

Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture
5-22-09

NOTE: The Leopold Center Ecology Initiative recently awarded a three-year competitive grant to Robb DeHaan at Dordt College to conduct water quality research. The Dordt College news release below provides more details about the project and various partnerships involved. A high-resolution image of DeHann (on left) and Schuiteman is available on the Dordt College Web site at:

http://www.dordt.edu/images/news/news_items/press_quality/3764_1.jpg

RESEARCH GRANT WILL FUND WATER PROTECTION RESEARCH

SIoux CENTER, Iowa -- When you turn on the faucet, you expect to get clean, safe, drinkable water. Robb De Haan and Matt Schuiteman want that, too.

That's why they applied for and have been approved to receive a \$50,000 grant from the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture. The grant funding will be used over a three-year period to monitor nitrate leeching in field plots planted in a variety of row crops, cover crops and perennials (hay or alfalfa).

The grant was written by Robb De Haan, professor of environmental studies at Dordt College. But De Haan says fulfilling the objective of the grant will require a collaborative effort between a local farmer, Dordt students and faculty, the Sioux Center utilities engineer, Sioux County Soil and Water Conservation District, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS).

"This project is the result of a farmer's desire to take care of resources, an environmental studies professor's desire to research a problem, and a city's desire for good water for citizens," said De Haan.

Taking the lead by offering land and labor for the project is Matt Schuiteman with AJS Farms. The Schuiteman family has been farming the land that will be involved in this study for more than 30 years. It is located on County Road B40 across from Sandy Hollow Golf Course.

"It is our pleasure to be the main field cooperater for this project," Schuiteman said in the grant application. "It is our hope that this research will lead us to better understand how we can produce crops in sensitive areas while maintaining underground water quality."

Schuiteman has a B.S. degree in agronomy, and has been involved in agriculture all his life. He will be responsible for plot layout, coordination and management of all plot activities. Field operations and inputs will be recorded, as well as the forage and grain yields for plots each year, using crop records to do an annual economic analysis. The Schuitemans also will draw soil samples for testing procedures and assist with a field day

For more information about this grant, "Performance of Cropping Systems Designed to Reduce Nitrate Leaching into Shallow Municipal Well Aquifers" and other grants awarded this year, see the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture Web site at www.leopold.iastate.edu/compgrants/E2009_new.html

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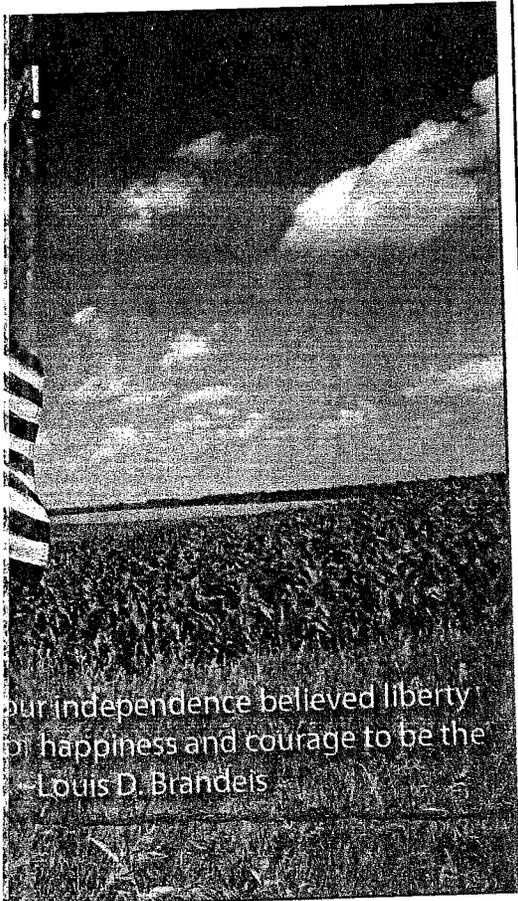
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EDOM out the window in recent years with modern corn
 owa was 33 inches on June 21, 12 inches taller than
 at Service. PHOTO/JOSEPH MURPHY

*Another Sioux C
 Article!*
**Farmer-led
 water quality
 efforts draw
 accolades**
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BY HEATHER LILIENTHAL

While he praised Iowa farmers for embracing efforts to address water quality issues, Chris Jones, laboratory supervisor for the Des Moines Water Works, added that even more needs to be done.

"Protecting the soil and water is a daily challenge," said Jones at a conservation and natural resources issues conference at the Iowa Farm Bureau in West Des Moines last week. "We know we have challenges (regarding water quality), and farmers have made good progress."

One of the biggest challenges is reducing the amount of nitrates found in water. From 1998 to 2008, 265 water systems in Iowa violated the nitrate standard of 10

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