with either a second short-term test, or a long-term test. Then, if either the average result of the two short-term tests or the result of a long-term test is over 4 pCi/l, you should consider taking steps to reduce radon levels.

In addition to testing radon levels, consider other factors such as smoking. Does anyone spend especially lengthy amounts of time in the home, such as an invalid? Does

anyone sleep in the basement? The more "yes" answers you have to these questions, the sooner you should act to reduce radon.

Radon is one of the few environmental hazards that you can act against. Why ignore it?

If you would be interested in testing your home, contact the Decatur County extension office at (785) 475-8121 to get your reduced cost test kit. Additional locations will be announced in the near future in case you are unable to get to Oberlin to pick up your kit.

Please watch this newspaper for further information.

Trena Watts is multi-county extension specialist in food, nutrition, health and safety for Decatur, Gove, Norton, Sheridan, and Trego counties. Call her at 785-443-3663 or e-mail twatts@oznet.ksu.edu. For more information, contact the county extension office, 475-8121.

Selden News

By Jacque Boultinghouse

Birthdays and anniversaries: April 10 - Bob Rogers, Joe and Carol Lobato; April 11 - Gary Emigh; April 12 - Mike and Tammy Miller; April 15 - Steve Shaw, Carl Mumm, Greg and Stephanie Ritter; April 16 - Gail Mumm.

On April 3 at Senior Citizens, Laura Berls won high, Irene Kruse took second, Lola Cook got low and Laura Berls had the most tens. Other members present include: Anna Albers, Royce Cook, Catherine Campbell, Cecelia Ottley, Paulie Neff, Vesta Shea, Edna Schiltz, Dorothy Lovin, Carol Shaw, Don Shaw and Gene Rogers. The next fire department meeting in Selden will be at 7 p.m. on April 28 at the fire house. All fire department personnel are welcome to attend the meetings/training in Hoxie on Tuesdays every week.

School Calendar: April 10 - high school track at Bird City; April 11 - junior high track at Bird City; April

13 - 1 p.m., Easter Egg hunt in Selden at the City Park; April 15 - high school track at Oakley.

Any boys interested in playing on the Selden Pee Wee baseball team this summer should contact Tammy Shaw at (785) 386-4547 or Jacque Boultinghouse at (785) 386-4231.

Looking for a job with...

- Benefits?
- Incentives?
- Flexible hours?
- Relaxed working atmosphere?



Then give Pat or Gail a call today at 308-345-5600.

Congratulations

Congratulations to the whole team!

We are proud of you!

Richard and Delayne May,
Brianna and Danica

Karli/"Sissy"
We are so proud of you
and your team! Keep up the
great work in academics.
We love you!
Dad, Mom and Kaine

Dear Andy & Friends,
Congratulations on
your accomplishments at
Scholar Bowl. All your
hard work did pay off!
Good job and keep up
the good work!! We are
very proud of you!!
Love,
Mom, Dad & Grant

Eighth Grade Scholar Bowl Northwest Kansas League Champs!



8TH GRADE SCHOLAR BOWL TEAM: Front row from left: Karli Fredrickson, Tricia Dorshorst, and Jenny Hirsch. Second row: Emmie Pauls, Breck Simonsson, Aaron Helm and Laura Fortin. Top row: Jace Robinson, Kurt Olson, Andy Gilliam and Nolan May.

These Scholar Bowl students went on to place: Aaron Helm, Nolan May, Karli Fredrickson, Kurt Olson, Jace Robinson, Breck Simonson, Tricia Dorshorst and Andy Gilliam

Jace,
Congratulations, we're
proud of you!
Love,
Mom, Dad and Jake

Congratulations 8th graders!
2 time League Champs!!
We are proud of you.
Brian and Pam Simonsson
and Nathan

Kurt,
We're so proud of you and the
whole Scholar Bowl team!
Love,
Dad, Mom,
Sarah and Mary

FIRST YEAR FOR TWO BACK-TO-BACK LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIPS BY THE SAME TEAM!

Dear Aaron,
We love watching you and
the other Scholar Bowl mem-
bers answer those questions!
It's amazing what you know!
Love,
Dad, Mom,
Becky, Jacob, Matthew and
Timothy

Herndon News

By Carrol Ginther

Congratulations to Nik Martin and Anikka Martin, who earned I ratings on their vocal solos at the Regional Music Contest. They will perform at the state contest on April 26. Ryan Becker is their instructor.

Mildred Kleidosty spent the weekend with her son, John, at North Platte, Neb.

Ron and Rodney were Saturday dinner guests of Monica Solko. Tom and Tim Solko were also callers.

Sunday visitors of Helen Marintzer were Vivian Horinek, Alan Hartner, Wheat Ridge, Colo., and Chris Wood.

Bob and Ann Martin traveled to Brighton, Colo., on Tuesday to attend the funeral of Mrs. Martin's sister-in-law, Connie Haller, wife of Andrew Haller.

Hank and Ann Martin were Tuesday visitors of Leona Haller at Stratton, Neb.

A business meeting and birthday party were held last Wednesday at the senior center. Happy Birthday was sung to Doris Marintzer. Maxine Reuber read "It is the Easter Season."

After the meeting bingo was played. Maxine Reuber had black-out, and Margaret Riener won the door prize.

The next potluck dinner will be Wednesday, April 16. Maxine Reuber and Edie Pettera will have kitchen duty.

The next meeting will be May 7. Beth Raha will be hostess.

McGraw News

By Karl Launchbaugh

Gayle Bainter attended the Rotary PETS Conference in Salina on Friday and Saturday.

Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Sines of McCook, visited Mr. and Mrs. George Launchbaugh, on Friday to wish Steve Launchbaugh a happy birthday