

Blair Field Office Monthly Newsletter

Eleventh Edition - November 2021

DIG INTO YOUR SOIL WITH NEW EQIP SOIL HEALTH PRACTICES



Pictured above is a "Rainfall Simulator" demonstrating the effects of tillage and decreased residue cover. The 'field' on the far left represents an untilled field with living vegetation while the 'field' on the right shows the result of tillage with minimal residue coverage. Notice the color and amount of runoff from each field. Oftentimes, erosion can be due to an infiltration issue and can be resolved by better management of the soil ecosystem. Photo courtesy of USDA.

By Thomas English, NRCS Soil Conservationist, Blair

NRCS is rolling out new soil health initiatives including soil health assessments to help determine the functionality of your soil!

'Soil health' is defined as the continued capacity of soil to function as a vital living ecosystem that sustains plants, animals, and humans. Soil assessments provide immediate observations of soil properties including: ability of the soil to form small aggregates (clumps of soil bound by biological activity) as well as observations of plant roots, microbes, fungi, soil color, structure, and compaction.

These assessments can easily be done by trained staff using nothing more than a shovel! Not only is this information valuable to any farmer or landowner for determining soil health in the field, but it can also lead to potential cost-assistance for future conservation practices that will improve overall soil health.

Call the Blair office at (402) 426-4782 for further information and to see what's going on below the surface of your fields!

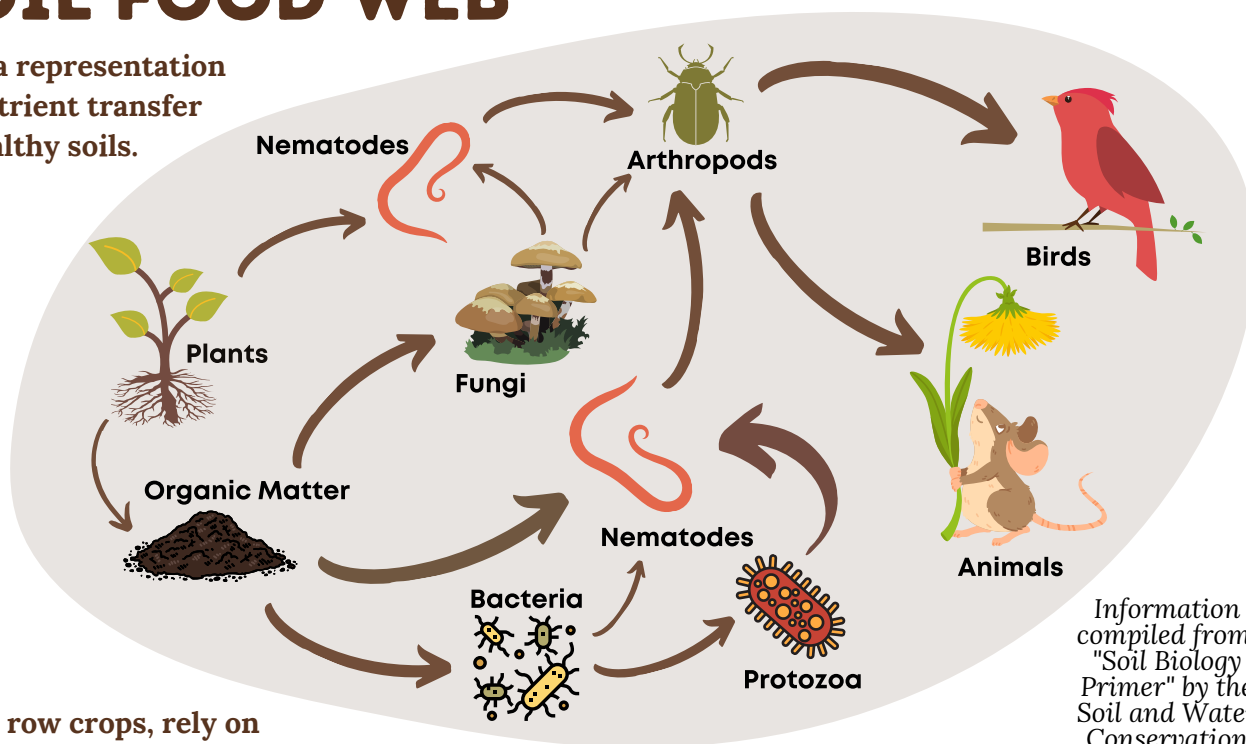
THE SOIL FOOD WEB

The 'Soil Food Web' is a representation of the energy and nutrient transfer that exists in healthy soils.

These conversions happen in two ways: the decomposition of complex materials, and organism consumption.

In these two ways, nutrients are converted from one form to another and made available to plants and other organisms in the soil.

All plants, including row crops, rely on the Soil Food Web for their nutrition!



Information compiled from: "Soil Biology Primer" by the Soil and Water Conservation Society, 2000.

REMINDER: NOVEMBER 19TH IS THE LAST DAY TO APPLY FOR EQIP 2022 FUNDS!

CALL THE BLAIR OFFICE AT (402)426-4782 IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SIGN UP!

2021 Household Hazardous Waste Collection



The 2021 Household Hazardous Waste Collection was held at the Blair Recycling Center on October 15th. The collection was sponsored by Cargill, the Nebraska Loess Hills RC&D, and the Papio NRD. We set a record this year with over 190 vehicles participating! Thank you to all the volunteers who assisted with the collection!

Tribute - Terry's

A Word from Terry Schumacher,
Land & Water Programs Coordinator



Harvest has wrapped up for some of you and for others it is still in full 'go' mode! Conservation work is progressing and the number of landowners interested in conservation continues to increase. As you are harvesting your fields, it is a great time to consider what conservation needs can be addressed on the farm.

There are the bread-and-butter terraces and tile, but we are seeing more interest in cover crops and sediment basins. This is a great opportunity to think outside the box.

I recently heard a great example of 'outside the box' thinking in Burt County. A producer has gone to no-till with cover crops on the "Gumbo" east of Tekamah instead of the tradition of fall tillage until the soil is black. This year, the beans yielded around 80 bushels/acre versus the usual 40 bushel/acre. This example furthers my belief that there are always opportunities to learn!

**Order forms for the 2022
Conservation Tree
Program are expected in
late November!**

**Call the Blair office at
(402) 426-4782 to be
placed on the list to
receive an order form!**

**DID YOU
KNOW?**

Before the discovery of aquifer irrigation, Nebraska and surrounding states were known as "the Great American Desert."

Engineering Firm Selected for Preliminary Investigation Feasibility Report (PIFR) in Davis Creek Watershed

The PMNRD Board of Directors selected JEO Consulting Group to lead the Watershed and Flood Prevention Operation Project (WFPO) in the Davis Creek Watershed.

The Davis Creek Watershed lies within the Northern part of Washington County through the Southern region of Burt County. This WFPO will begin with a Preliminary Investigation Feasibility Report (PIFR) which will determine if projects can be completed in accordance with Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) standards. If approved, projects within the watershed will reduce sedimentation and streambed degradation.

If the PIFR is approved by NRCS, the next phase of the project, a Watershed Work Plan, will begin. The PIFR is expected to be submitted to NRCS for approval in February 2022.

