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Activities at Northwest Research Farms

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Activities at Northwest Research Farms

Disciplines

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NOTE: This is a progress report and, therefore, is not necessarily conclusive. Further data may result in conclusions somewhat different from those reported here.

Activities at Northwest Research Farms

David Haden, superintendent

Welcome to the Northwest Research Farms report. If you would like a farm tour or information, contact us at 712-446-2526 or nwrf@nwidt.com. Our goal is to serve the people of northwest Iowa.

The Northwest Research Farm is active in educational programs for area youth. Almost every sixth grader from O'Brien County and every fourth and fifth grader from Cherokee County visit the farm.

This year Iowa State University's PrISUm solar car racing team and the ISU entomology department's "Bug Zoo" were part of the

outdoor classroom for youth. They were rated so highly by students and teachers that we have asked them to present next year. We also used the demonstration windbreak, weather station, and the renewable energy project for youth education.

This was the first year of a cooperative effort between Woodbury County NRCS, Iowa State University, and Farm Bureau. The result was an Ag for Kids program held at the Woodbury County fairgrounds September 19-21. Nearly 1,300 fifth grade students and teachers from the Sioux City public school system, along with many parents, attended. A summary of the farm's events follows:

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
Annual meeting	February 22	60
Tree pruning workshop	March 24	15
Cherokee County fourth grade	May 4-5	200
Weed commissioners	June 15	11
Sutherland farm field day	June 28	131
Danish student tour	June 29	17
Extension field specialists tour	July 19	20
Doon farm field day	August 23	25
Garden field day	September 9	38
O'Brien County NRCS Outdoor Classroom	September 12	288
Cherokee County fifth grade	September 15	<u>175</u>
Total		980

Development

The Northwest Research Farm is constantly changing. This year we added seven new projects. Most experiments need three years for completion. The data are collected and the results are made available in this report. Spring is when most experiments begin. Each fall some experiments end.

An experiment looking at rates of sulfur fertilization on corn and soybeans was started at Doon. Sulfur effects on grain yield and grain quality is being studied.

We now have a long-term nitrogen study. Continuous corn and a corn-soybean rotation are the cropping systems. Varying rates of nitrogen fertilizer will be applied to the corn. This study will produce valuable data for many years.

In an effort to expand our forage area, an experiment comparing annual ryegrass and perennial ryegrass has begun. We hope this

project will be part of our 2001 forage field day.

The farm's first organic farming study began in 2000. A three-year rotation of corn-soybeans-oats with legume under seeding and a four-year rotation of corn-soybeans-oats-legume were established. Red clover and alfalfa are the legumes. Next year varying rates of composted swine manure will be applied prior to corn planting. This experiment is designed to find the combination of legume and compost rate in each rotation that best meets the nitrogen needs of the corn plant.

Because of increasing interest, we established an area of wildflowers. Our goal is to focus on those flowers native to northwest Iowa.

Each year northwest Iowa increases its capacity to generate electricity from the wind. We have added a small wind generator and solar powered photovoltaic array. This project will produce a database for small scale, renewable energy.