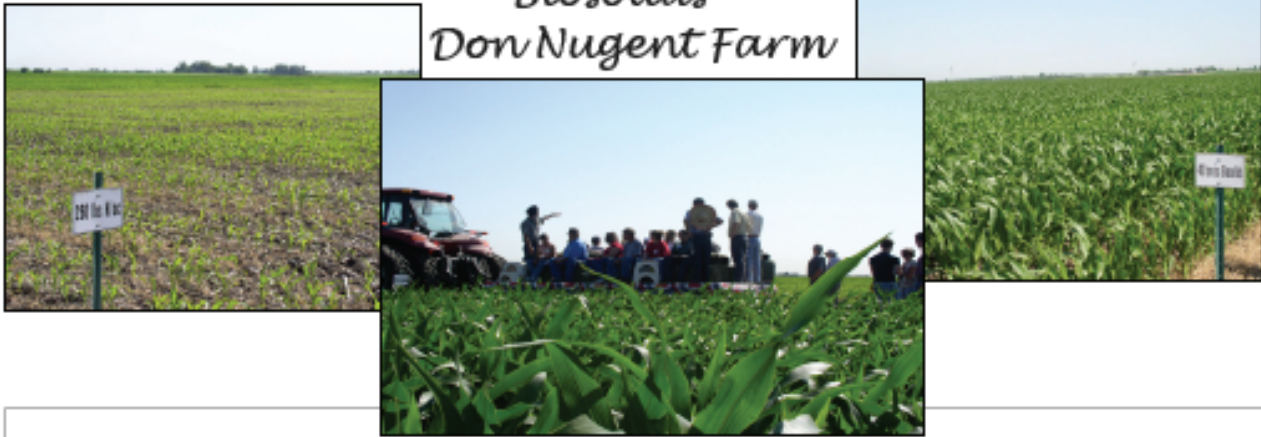


SWCD ~ NRCS Field Days

Biosolids ~ Don Nugent Farm



Submitted By Bob Jankowski, District Conservationist

A spring tour of the Donald Nugent farm in Florence Township attracted a crowd of individuals interested in learning more about biosolids. How could a product from the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District possibly be used on cropland? What is this product comprised of? Does it smell bad? What does it cost the farmer? Is there really value to a household and industrial waste product previously sent to landfills? Is this otherwise known as sludge?

These questions and many others were fielded by the MWRD staff that was present June 14th, 2006. Lakhwinder Hundal, MWRD Professional Soil Scientist, is currently working with Don Nugent to provide plot research information to virtually anyone who has an interest in soil quality and yield impacts of biosolids application. This project compares equivalent rates of commercial fertilizer vs. biosolids application to plots with continuous corn rotation. The project is to continue for three years.

Synagro employee, Greg Ferrentello, provided information about the role of Synagro in the project. Greg's responsibility is to deliver and apply the material in a timely manner to his customers and from all indications Don Nugent appears to be more than pleased with the results.

Paul Youngstrom, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service Agronomist, discussed the importance of conservation planning and good management practices on cropland soils. According to Paul, the application of biosolids on cropland adds organic material and fertilizer benefits that reduce the bottom line cost of production. In addition, soil erosion benefits can be realized.

Other speakers included Robert Jankowski, USDA NRCS District Conservationist. Bob explained the benefits of using biosolids on highly erodible fields and suggested that farmers consider the use of biosolids in their farm conservation plans. He also encouraged these farmers to consider a visit to their local NRCS/SWCD office for further assistance. SWCD Conservation Education Director Everett Moeller also provided comments encouraging the use of biosolids. Everett explained the value of using biosolids as a fertilizer as well as for increasing organic matter.

Anyone interested in looking at the plots at the Donald Nugent farm should contact Don Nugent or the Will-South Cook SWCD office at (815)462-3106 to arrange for a visit. Don welcomes visitors to take a look at the field and make a comparison of the plots.