

News Release

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Contact: Scott Crumpecker

Bootheel Resource Conservation & Development, Inc.
18450 Ridgeview Lane
Dexter, MO 63841
Phone: 573-624-5939 ext.6
Fax: 573-624-6940

scott.crumpecker@mo.usda.gov

Bunge Funds FFA-Producer Partnership in Missouri Bootheel

GENERATIONS program pairs FFA students with corn producers to improve farmers' bottom lines and water quality

(Dexter, Mo.) –Bootheel Resource Conservation & Development, Inc. announced Bunge North America is making a donation to GENERATIONS, an agricultural program designed to help reduce excess nitrogen that can escape the field. Nitrogen loss equals financial loss to the producer and potentially impairs water quality.

“As a leading agribusiness company that connects producers to consumers, Bunge is working with our partners in the value chain to meet the world's demand for food in a sustainable way,” said Fred Luckey, executive vice president, sustainability and innovation, Bunge North America. “Programs like GENERATIONS fit well with Bunge’s efforts to achieve a high level of environmental performance by adopting science-based, culturally sensitive and pragmatic best practices.”

Through this program, seventy-five corn growers in Dunklin, Stoddard, Scott, New Madrid, and Pemiscot counties paired with FFA students and ag professionals to collect stalk samples in their fields. The University of Missouri Delta Research Center tests stalks for nitrate content. Producers can use testing results to optimize next season’s nitrogen application rates.

This past summer’s project sign-up, supported by the Environmental Protection Agency through the Conservation Technology Information Center, exceeded project coordinators’ expectations three-fold. As a result, project partners were unable to cover all expenses related to the project.

“Bunge made it possible to cover our expenses, and possibly have some seed money for next year’s program,” says Scott Crumpecker, coordinator for the Bootheel Resource Conservation & Development, Inc.

“Bunge and others in the value chain have a stake in improving the efficiency of our operations with respect to the use and impact on natural resources,” says Matt Thibodeaux, vice president and general manager, Bunge North America Fertilizer. “By engaging the next generation of

farmers in this program, GENERATIONS helps ensure the message of sustainable agriculture continues to be heard.”

The University of Missouri Delta Research Center will release stalk nitrate content results this month. Each producer’s test results will be kept confidential, but aggregate results will provide helpful information to agribusiness, teaching institutions, conservation service technical providers, and non-profit organizations seeking solutions to water quality problems linked to excess nitrogen loss to streams and rivers.

“Corn stalk nitrate testing provides the producer with data to make sound decisions about next season’s nitrogen application. We decided to participate in this program because it benefits the farmer economically, allows young people to learn from those in the business, and helps conserve water quality,” says David Dunn, Soil Testing Laboratory Supervisor at the Delta Research Center.

Project organizers sponsor programs to reduce nitrogen and phosphorus pollution of waterways that can lead to excessive algae growth detrimental to aquatic life, recreation, and drinking water supplies. The hypoxic zone in the Gulf of Mexico is a large scale example of the impact excessive nitrogen and phosphorus can have on water bodies. Both agricultural and urban fertilizer applications can be fine tuned to help prevent water quality degradation.

For more information contact Scott Crumpecker at 573-624-5939 ext.6, or scott.crumpecker@mo.usda.gov



Dexter FFA students delivering stalks to be tested.
Photo: Scott Crumpecker



FFA students lopping corn stalk.
Photo: David Dunn



FFA senior checks out ear of corn with corn producer.
Photo: Pam Burgess