

October—December, 2025

Newsletter



VAN WERT

Soil & Water Conservation District Newsletter

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Cows and Plows

As the new school year begins we are very excited to be in the schools once again. Education coordinator, Tammy Campbell, has a wide variety of educational programs that she teaches to students in Van Wert County. Our most recent event was “Not Just Cows and Plows” that is put on at the Van Wert County Fairgrounds for all area 4th graders.

The SWCD, in cooperation with Crestview Local Schools, Lincolnview Local Schools, St. Mary’s Parochial, and Van Wert City Schools, presented a day-long session for students to acquaint them with the primary industry in the county, AGRICULTURE. While some of the students do live on farms, most of them do not have an opportunity to experience what modern-day farming is all about. More important is that the field trip reinforces the social studies and science state standards and curriculum for this age group.

Local supporting agencies for the event include: Ag Credit, TruLand

Equipment, Ohio State University Extension Office, Van Wert County Fair Board, Van Wert County Farm Bureau, Brookside Convenience Store (ice cream), Van Wert Soil & Water Conservation District, and the Van Wert County Foundation.

The speakers cover a broad range of topics, including livestock, crops, marketing and production of agricultural products, soil basics, water, and equipment with an emphasis on how technology has changed the way we farm and how agriculture effects our daily lives.

A huge thank you to the presenters for taking time out of their busy schedules to teach our local students. Also, to the sponsors for supporting this event and understanding the importance of teaching our youth.

Thank you to everyone who made this day successful!

Pictures from Cows and Plows



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Special points of interest:

- ✧ Help save the Monarch Butterfly's by saving milkweed plants
- ✧ Water Test Kits
- ✧ Annual Meeting

Annual Meeting

The Van Wert SWCD held their 76th Annual Meeting by co-hosting with the Van Wert Farm Bureau at the Ag Banquet on Tuesday, August 5 at Life House Church, Van Wert, OH. A SWCD election was held for two supervisor positions on the SWCD Board of Supervisors five member Board. Dustin Schaadt and Phil Young were elected to serve a three year term commencing January 1, 2026.

Dinner was provided by Lock 16. The speaker was Jolen Brown who delivered a powerful presentation on succession planning.

Emma Wells, Luke Heffelfinger and Claire Keysor were the SWCD Scholarship recipients.

Tom and Doug Jones were recognized by the SWCD and received the Conservation Farmer Award. This award is given to honor individuals for their conservation achievements. Farm Bureau honored their scholarship recipients, Luke Heffelfinger and Emma Wells.

The Van Wert Ag Hall of Fame Award was presented to Fred Pond for his many agricultural accomplishments.

Sponsors for the evening were: Farm Bureau and the Van Wert Soil and Water Conservation District. We would like to thank everyone that attended the meeting and are looking forward to next year!



Tom and Doug Jones

Conservation Farmer

Fred Pond
Ag Hall of Fame Recipient



Statewide Milkweed Pod Collection Runs Sept. 1 –Oct. 31

Due to the drastic decline in monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) populations, the Ohio Pollinator Habitat Initiative (OPHI) and local Soil & Water Conservation Districts are again seeking public involvement to collect common milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*) seed pods from established plants September 1 through October 31. This is an annual event and we hope you can participate !

The seeds will be used to establish new plantings and additional habitat for the monarch butterfly throughout the buckeye state. These future plantings will increase the food source for the caterpillar stage. Seed pods from common milkweed should be collected **ONLY WHEN THE PODS ARE DRY AND BROWN-GREY** in color. If the center seam pops with gentle pressure, they can be picked. The seeds in green pods will not be viable and won't be able to be used. Be patient and don't collect too soon !

It is best to collect pods into paper bags. Avoid using plastic bags because they can allow mold to develop. It is recommended to wear disposable gloves when picking the handling pods. Ideally, it is recommended to leave at least 50 percent of the seed crop at a given site to allow for natural regrowth of the native population the next growing season. There are situations where total collection can occur. For example: If the field or area will be mowed completely or the area will be converted for crop or development. A collection container is located outside the door of the Van Wert SWCD, 1185 Professional Drive, Van Wert.



Water Test Kits Available

The Van Wert Soil & Water Conservation District has partnered with Heidelberg University's National Center for Water Quality Research to offer residents the opportunity to have their well water tested.

If your drinking water comes from a private well, you are responsible for your water's safety. If you have never had your water supply tested, it is always a good idea to educate yourself on what is present in your drinking water and provide yourself with some baseline information in the event there are changes in the future that may impact the quality of your water supply.

Should you test your well water?

Your well has an increased likelihood of contamination if:

- Your well is more than 20 years old
- Your well was dug or driven rather than drilled
- Your well is shallow
- Your soil is sandy
- A chemical spill is known to have happened nearby

Your well is near possible sources of contamination, such as: cropland, feedlots, landfills, industrial sites (active or abandoned).

Even if your well fits none of these categories, you cannot know the quality of your water without testing. Contaminants may have entered the ground without your knowledge or before you lived at the site.

Due to supply and testing equipment issues, the only test kit Heidelberg is offering at this time is the basic nitrate test, which includes testing for nitrates, nitrites, ammonia, chloride, sulfates, fluoride, soluble phosphorus, silica, and conductivity.

The cost of the kit is \$30.00 (which includes shipping), made payable to Van Wert SWCD.

The test kits will be for sale **Monday, October 20 through Friday, October 24, 2025**. The samples must be returned to the Van Wert SWCD on **Monday, October 27, 2025** between 7:30 a.m. and 3 p.m. Please take the sample right before dropping the kit back off to us so that it is as fresh as possible. Participants can expect their confidential results back in two to four weeks from Heidelberg University.

Van Wert County H2Ohio Update

Our county has officially opened enrollment for 2026-2027 crop years! This is for new and existing producers. See the attachment "H2Ohio Program and Practice Overview" in the newsletter to see what the program has to offer in the next two years. If you would like to enroll or learn more about H2Ohio please reach out to Kady Mohr kady@vanwertswcd.com or call 419-605-7203.

Field Enrollment opened Sept 15th and will stay open until Dec. 8th or until we reach 1.4million acres in the WLEB counties.

Once you have completed field enrollment, you will have until March 2nd to complete a nutrient management plan.

Van Wert S.W.C.D.
1185 Professional Drive
Van Wert, OH 45891

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Ben Kales, Soil Conservationist
Jeff Carlson—Ohio Senior Wildlife Biologist

Upcoming Dates and Events

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| October 8 | SWCD Board Meeting @ 8 am |
| <i>October 13</i> | <i>Columbus Day—Office Closed</i> |
| November 2 | Daylight Savings Time ends |
| <i>November 11</i> | <i>Veteran's Day Observed—Closed</i> |
| November 12 | SWCD Board Meeting @ 8 am |
| <i>November 27/28</i> | <i>Thanksgiving—Office Closed</i> |
| December 10 | SWCD Board Meeting @ 8 am |
| <i>December 24/25</i> | <i>Christmas—Office Closed</i> |
| <i>December 31/January 1</i> | <i>New Year's—Office Closed</i> |

Like us on our new Facebook page at:

<https://www.facebook.com/www.vanwertswcd.org>

The SWCD Board of Supervisors monthly meeting is held the second Wednesday of each month at 8:00 a.m. in the SWCD office.

