



Galen and Colton Deutsch of Chase stand amongst one of their buffer strips that decrease erosion from runoff and improve wildlife. Galen has farmed in the area since 1994.

2015 CONSERVATION AWARD

buffer strips provide wildlife cover, prevent soil erosion

**By RYAN CARLSON**  
A piece of ground next to Cow Creek was the perfect candidate for owner Sara A. Hollinger Welch of Topeka and operators Galen and Colton Deutsch of Chase to plant a filter strip. Colton said the decision came after he and his father Galen decided they wanted to reduce run off from the field into the creek. He said the two had planted

filter, also known as buffer, strips before in two fields and were no stranger to the practice. They decided upon sedan grass because of it’s reputation of holding soil from eroding. “It also makes a great cover for wildlife,” said Colton. Colton said the field they won the award for is east of Lyons. Since it has grown to maturity it has served it’s purpose. The sedan grass grew

to six feet in height and lasts for 11 acres. “The pheasant and deer really like it,” said Colton. Galen said he has farmed the area since 1994. He has farmed the field that won the water quality award for the past 10 years. “We like to conserve natural resources. We always strive to take care of the land and leave it better than we found it,” said Galen.



Milo can be good for food plots on lands where wildlife are concerned. On top of attracting deer and pheasant as a food source, some animals like to use it for cover. Other crops commonly used in food plots include winter oats, alfalfa and barley.

Kansas Banker Association & Rice County Conservation Recognition Program

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Good conservation helps make sure that we have the essentials of good food and clean water. Rice County has many people who work hard every day to protect, manage, and improve our natural resources. We applaud the pioneers of conservation and encourage those who continue to explore its frontiers today.

Nominations of individual for the Banker’s Award are accepted annually, usually in September and October. Nominations are submitted to the Rice County Conservation District. Selection of the Banker’s Award recipients is made by a committee composed of the Rice County Conservation District’s Board of Supervisors, the Soil Conservationist for NRCS, the Conservation Technician for NRCS, Farm Service Agency County Committee and CED, President of Farm Bureau Association, the Rice County Extension Council, the Kansas Key Banker, and the Conservation District Manager.

The Kansas Banker Association and Rice County Conservation Recognition Program is given to recognize those farmers who have made outstanding progress in the development of a complete soil conservation plan and implementation of that plan on their farms in accordance with the capability of the land.

The Water Quality Recognition Program’s

purpose is to stimulate a greater interest in the quality of the water resources in Kansas by giving recognition to those farmers who have taken measures to improve the beneficial use of water supply. The Wildlife Recognition Program’s purpose is to stimulate a greater interest in fish and wildlife habitat management in Kansas by giving recognition to landowners who have made outstanding prog-

ress in the development and stewardship of fish and wildlife resources. The Windbreak Recognition Program’s purpose is to stimulate a greater interest in windbreaks in Kansas by giving recognition to landowners who have made outstanding progress in the establishment and management of windbreaks. Consideration is taken in the design, location, density and length, moisture conservation, providing

Prescribed burning helps to maintain grass plantings

Prescribed burning is a very important management tool for maintaining and enhancing native grass plantings. To reduce weed competition, prescribed burns are usually performed in the early spring. During this time, many of the competing cool-season grasses, weeds, and woody plants begin growing while the native plants are still dormant. Always develop a prescribed burn plan prior to burning. Assistance is available through the NRCS office.

Consideration should be given to the influence of burning on nesting birds. Required burning dates for CRP is from February 1 through April 15 in hardland areas of the county. In sandyland, the required burning dates are from April 1 through April 30. Fire helps to maintain native plant health. Most native plants will grow more vigorously, produce more flowers,

and produce more seeds after a fire. The active growing points of most prairie plants are below the soil surface, and are unaffected as the fire rapidly passes over. After the fire, these plants are stimulated by warmth of the blackened ground and the nutrients that were released from burned plant material.

For both safety and legal reasons, certain groups should be notified before a burn to prevent unnecessary concerns and danger. Notifying neighbors, fire departments, and the local law enforcement and officials should be a part of the prescribed burn process.

A prescribed burn requires careful planning, attention to fuel sources and amounts, and attention to the wind. Using a small, slow backfire helps to keep the fire more controlled while it is close to neighboring shrubs and trees.

It is highly suggested

that if you have a prescribed burn scheduled, that you prepare for the burn during the fall, prior to the burn. A fire break should be mowed in the fall prior to the scheduled burn. In the spring, disking a 20’ fire break around the edge of the field is highly suggested so that the fire does not get out of control. The fire break can be wetted if the fuel is dry. A good strategy is to burn when steady wind (4-15 mph) is blowing.

When done properly, a good burn on our native pastures and CRP fields has shown great benefits, the difference being a wildfire versus a prescribed burn.

If you have questions, would like to know more about prescribed burning, or are interested in having a plan written, feel free to contact the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office located at the USDA Service Center in Lyons.

Caring for concrete structures

Several producers come in to our office each year to report problems with their concrete terrace outlet structures. The major problem seems to be with voids under them or water washing around the sides. These problems are usually the result of a lack of maintenance. Producers should inspect their structures after heavy rainfall events or at least once a year for problems. Cracks that develop should be sealed and

modifications or repairs made as soon as they are needed. Most often a small repair job will prevent a larger, more expensive repair job or even complete failure in the future.

The inlet and outlet of the structure should be kept free of debris and obstructions. Silt accumulations around the inlet and outlet should be removed and remain open the entire width of the designed structure for effective operation. If there is more than one structure in a system, silt should not be allowed to accumulate between them. A narrow inlet will not allow the water from the terrace to flow as designed and usually results in water backing up and finding a weak spot in the terrace and breaking through or running over the terrace.

Trees should be removed and not allowed to grow around structures. Check for damage from burrowing rodents around structures and the adjacent embankment. Protection from livestock is also good preventive maintenance. If voids

occur under the structure the area can usually be filled with a concrete slurry. Most of the older structures did not have a wide enough apron on the inlet side. Sometimes soil can be pulled out from directly in front of the structure and washed over it due to the suction from water. This can create a void or hole that only gets worse in time. Holes from rodents can compound the problem. If this occurs, pour a 4 inch thick slab of concrete 2 to 3 feet out in front of the inlet. Make sure the slab is across the entire width of the inlet. This will usually cure the problem.

There are quite a few of these structures in Rice County compared to other counties in Kansas. The majority were probably built 30 to 40 years ago but with proper maintenance can still work as designed.

If you have any questions about maintenance of concrete structure contact the Rice County Conservation District / Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office in Lyons.

Weather, markets, weeds, bugs, disease and all the other factors that affect your profitability – we’ve seen it all too. Since 1938, we’ve been helping farmers and ranchers succeed in their business. Our expertise has grown, but one quality remains constant: our dedication to Superior Customer Service. We’ll be happy to visit your place and talk about making the most of your grain and livestock operation. John, Haley, Gunner and Kaleb are ready to discuss your options and help you plan your success!



John Wempe



Haley Eck



Gunner Whorton



Kaleb Horne

We congratulate this year’s soil conservation award winners who have succeeded in their farm programs!

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