



2012 Evaluation Report

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INTRODUCTION

Iowa Learning Farms continues to build a *Culture of Conservation* by utilizing sound research (from Iowa State University and ILF partner agencies), in-field application and demonstration, and outreach and education to Iowans of all ages and residencies.

It is clear that Iowa Learning Farms is making a difference. Since 2008, 85% of farmers attending ILF field days have made a change in their behavior:

- **Average of 34% of farmers increased surface residue management on 71,343 new acres of strip-till or no-till**
- **422 = average number of increased acres put into no-till/strip-till**
- **Average of 39% of farmers increased surface residue management on 18,346 new acres of cover crops since 2010**
- **197=average number of increased acres put into cover crops since 2010**

OVERVIEW OF ILF IN 2012

From January to December 2012, the Iowa Learning Farms:

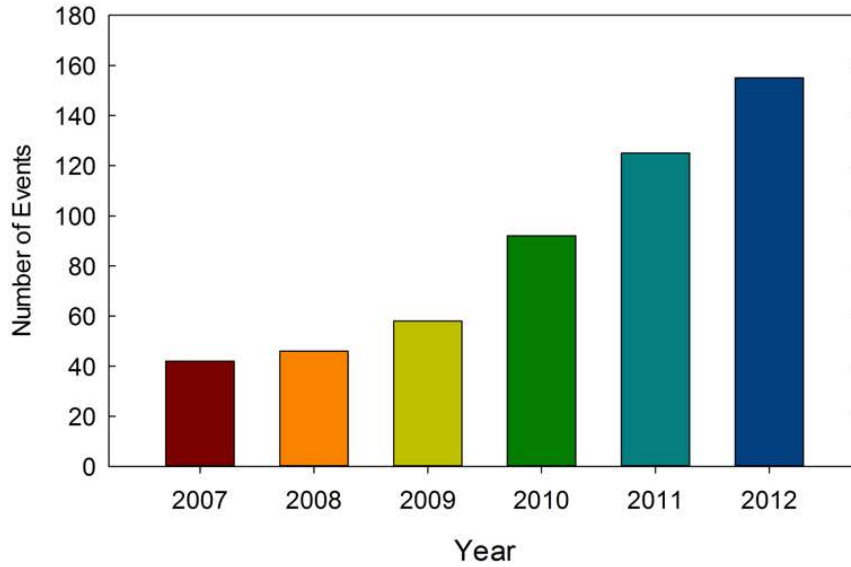
- **Sponsored 27 farmer events (field days/workshops) attended by 1,106 people**
- **Participated at 128 other events, attended by approximately 16,450 people**
- **Visited 76 counties**
- **We turned down 36% of our requests in 2012 due to scheduling conflicts, funding and staffing limitations.**

Iowa Learning Farms event evaluations occur at five stages:

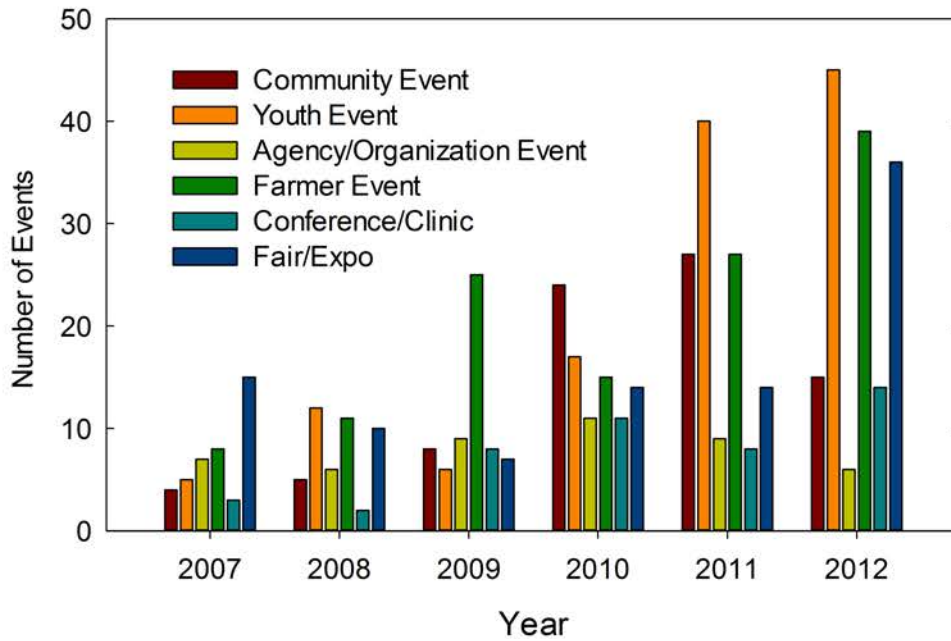
- **Event Evaluations** for any event that ILF team members participate. These forms (completed by ILF team members) help us to understand the audience's level of engagement and help us to improve future outreach activities.
- **Comment Cards** filled out by all participants at an ILF-sponsored event in order to gain a better understanding of who they are and why they are there.
- **Mailed Evaluation Questionnaires** to participants in any sponsored "field" event as a part of the ILF program. These questionnaires were sent within three weeks of the event. The questions focus on the clarity and accessibility of the information received and inquired whether participants planned to make any changes in their land management as a result of the event.
- **Follow-up Evaluation Questionnaires** to participants in any sponsored "field" event. This survey was sent in January 2013 to see if the participants had made the changes they said they were going to make in earlier evaluations.
- **Teacher Evaluations** of Conservation Station or ILF classroom events. These questionnaires were handed to the teachers at the event with a return envelope to help see how these individuals perceived our educational programming.

EVENT EVALUATIONS

Iowa Learning Farms staff complete event evaluation forms for all major presentations including field days. For detailed information of a specific event, see the quarterly and year-end reports.

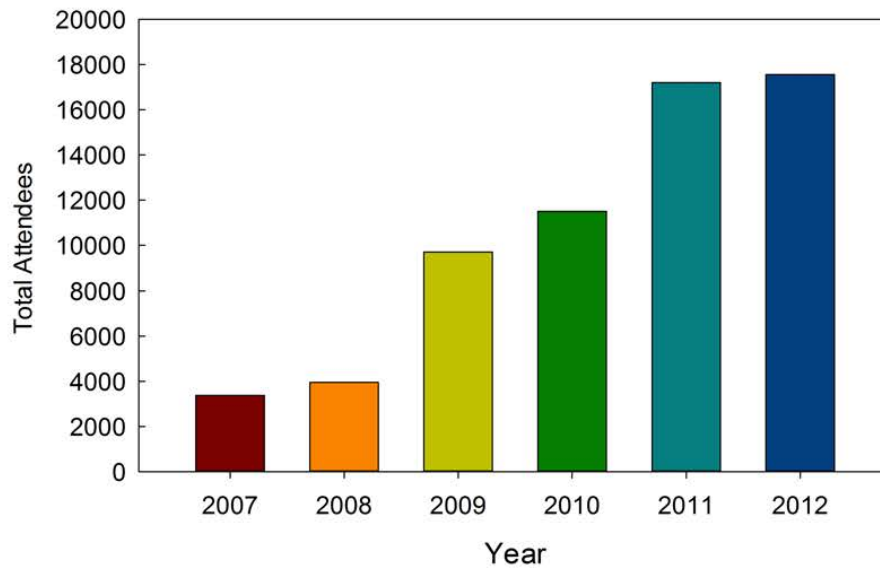


Month	# of events		
	2010	2011	2012
January	1	5	7
February	3	4	4
March	14	8	8
April	3	15	15
May	6	15	21
June	14	19	21
July	22	20	34
August	12	8	19
September	11	21	9
October	6	10	14
November			2
December			1
Total	92	125	155



Event objectives	2010	2011	2012
Community Event	24	27	15
Youth Event/Outdoor Class	17	40	45
Agency/Organization Event	11	9	6
Farmer Events	15	27	39
Conference/Clinic	11	8	14
Fair/expo	14	14	36

Description of Audiences						
Age groups						
<i>Primarily youth</i>	14%	26%	10%	24%	27%	25%
<i>All ages</i>	42%	35%	21%	27%	27%	34%
<i>Primarily adults</i>	44%	44%	69%	49%	46%	41%
Background						
<i>Rural</i>	56%	54%	47%	52%	52%	42%
<i>Urban</i>	7%	11%	2%	14%	9%	21%
<i>Rural/urban</i>	37%	35%	52%	34%	39%	37%
Level of engagement						
<i>High</i>	77%	83%	81%	78%	78%	91%
<i>Average</i>	18%	13%	14%	15%	18%	8%
<i>Low</i>	5%	4%	5%	7%	1%	1%



Total Attendees	2010	2011	2012
Number of events	92	125	155
Total numbers for events	11,500	17,200	17,556

Summary of Field Day Evaluations

n=275	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Overall quality of field day or workshop	42%	49%	8%	1%	--
Effectiveness of expert presentations	45%	43%	11%	1%	--
Effectiveness of farmer presentations	41%	44%	13%	2%	--
Quality of information exchanged during presentations and discussion	44%	46%	9%	1%	--

2012 ILF Field Day/Workshop Audience Participation in Evaluation

	#Attendees	#Comment Cards	#Returned Evaluations	#Returned Follow-up Evaluations
Cover Crop Workshop (Malcom)	45	31	17	14
Cover Crop Workshop (Boone)	47	35	21	13
Cover Crop Workshop (Calumet)	40	27	16	8
Cover Crop Workshop (Nashua)	40	31	15	10
Cover Crop Workshop (Crawfordsville)	40	30	20	17
Cover Crop Workshop (Lewis)	38	29	13	11
Black Hawk Lake Strip-Till Field Day (Breda)	56	33	11	11
No-Till Corn-on-Corn Field Day (Waverly)	92	32	12	12
No-Till/Cover Crop Field Day (Manning)	55	33	11	13
Strip-Till/No-Till Field Day (Osage)	95	63	24	32
Greenseeker/N Management Field Day (Sumner)	50	18	9	8
Triple C Farms Pasture Tour (Leon)	43	22	11	NA
Badger Creek Lake CREP Tour (Winterset)	54	20	9	NA
Taylor Co. Cover Crop Field Day (Riceville)	51	36	13	19
Competine Creek Cover Crop Field Day (Martinsburg)	42	19	11	9
Chris Henning Farm Cover crop Field Day (Jefferson)	45	31	13	7
Robert Lynch Farm Strip-Till Field Day (Gilmore City)	27	17	8	11
Pete and Jerry Crew Farm Cover Crop Field Day (Webb)	36	30	16	NA
McGrew Farm Cover Crop Field Day (Emerson)	30	17	6	NA
Mike Henning Farm Cover Crop Field Day (Winterset)	13	7	5	NA
Art Behrens Farm Cover Crop Field Day (Carroll)	47	30	14	NA
Total	986	591	275*	195+

*This is a 46% response rate to mailed questionnaire. This is an excellent response to a single mailed survey.

+This is a 42% response rate—a good rate of return, much better than last year.

Summary of Follow-Up Evaluation Questionnaires For Field Days

(sent by mail in January 2013 to all those who filled out comment cards)

Please describe at least one way you will integrate what you learned at this meeting into your farming:

	Jan 2013 Follow-up n=195	Jan 2012 Follow-up n=253	Feb 2011 Follow-up n=96	Feb 2010 Follow-up n=130	Feb 2009 Follow-up n=69
Increased use of surface residue management (no-till or strip-till) on some of my acres (n=79)*	36%	38%	32%	30%	32%
List # of acres	7,198	32,058	8,983	12,558	10,546
Average # of acres per respondent who said they were putting more acres into no-till or strip-till	267	458	428	370	586
Using fall seeded rye or other cover crops (n=121)*	53% (12,399 new acres)	32% (4,348 new acres)	47% (1,599 new acres)	23%	Not asked
Average # of acres per respondent who said they were putting more acres into cover crops	197			Not asked	Not asked
I discussed +/- of using no-till or strip-till with my landowners (n=79)*	40%	35%	27%	33%	39%
I discussed +/- of using cover crops with my landowners (n=121)*	50%	21%	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked
I discussed/networked conservation and water quality improvement ideas with other farmers in my area	65%	47%	61%	72%	70%
I purchased a grain drill or other seeding equipment, joint purchase of seeding equipment with my neighbors, leased equipment from local ag supplier or co-op, or contacted for aerial seeding of cover crops (n=121)*	19%	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked

I made modifications on my existing planter with residue managers, coulters, and/or different closing wheel attachments to plant no-till, or into cover crop residue (n=108)*	11%	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked
I purchased strip-till equipment, made a joint purchase of strip-till equipment with my neighbors, or leased equipment from a local ag supplier (n=79)*	14%	11%	8%	Not asked	14%
I did not make any changes	9%	14%	16%	18%	18%

*These are the number of possible respondents for each question for 2012 field days. Those without a smaller number after the question were asked for all the field days.

The final three questions were only asked on the follow-up questionnaire:

Do you think, in general, we are moving toward increased or decreased implementation of soil conservation practices? (check best answer)

82% INCREASED 18% DECREASED

Educating youth on the value of our natural resources and on the importance of improving soil and water quality in Iowa is a worthwhile investment of federal and state dollars.

95% I AGREE 5% I DISAGREE

Does the environment receive the right amount of emphasis from government and officials in your community? (CHECK ONE ANSWER)

49% Not enough emphasis is placed on environmental protection

45% Environmental protection receives about the right amount of emphasis

6% Too much emphasis is placed on environmental protection

Summary of Comment Cards (filled out by attendees at the field day)

<i>Which statement best describes you?</i>	
Farmer	58%
Landowner	35%
Government employee	25%
Student	4%
Other	16%
Individuals could choose more than one category.	

<i>How did you hear about the field day?</i>	
Neighbor	14%
ISU Extension Staff	15%
DNR/NRCS Staff	31%
Website	6%
Radio	3%
Newspaper	21%
IDALS staff	1%
Mailing	6%
Other	17%

CLASSROOM EVALUATIONS FROM TEACHERS

On a scale of 1 to 5, please rate the following (circle the number):

n=80	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Overall quality of ILF Conservation Station or indoor classroom activities	83%	17%	--	--	--
Effectiveness of water quality and conservation lesson	80%	17%	2%	1%	--
Effectiveness of Rainfall Simulator at demonstrating connection between land management choices, soil erosion, and water quality	90%	10%	--	--	--
Engagement of educators – knowledgeable and concerned that students understood the material	93%	7%	--	--	--

Please describe at least one way you will integrate the Iowa Learning Farms conservation material in your classroom (Place "X" in front of all that apply):

(NOTE: several of the teachers at outdoor classrooms taught other subjects and told us they would pass on the materials to the science teacher.)

65% I will follow-up the Conservation Station with future discussion of watersheds and teamwork.

78% I will use the enclosed worksheets and certificates as a follow-up to the outdoor classroom.

67% I will use the videos (Culture of Conservation, Troubled Waters and/or Out to the Lakes) as a follow-up to the outdoor classroom (Grades 4-12).

87% I will use the music CD (Dogs, Frogs, and Nature Songs) in my classroom (Grades K-3).

5% I do not plan to use the Iowa Learning Farms materials in my classroom

# of teachers surveyed by grades of students taught	%
K-3	29
4-8	50
9-12	1

March 8: Wilder Elementary, Indianola

What impact do you think the Prairies, Wetlands and Croplands program had on your students?

- They came away with an understanding how everyone can make a difference.
- They loved it! All the kids were engaged & actively listening to the presentation.

How did the Prairies, Wetlands and Croplands program tie into your science and/or social studies lessons?

- We had gone to Neal Smith Nature Center. We studied the prairies and we've been studying the land. It tied in so well. I wish we could have had the program before we go to Neal Smith.
- We are currently studying the Midwest region, its history and natural resources. Great fit!

March 15: Southeast Warren Elementary, Indianola

What impact do you think the Prairies, Wetlands and Croplands program had on your students?

- The students became very interested in the topic and are eager to learn more.

How did the Prairies, Wetlands and Croplands program tie into your science and/or social studies lessons?

- It ties into our social studies Iowa unit and our science plant unit.

March 16: Emerson Elementary, Indianola

What impact do you think the Prairies, Wetlands and Croplands program had on your students?

- They learned facts about all 3 and understand their importance in Iowa.
- Students learned how each ecosystem impacted the environment and soil.

How did the Prairies, Wetlands and Croplands program tie into your science and/or social studies lessons?

- We study animals in science, discuss prairies in science and social studies and read about their ecosystems.
- We have been learning about Iowa and the different regions in the USA. (I would be very interested in purchasing more Creature Cache games for my classroom!)

March 26: Ames Homeschoolers, Ames

What impact do you think the Prairies, Wetlands and Croplands program had on your students?

- Significant. Students continued to discuss information learned after presentation had finished.

How did the Prairies, Wetlands and Croplands program tie into your science and/or social studies lessons?

- Perfect way to kick off unit study on Iowa geography.

March 30: Whittier Elementary, Indianola

What impact do you think the Prairies, Wetlands and Croplands program had on your students?

- They loved it! They seemed very engaged, had the perfect amount of background knowledge, and asked excellent questions. I think they gained an understanding of the relationships between 3 ecosystems.
- Educational! Information made such an impression that it should be retained.

How did the Prairies, Wetlands and Croplands program tie into your science and/or social studies lessons?

- In our study of the Midwest region during soc. st., we learn about the prairie, farmland, even visit a farm to see how the business of agriculture works.
- This program fit very well into our Soc. St. and Science. We studied the prairie in the Midwest and discuss habitats and environments in science. (This was an EXCELLENT program! Presenters were well prepared and wonderful with 4th graders!)

April 5: Iowa Valley Community School

What impact do you think the Conservation Station had on the students?

- We did an energy conservation unit a couple of months ago so this extended the bit of water conservation we covered as well as connecting to our use of stream tables in the fall. Thank you so much!
- Made them think about their impact on the watershed they live in. The demonstration of river and stream pollution was effective.

April 13: Mahaska Co. 3rd Grade Ag Day

Conservation Station impact?

- It made them start thinking and talking about these issues and what they can do to help.
- Makes them think about how and what they can do to make a difference.
- The visual reinforced the topic.
- I think the impact was hindered because the noise level was so high in the barn and the material seemed a little high level for the majority of my 3rd graders. Presentation was done very well, but I sensed frustration due to the above reasons.
- Great visual display of water runoff.
- It gave them something to think about...Why we do things a certain way. 😊
- More student involvement would be helpful.

April 18: Epworth Elementary School

Conservation Station impact?

- Third grade students enjoyed the song and will listen.
- Engaged-Students loved the hand-on activities. Higher order thinking skills, what their watershed represented, what would happen to the water (rain simulator) It was great.
- The kids enjoyed the songs and especially liked the t-shirts. I wish there was more time. We also didn't get to see the simulator due to rain so that was a bummer, otherwise overall it was really neat.
- The students were highly engaged. However, seemed more focus on animal pee than understanding what happens to water when it goes into the soil. The songs and dancing were fun for 3rd grade.

April 23: Jones Co. Elementary School

Conservation Station impact?

- It was the best presentation I have seen in 20 years of teaching. The presenters were exciting and talked to the 10 year olds not above them. Thank you for coming.
- Yes the models made students aware of human impact on the environment.

April 26: Arbor Day 3rd Grade, Cresco

Conservation Station impact?

- Understanding watersheds, we need to take care of water, it's the only water we have, water cycle, erosion.
- My students loved the Conservation Station that came to our community for Arbor Day. The two teachers that brought it and talked to us did a great job! They learned a lot! (Please come for Arbor Day again!)
- Well received. They have good awareness and hear often how we have to take care of the earth.
- Great demonstrations and group involvement. Students were actively engaged and enjoyed the demonstrations. We hope to have you back next year! ☺

May 1: Van Buren CSD Elementary Ag Day

Conservation Station impact?

- I thought the station/display/presentation were excellent, it was just very difficult to accommodate our large group (25 kids) so that all could see and hear.
- They remembered about the run off ☺
- We just had a few too many at our station to see and hear well, but the ISU students did great! Loved the real visuals!
- I thought the students were very interested and enjoyed learning about this topic-which they probably don't hear much about.

May 3: Waukon 6th Grade Conservation Education Day

Conservation Station impact?

- This station was excellent.
- The students really seemed engaged and interested. Some chose this station as their favorite.

May 7: Sioux Co. 5th/6th Grade Outdoor Classroom

Conservation Station impact?

- My children all understood what a watershed and conservation meant. Educators were friendly, smiled a lot and wanted to have the students to have a good time with the lesson.
- Visual representation of erosion will help them remember concept.
- Got them to see the impact of certain choices made by themselves, farmers, etc... when it comes to proper use of resources. Gave the students some ways to improve how they go about conserving resources.

May 8: Buena Vista Co. 6th Grade Outdoor Classroom

Conservation Station impact?

- I think they did a great job presenting! The students were interested in what they were learning. When they were drawing pictures and they put on the trailer, I think they realized how everything flows into the watershed, also when they polluted the clean water, I think it really opened their eyes.
- This was a wonderful review of what the students studied this year. (Thank you. I really feel you did an outstanding job on a very cold afternoon.)

- I believe the students understand how the way the land is used effects the water around it, which will affect us as humans.

May 8: Bremer Co. 5th Grade Outdoor Field Day

Conservation Station impact?

- Showed them what we had learned in class. ☺ Thanks for coming!

May 9: Carroll Co. Outdoor Classroom

Conservation Station impact?

- The engagement was good, but some activities were a bit rushed.
- The visuals made it very clear as to the impact of each “million dollars” distributed on the whole community.

May 10: Sustainability Day @ UNI, Cedar Falls

Conservation Station impact?

- It gave our students a better understanding on how to sustain our top soil.

May 11: Palo Alto 5th Grade Outdoor Classroom

Conservation Station impact?

- I think the students were very interested in the presentation. When they’re interested and having fun, they learn! I think they liked being part of the “pack”!
- It helped connect real world learning. Students were involved in hands-on activities and discussions. The conservation station is an amazing opportunity for learning. It was a great experience. Thank you for this wonderful opportunity and experience!
- Very nice- students talked about the activities.
- The students enjoyed the activities. They mentioned that they were always actively involved. Several listed all the substances that can end up in the lake. (Your activities were the 2nd favorite of my class. You had tough competition from the trumpeter swan and using the dip nets at the march. Both sessions proved that student engagement is an important learning tool! Thanks for coming to our field day. ☺)

May 15: Pocahontas Co. 4th Grade Outdoor Classroom

Conservation Station impact?

- The students were engaged w/ the instructors because of the energy of the instructors.
- Use the website. They were impressed of how watersheds could become so polluted so easily! They loved the hands-on writing activity and hand-on water experiment. Loved the dogs too! Nice job.
- I think the students learned a lot and will now think more carefully about their choices.
- They will be more aware of water.

May 15: Adair Co. 5th Grade Outdoor Classroom

Conservation Station impact?

- I think that the visual shown let the students actually see what happens. They can make more of a connection to how water works in different places. It raised their awareness of this area since most of my students aren't readily exposed to this every day.
- Made them aware of how soil erosion occurs. We had talked about it in science class. But this gives them more of a visual.
- They were very interested in each station and asked good questions. I am even amazed at what I learned.
- Excellent way to relate watersheds to these students. Ladies were very engaging and we heard common vocabulary all day. Incredible experience.

May 16: West Elementary, Independence

Conservation Station impact?

- Made them think about their actions and the effects on water quality.
- It was awesome. You reinforced what students learned about water pollution on Earth Day. It was a good preteaching for our field trip to Fontana on Friday! Good rainfall simulation. Great job engaging students.

May 17: Edwards Elementary, Ames

What impact do you think the Prairies, Wetlands and Croplands program had on your students?

- Good review of some things. Some got them thinking about how humans impact nature. Run off demo was excellent visual.

How did the Prairies, Wetlands and Croplands program tie into your science and/or social studies lessons?

- We had visited Neal Smith Prairie so we made some good connections to that. One of our big ideas in science in 3rd grade is: living things interact with their environment.

May 18: Roland-Story 2nd Grade

Conservation Station impact?

- They loved it! It was very entertaining and engaging for all students! They were involved in their own learning! Thank you! It was great!
- The program gave the kids a very visual concept of erosion and conservation. An excellent program for our kids. Thank you!
- This was an excellent program! It had great visuals and got the kids actively involved! Great job!

May 22: Jefferson High School, Cedar Rapids (Level 2 Intellectual Disabilities Class)

Conservation Station impact?

- The educators did a super job with our students. They didn't talk over their heads and kept them engaged.

September 11: McNay 3rd Grade Field Day

Conservation Station impact?

- I'm hoping it will help my students be aware of the causes and consequences of soil erosion.
- Made them think about ways in which they can make differences in conserving land.
- It was great for students to see so that when they start that unit they will already have some excellent background information.
- Students could immediately see the differences in water quality by using the clear, large jars. See the difference between the top level and lower level jars sooner in your presentation for a bit clearer explanation/understanding. Great visual! That's what kids need to learn, plus "hands-on" Thank You! Come again!
- This was a great "visual" tool, much better than just pictures. Some of my students even picked this as their favorite station. Very nice job!
- Lots of "first-time information", terminology will be reinforced and built on throughout the year, grade level info.

September 13: Crawford Co. 7th Grade Ag Day

Conservation Station impact?

- Students learned a lot. Great visuals. I hope you guys can come back next year!

September 19: Clarke Co. 3rd Grade Field Day

Conservation Station impact?

- Visually this presentation made a big impact on students. They were able to make a comparison to the type of erosion the presenter was discussing. Students were also able to see cause and effect of erosion under different or various conditions.
- Everything was great. The visual aid really helped the students understand the concept.

October 2: Lyon Co. Outdoor Classroom

Conservation Station impact?

- I think the students understood the basics of what it means to conserve water and take care of the water around them as it may affect other areas.
- Both presenters did a great job of presenting the information. I only wish we had more time!! I believe the kids really understood the difference in runoff after watching the simulated rainfall.

October 11: Knoxville 7th Grade Conservation/Ecology Field Day

Conservation Station impact?

- As a result of this activity I think the 7th graders can now effectively explain what a watershed is and name the watershed they live in. Students can now explain how land management choices can affect water quality. (On behalf of the entire 7th grade teaching team we would like to thank you for coming and presenting to our students!)

October 12: Bishop Garrigan High School

Conservation Station impact?

- Despite living in the middle of farm country, it always surprises me how little the students know about run-off. The visual demonstration had the biggest impact on the kids that come from farm background. The simulator was helpful b/c of the use of real land pieces. "Great energy by the presenters!"
- The students were each able to gain some knowledge of awareness they did not have before attending the lesson. The students were able to share what they learned, they appreciated being involved in the hands-on activities, and were able to integrate the information into (real world) their personal lives. (Thank you for sharing your knowledge and the enthusiasm you had for your presentation even if it was the 6th time in a day you taught the lesson!)

October 19: Fellows Elementary, Ames

Conservation Station impact?

- The students were very attentive and actively involved in the demonstrations. They continued to talk about the things they learned after the team left. This is something we will review and re-visit in both science and social studies.
- I think it brought an awareness of what is happening to our earth. They learned new concepts-watershed. (Next time don't have them say "hi" back, it gets them all wound up).