



Local farmer installs conservation drainage, calls on agencies for support

October 2013 Snapshots



Yellow Medicine County farmer Doug Albin sent a strong message to attendees at the Ag Drainage Seminar and Field Day in early September:

“We need to make an effort, because we know our ground better than anyone else. We need assistance, because we can’t do this ourselves,” Albin said.

More than 100 people attended the event in Luverne, Minn., which was part of a Clean Water Fund Conservation Drainage grant to the Rock Land Management Office to provide outreach and training in southwestern Minnesota. Participants included producers, local government and state agency staff, local soybean and corn grower organizations, the Iowa Soybean Association, the University of Minnesota, South Dakota State University and Natural Resources Conservation Service staff.



MDA staffer Mark Dittrich (L) with Yellow Medicine County farmer Doug Albin (R).

BWSR Conservation Engineer, Tim Gillette, said Albin is a great example of a willing producer who is persistent in looking for ways to enhance the workability, sustainability and profitability of his family farm while at the same time managing the farm’s resources and adjacent water resources for the benefit of future generations.

“He knows the places that flood easily, the problems with the drain outlets, the soil’s potential for being washed away, and the frustration of having his costly nutrients leached away,” Gillette said. “He has become acutely aware that he cannot do sustainable farming on his land without help – and, he knows what it takes to bring change to the landscape.”

Albin has been seen in a number of venues around the state talking about how he has been helped by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA), the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Yellow Medicine Soil and Water Conservation District, as they guided him in the use of several drainage water management practices, from planning through implementation. While he has put a sizeable amount of his own money into implementation, Albin calls attention to the technical and financial assistance he has received from state and federal programs.

Those programs include resources and information from MDA, NRCS, BWSR and the University of Minnesota Extension to help get conservation drainage practices onto farms and fields. Conservation drainage practices like Albin has installed on his farm are eligible under the BWSR Clean Water Fund, open now until Oct. 4, 2013.

Albin is so passionate about sustainable farming, he even has a YouTube channel with information about the practices he’s installed, including saturated buffers and denitrifying bioreactors.

“For the agencies involved in conservation drainage practices with Doug, he is a great conservation cooperator. He is always challenging his fellow producers and the agencies to do more to create a sustainable future for agriculture, as well as for water resources. He is always learning more about what he can do. But most of all, he is persistent in working toward his goal,” Gillette said.