Co-Operator March 2021 Cook County Farm Bureau®

# Agriculture Adventures for Families

As the snow begins to melt away, signs of soil begin to show. Soil is full of life. It is often said that a handful of soil has more living organisms than there are people on planet Earth. Soils are the stomach of the earth, consuming, digesting, and cycling nutrients and organisms. Soil is a key resource for food production and influences the worldwide distribution of plants, animals, and people. What can we do and what are farmers doing?

Let's take a look.









## Farmers:

#### **Conservation Tillage**

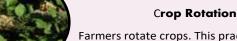
Farmers use conservation tillage, such as no-till and strip-till. These methods leave the previous year's crop residue, such as corn stalks or soybean stubble, on the fields after harvest to protect soil over the winter when nothing is growing

#### **Cover Crops**

Farmers plant cover crops after harvest. Cover crops can add nutrients back into the soil and "cover" the soil- protecting it from wind and water erosion.

#### Who is Responsible for Soil Conservation?

Soil conservation is the protection and careful use of soil to prevent it from being lost or damaged. Soil conservation is important because soil can be damaged easily, but it cannot be replaced easily. It takes hundreds of years to replace one inch of top soil. In Illinois, most of our soil loss is caused by water erosion. Farmers play a big role in soil conservation. You, too, can help conserve soil.



Farmers rotate crops. This practice, called crop rotation, is when farmers grow different types of crops in the same area in sequential seasons. It helps ensure that the soil is not depleted of certain nutrients. It also helps reduce soil erosion and increase soil fertility and crop yield.

#### **Contour Farming**

Instead of planting crops in rows of straight lines, farmers plant rows which follow the natural shapes of the land to slow water runoff and reduce erosion.

#### **Technology**

Farmers use technology, such as global positioning systems (GPS) to see pictures, or soil maps, of the land to spot and address erosion.

#### **Buffers**

Farmers use stripes of permanent vegetation, called buffers, to intercept nutrients and sediment carried by surface water, allowing plants to absorb and use the water and nutrients.

### You:

#### Cover Soil

Cover bare soil with new plants or mulch. Soil coverings, like mulch, help keep soil in place.

#### **Plant Vegetation**

Plant trees, shrubs, bushes, flowers and other forms of vegetation. Plant roots help prevent soil erosion.

#### Manage Waste

Follow guidelines when disposing of contaminants like paint. Waste can hurt the soil as well as human, plant, and animal health.

#### Inform Friends

Tell others how important soil is for survival and encourage them to protect soil. More people protecting soil will help make sure it stays in place and stays healthy for future generations.

#### **Use Walkways**

Stay on sidewalks, trails, and other walkways. When you walk where it is designated, you protect soil by not carrying it away on your shoes and clothing.



#### Reduce, Reuse & Recycle

Practicing the 3 Rs (reduce, reuse & recycle) every day in important for healthy soil, as well as a healthy environment.

Source: www.agintheclassroom.org

### **March Word Search**

**Buffers Protection Conservation** Recycle Contour **Rotate** Soil Cover Tillage Crops **Erosion Technology Farmers** Vegetation **Nutrients** Water

Name:
Phone #:
Membership #:
(Membership # is located on front of paper)
If you were to win, check your preference:
if you were to will, eneck your preference.
Beggar's Pizza GCHRI GC3 Movie Tix
(If a choice is not made, movie tickets will be sent)

Deadline is the 20th of each month.

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#### Choose your prize:

Choices include a \$25 Beggar's Pizza Gift Card, a \$25 Home Run Inn Gift Card, OR \*3 AMC Movie Tickets \*AMC Yellow tickets not valid in California, New York & New Jersey.

Complete the Word Search puzzle for your chance to win! Winners will be contacted by mail.

Mail to: Cook Co. Farm Bureau

Ag Adventures Word Search

6438 Joliet Rd

Countryside, IL 60525

Fax to: 708-579-6056

Email to: FBCooperator@gmail.com

Complete and submit an entry every month all in 2021 and your name is automatically entered into an "End of Year" drawing for a gift basket full of ag themed goodies.

Good luck!

### Last Month's Word Search Winner Is...



**Cori Fagan**