**Medicine Hat Area Direct Seeding Workshop**

The Southern Alberta Conservation Association (SACA) is organizing a Direct Seeding Workshop entitled: “A Practical Approach for the Farmer”. The event will be held at the Cypress Centre on the Exhibition Grounds in Medicine Hat, November 16 & 17, 1993.

Workshop speakers include: Gerry Miler, Murray Green, Cam Campbell, Terry Appetly, John Haaspaak, Denise Maurice and Wayne Lindwall. A Trade-Show is also planned in conjunction with the workshop to highlight equipment and technology related to Direct Seeding.

The SACA is an association of 15 local farmers/conservation clubs. For more information on the workshop contact:

Stan Dzeniowski, Medicine Hat
403-529-3616
Brad Hawe, Medicine Hat
403-636-3765

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**Prairie Steward... Conserving the Land Resource**

**The Newsletter of the Saskatchewan Soil Conservation Association Inc.**

**Summer Issue No. 10, 1993**

**SASKATCHEWAN SOIL CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION**

**By Ray Kutschenbach**

SBCA Communications Specialist

A huge crowd of just under 4000 attended the 1993 Soil Conservation Field Day, June 15th, at the Muenster-Jay Airport. Farmers came by truck, bus and even airplane to see the latest in soil conservation and direct seeding equipment. In all a total of 10 charter buses and 25 planes from Alberta, Manitoba, North Dakota, Montana, Kansas and all corners of Saskatchewan brought farmers interested in seeing the very latest in direct seeding technology.

People crowded around the direct seeding equipment to get a better look.

The residue management demos also were also well attended. Farmers were very interested in how the residue management equipment would work in field conditions. Organizers unloaded round bales of unthrashed wheat on stubble to simulate harvest conditions. Many farmers left the field day realizing that residue management was the first change they need to consider in their seeding operation. Other conservation related equipment also demonstrated and displayed included tillage and fertility management and spray technology. A trade show area was busy throughout the day as farmers gathered more information on direct seeding and soil conservation. Other successful direct seeding days were held in Meikert and Lacey. Congratulations!

Organizers of the event were very pleased with the turn out and the weather. At the end of the day a rain shower moved through the area settling the dust and sending people looking for cover. The organizers wish to thank Flexi-coil, Monsanto and Morris for their financial support for this field day. Plans are already under way for a Field Day next year. See page 10 for more of the field day.

**For complete conference details see page 9.**

**Direct Seeding: Designing A Sustainable Agricultural System**

February 14 - 15, 1994 - Lsponsible Exhibition Grounds, Lsponsible, Saskatchewan

Workshop Pre-Registration Form: (Please Print)

**Name:** ________________________________ **Address:** ________________________________

**Postal Code:** __________________________ **Telephone:** __________________________

**Are you a Farmer YES NO** (check one)

**Agency/Organization** __________________________ **Occupation** __________________________

**I am an SACA Member** I would like to support the SCA by becoming a member (3 year membership for $100)

Workshop Pre-Registration before February 1, 1994: Single & Proceedings $60 Husband & Wife $90 Total Amount Enclosed $ __________

**Note:** This form is for the conference pre-registration only. Registrants are responsible for making their own room reservation.

Please make cheques payable to Saskatchewan Soil Conservation Association Inc.

**REGISTER EARLY AS LAST YEARS WORKSHOP WAS SOLD OUT IN ADVANCE!**

MAIL TO: DIRECT SEEDING WORKSHOP
SASKATCHEWAN SOIL CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION
133-3085 Albert Street, Regina, Saskatchewan
S4S 0B1

For more information phone the SACA at (306) 787-0558 or Fax us at (306) 787-0551.

**Fast Facts On Soil Conservation**

Source: Statistics Canada and various agricultural journals and articles

- Base soil can begin to blow with as little as 30 km/hr.
- According to a worldwide (UNS) study, the productive value of 7 million hectares of land, is lost annually due to soil degradation.
- Over 8000 hundred farmers attended the SACA’s 1993 Soil Conservation Field Day held June 15th near Moose Jaw, SK.
- On average, direct seeding can reduce input costs by 20% resulting in a savings of $20/acre worth of fuel and machinery costs

- Maintain a cultivated strip of at least 3 feet wide on each side of the shelterbel tree rows.
- The mineral nurse for topsoil, under natural conditions of soil formation, is 25 mm or 1 inch per 20 years.
- Rangelands account 87 million acres in Saskatchewan.
- Upon request a PFRA Shelterbelt technician will visit your farm and help you plan your field shelterbelt.
The spring and early summer of 1993 have turned out to be one of the coolest recorded. To date, at my farm, there has only been 4 days that I classify as really warm, and approximately 48 days when I wished would have been warmer. Numerous spring frosts and storms took their toll in the pastures and the hay stands. Indian Head was actually quite dry compared to normal until late June when the summer rains started. This has led to a lot of weed problems and muddy conditions for the hay stands. Indian Head would be extremely successful and we received many congratulations. Our hay crop is quite short, but I hope you have a good harvest. Remember direct seeding, spraying, conservation tillage and harvest are key factors in the future, especially concerning the Canada Saskatchewan Conservation Association.

The weather did cooperate, though, for our Soil Conservation Field Day at the Municipal Airport near Moose Jaw, on June 15. Approximately 400 people came out to see demonstrations of direct seeding, spraying, conservation tillage and harvest rescue management. All aspects of the field day were extremely successful and we received many congratulations from all involved parties for sponsoring such an event. Since the actual field day, there have been significant changes as we fight to keep the traffic by farmers to view the plots on the crown. The feedback from this plot will be used for the coming summer, if you wish to view them. We are presently in the process of negotiations to hold another Conservation Field Day in 1994. Watch for more information and details about this field day in the coming months and issues of the Prairie Steward.

The SSA central office at #132 3085 37th Ave. Saskatoon, SK S4S 081

SSCA holiday wishes to all our members and friends. May the season bring joy to you and yours.

EFFECTIVE AUGUST 1ST, THE CANADA SASKATCHEWAN CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION (SSCA) IS NOW SERVING AS THE OFFICIAL BUSINESS OFFICE FOR THE SASKATCHEWAN SHELTERBELT INSTITUTE (SSI). THE OFFICE IS OPEN FROM 9:00 TO 4:00 (11:30 TO 1:30 WEDNESDAY) WEDNESDAY THROUGH FRI., JULY 30 TO AUGUST 31. CONSIDER THIS PROVISION ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE COMMITMENT OF THE SSCA TO DETERMINE A VÁLID SOLUTION TO THE ABSOLUTELY CRITICAL PROBLEM OF SHELTERBELT DESTRUCTION.
News From Conservation Learning Centre

By Marvin Fenrich

The crop is up and the rain has been falling regularly at the Conservation Learning Centre (CLC). This year’s cropping program consists of 5 Polish canola varieties on 224 acres. A yield trial has been set up to compare the following varieties: Parkland, Tobin, Reward, Hinton, and Goldrush. Another trial is being conducted by the Prince Albert ADD Board. This trial will examine seed placing Uva nitrogen with Parkland canola seeded by great Plains air drill. In this program, rates will range from 0.70 lbs/acre of Uva nitrogen. The balances of the canola plots have been planted to Bighorn wheat.

The Saskatchewan Department of Agriculture and Food have also set up a small plot safety crop demonstration. This demo features every conceivable safety crop that has and could be grown in the northeast region. Crop range from legumes to spicas to sunflowers.

Duck Unlimited has seeded their habitat area to grass and are well underway to establishing a diverse nesting cover. This area of the CLC will demonstrate the value of converting pourth type areas from annual cropping to wetland habitat. This area is just south of Highway #2, going south of Prince Albert, and will also serve as a section where visitors can come and get a closer look at natural habitat.

JPRA has completed the topographic survey and they are also in the planning stage of sustainability field shelters, woodlots, tree variety plots, and possibly some tree fruit species demonstrations.

The Mellert Research Station of Agriculture Canada is busy planning research trials which will start in the spring of 1994. As this year is the last year for the CLC, there was not enough preparation to establish research trials in 1993. We will have to wait until 1994 to see if Agriculture Canada is still present at the Centre.

The University of Saskatchewan will also be conducting research at the CLC in 1994. Their involvement is in soil and water monitoring. During 1993, they are monitoring greenhouse emissions from the fields. This study will be ongoing at the site.

The CLC held its first field day on July 6th. The morning workshop session was held in Prince Albert and included: 3) Field trial placement in direct seed planting speaker - Norm Flook, Weston Fertilizers, Calgary; 2) Managing water with conservation agriculture Dr. Adam Johnston, Ag. Canada, Mellert; 3) Seed spacers and direct seed planting in 1993, speaker - Gerry Nie, SICA, Regional Soil Conservationist.

After lunch, tours to the CLC provided a people with a chance to see the trials already underway. Due to some wet ground, getting to all the plots was a bit difficult. In all nearly 100 people attended the field day and many thanks to the organizers, Saskatchewan Agriculture & Food - Extension Division, and District 32 ADD Board.

This is a brief update of what is happening at the CLC this year. Please remember that 1993 is the start up year and as with any project there have been growing pains along the way. It may seem as though we are not doing anything at the various fields, but we are building a solid foundation for the future of CLC. I have been encouraged by the number of organized efforts working together to make this venture a success.

The SICA has been involved with this project since its inception and we will continue to keep you informed on the progress and activities happening at the CLC.

Shelterbelt Economic Facts:

Many of the tree species currently being distributed free to prairie farmers produce good quality finish wood for furniture construction, and hobbies. This little known development surfaced recently at the JPRA Shelterbelt Centre Field Day held recently in Indian Head, Saskatchewan.

EDITORIAL COMMENT

By Gerry Willibald

SICA President

It appears that the “X” are all dotted, the “X” are crossed and the budget cuts enacted (well almost) for the long awaited $51.6 million Canada-Saskatchewan Green Plan. While writing this article, one again the face value of the Agreement decreased as a result of on-going budget cutting. The Agreement was $43.6 million, it is now $41 million.

Next year it may be...

In 1991, the lead-up to this $51.6 million Green Plan Agreement included a public (invited guests only) consultation process to prairies the principles of the Saskatchewan Green Plan funding. The prioritization for funding was agreed to as follows:

1. Agricultural Soil Resources
2. Surface and Groundwater Quality
3. Water Quality
4. Protection and Responsible Use of Land
5. Wildlife Habitat
6. Energy
7. Genetically Resistant Resources
8. Air and Climate

After reviewing the allocation of real dollars in the next to final Agreement, I would say that everything has been added to the soup; it is cooked and ready to be served.

Tours can be a great learning experience because they are usually held to showcase something developed by persons with a large amount of expertise as well as enthusiasm. Field days are great because you can benefit from someone else’s experience at no expense to you, other than travel costs and the time it takes away from your own operation. Both tours and field days allow you to view the latest machinery, machines and techniques being you go out and purchase or experiment.

Smart operators usually tour regularly. Take your friends, or maybe your banker - they need to know.

By Bob Linstead

SICA S.E. Regional Soil Conservationist

Everyone at some time in their life goes on a tour, or in the case of practicing farmers, a field day. Some travel a great distance to attend these functions, while others wouldn’t cross the road to participate.

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The SICA has been involved with this project since its inception and we will continue to keep you informed on the progress and activities happening at the CLC.

By Carolyn File

SICA Office Manager

Membership in the SICA has grown to a total of 709 members. Broken down by regions membership is as follows:

West Central (194); East Central (92); North East (136); South East (77); North West (77); South West (118); Out of Province (58). Total member count as of March 31st, 1994 was 709. This membership was made possible by the Mennonite Membership Incentive Program. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Mennonite for their sponsorship. All available memberships under this program have been realized. The regular membership rates now are in effect 15 years for $100.00. Remember you can still take part in the Membership Enhancement Program:

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The SICA has been involved with this project since its inception and we will continue to keep you informed on the progress and activities happening at the CLC.
1. Winter Annuals

As in other areas of the province, direct seeded fields have become a common sight in the province. Several methods of application are possible. The following lists some of the more common techniques that have been used.

2. Winter Annuals

Winter annuals were not controlled on several fields this spring. While the seeds may be small, winter annuals are germinating in the fields. This is a problem in the cool, wet soil conditions that we have experienced in some areas. The more common methods of control are through fall tillage or early spring chemical control.

3. Seed Depth

Seed depth can be a major problem in direct seeding. In some cases, the seed is placed too deep, which can lead to poor germination. In other cases, the seed is placed too shallow, which can lead to disease or insect damage. The ideal depth for most crops is between 1 and 2 inches.

4. Seed Placement

Seed placement is a critical factor in direct seeding. Poor seed placement can lead to poor crop emergence and yield. Seed placement can be improved by using precision planters or by adjusting the seed rate and seed depth.

5. Fertilizing Dilemma

Choosing a method of fertilizing will depend on many variables, such as cost, crop choice, fertilizer requirements, and growing conditions. It is important to consider these factors before making a decision.

6. Crop Establishment

Crop establishment is a critical aspect of direct seeding. Crop establishment can be improved by using proper seed rate, seed depth, and seed placement.

7. Fertilizer

Fertilizer is an important component of direct seeding. Fertilizer can be applied in several ways, including pre-planting, inter-row, or post-emergence.

8. Winter Annuals

Winter annuals have become a major problem in the province. These crops are often more difficult to control than summer annuals. The most common methods of control are through fall tillage or early spring chemical control.

9. Seed Quality

Seed quality is an important factor in direct seeding. Poor seed quality can lead to poor crop emergence and yield. Seed quality can be improved by using certified seed and by testing the seed for germination.

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Top School of Ag. Papers Win SSCA Memberships

By Garth Patterson
SSCA W.C. Regional Soil Conservationist

Congratulations to Marg Clarke of Eatonia and Jarrad Gerle of Ceylon, for having the top papers in the U of S School of Agriculture’s Soil Conservation and Land Degradation Class. For their efforts, each wins a three year membership in the SSCA. The class is taught by Dr. Mike Groves of the Soil Science Department at the U. One of the requirements of the class is a paper discussing a soil degradation process and how it is managed on the student’s farm.

Marg’s paper describes how wind erosion occurs and methods to reduce it. “As a very flexible plan is incorporated into our farm. A plan that consists of chemical weed control and minimum shallow tillage.” Her opinion on conservation was “research and educational material such as by Save Our Soils, or information from the Universities or Rural Service Centres all aid in educating the farmers. Having access to this material and further education are essential for long term solutions.”

She concludes that “a holistic approach encompassing shelterbelts, strip farming, storable managed, snow trapping, chemicals and sometimes land use design. Thus the farmer will have to think about all the problems of soil conservation and economic reality is clearly the only way to save our soil.”

Jarrad’s paper on wind erosion discusses the economic consequences of erosion, how erosion occurs, and methods to reduce it. “We maintain our storable until spring. This protects the soil and captures snow even across the field. Stripcropping seems to work well on our farm, however striped fields will not be grazed when the crop is growing (without cross-lining).”

Residue management is a high priority on their farm. “We use chaffmower and residue covers to maintain trash cover. We also switched from borrowed hay from the back of a cultivator to a dead rod, which seems to make more residue on the soil surface and reduce erosion.”

Jarrad’s comments on government programs included “making farmers more aware of options for financing including direct seeding programs.” He also thought that “the government could provide educational programs to farmers to make them aware to the problem.” Jarrad concluded that “which is a huge problem on the prairies and will continue to increase if farmers don’t adopt methods to reduce erosion.”

Residue Management

One of the most common questions that I am asked is “what is the best machine for direct seeding?” The best answer is to ask the farmer “what colour primarily do you like?” In other words, there is no one “best machine”. The process for deciding what you want is similar to deciding what combines to buy. The following are some of the things that should be considered.

1. Can you use or modify your current seeder or should you buy a different one?
2. How much can you afford to spend on a different seeder? New or used?
3. Do you want disc or hoe openers?
4. Is double shooting essential? This point should be carefully considered. Single shooting is simple and can be effective if the system properly planned. If double shooting is essential, look for a seeder that has worked properly under Canadian conditions.
5. What conditions will you be seeding into? Soil type? Rock? Chelmoil or storable? Look for a seeder that will work in all of the conditions on your farm.
6. Who do I want to deal with?
7. Is the service and parts availability acceptable?
8. Talk to other farmers, extension workers and researchers about their experiences.
9. Be careful, it’s your money! Be skeptical about what salesmen tell you.

There are a wide variety of seeders available for direct seeding that will do a good job if you understand their limitations.

Selecting A New Direct Seeding Implement

By Blair McClinton
SSCA N.W. Regional Soil Conservationist

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There are a wide variety of seeders available for direct seeding that will do a good job if you understand their limitations.
Not unlike those farmers pondering a change to a direct seeding system, the Saskatchewan farmers are rightly planning for the uncertainties of change. As of August 31, 1993, more than 473,000 acres of cropland across the province is converted to direct seeding. The adoption of direct seeding technology now goes back to 1984. The first large-scale conversion to direct seeding occurred when more than 2,000 acres were direct seeded in the east central region. As of 1993, more than 300,000 acres of cropland has been converted to direct seeding. The concept of direct seeding, without first planting a certain amount of seed, changed the way farmers viewed their land. The Saskatchewan farmers have been part of changes taking place in this province. The adoption of direct seeding technology is now a certainty in the province. The adoption of direct seeding technology is now a certainty in the province. The adoption of direct seeding technology is now a certainty in the province. The adoption of direct seeding technology is now a certainty in the province.
It's the summer season again, or at least it should be according to my calendar. During this time we see a number of fun and informative events to attend. If there is something for the whole family to get involved in, even better. Approximately 2300 people found the FSSA Soil Conservation Field Day, at Indian Head, on July 8 to be just the ticket the doctor ordered.

The Soil Conservation Field Day held on June 15 was a great success, but the learning hasn't stopped yet! The plot signs are still up along the main access road into the field. Fast boxes to step in and check the crop conditions on the various plots throughout the growing season (please do not drive on the field). Remember, your own conclusions are the most valuable ones!

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Economic Facts, Stats and Figures
By James Lokken
SSCA Conservation Specialist

SSCA submitted and developed a brief in April to Agriculture Canada's legislative reviewed of Crop Insurance. In the document, notes that while "Crop Insurance is a useful tool for management by small and medium sized farms which impacts diverse crops and acreage. This material to plant to grow is essential for all industry, sustainability, and financial security." The brief concludes by stating that "Crop Insurance is a useful tool for management by small and medium sized farms which impacts diverse crops and acreage. This material to plant to grow is essential for all industry, sustainability, and financial security." The brief concludes by stating that "Crop Insurance is a useful tool for management by small and medium sized farms which impacts diverse crops and acreage. This material to plant to grow is essential for all industry, sustainability, and financial security." The brief concludes by stating that "Crop Insurance is a useful tool for management by small and medium sized farms which impacts diverse crops and acreage. This material to plant to grow is essential for all industry, sustainability, and financial security." The brief concludes by stating that "Crop Insurance is a useful tool for management by small and medium sized farms which impacts diverse crops and acreage. This material to plant to grow is essential for all industry, sustainability, and financial security."

The full report can be accessed through the SSCA website. The full report can be accessed through the SSCA website. The full report can be accessed through the SSCA website. The full report can be accessed through the SSCA website. The full report can be accessed through the SSCA website.

Central Roundup
FIRA Shelterbelt Centre Field Day a Success
By Chris Zabek
SSCA Shelterbelt Information

The biggest news this issue is that Project Soils, SSCA's soil conservation education program for students at Grade 6-9, is gathering momentum. In the first year alone, over 200 Saskatchewan teachers have taken a workshop to receive a copy for classroom use. Eight more workshops are booked from now to February, 1994.

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**CONSERVATION CROSSWORD**

**Clues**

**Across**

1. Leaving this after harvest provides organic matter and protects the soil

2. Seeding means planting the seed into last year’s soil

3. Some is incorrectly called “alkali”

4. These rows of trees can protect a field for a distance of up to 20 times their height

5. This is what causes dust storms, especially on bare fields

6. They share the land with us. Soil conservation helps them too!

**Down**

7. AVOID DISAPPOINTMENT

8. DRAW PRIZES*

9. HOW LONG CAN YOU AFFORD NOT TO PRACTICE SOIL CONSERVATION?

**Answers**

1. Cover crops

2. Direct Seeding

3. Avoiding disappointment

4. Drawing prizes*

5. How long can you afford not to practice soil conservation?

6. Soil conservation is important to farmers

7. Farmer perspective of forages

8. Farmer perspective of forages

9. Farmer perspective of forages

**Notes**

- Avoid disappointment
- Register now!
- Limited seating!

**Registration Form** included on back page of this Prairie Steward