

WICST EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH 2003 and 2004

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WICST continues to serve as an ‘outdoor laboratory’ for learning about issues of sustainable agriculture such as crop rotation, environmental stewardship, economic sustainability, and biodiversity. In addition to field tours, we have disseminated WICST results at local and regional events as well as scientific meetings. Table 1 summarizes the outreach and educational activities for WICST in 2003 and 2004. WICST abstracts, theses and publications are listed in Appendix XI.

Several brochures were developed and passed out to UW Extension. They include the following titles: ‘Leaching of Agricultural Chemicals to Tile Drains on WICST’; ‘Using Pre-Plant Nitrate Test To Reduce N Inputs On Corn: 11-Year History On The WICST Plots’; ‘Benefits of diversifying corn grain systems: Data from WICST’; and ‘Restoring native prairie at the Arlington Research Station’. Our website (www.cias.wisc.edu/wicst) continues to provide information for a worldwide audience and we frequently receive emails and phone calls generated by the website.

On-station. Field tours were given throughout each year to several groups including extension agents, local farmers, and UW students and foreign visitors. The major outreach activities were the Agronomy/Soil Science Departments’ annual field day (140 visitors) in 2003 and Prairies Jubilee in both years, which is co-hosted by the Audubon Society (300 visitors). Two posters were presented at Prairies Jubilee in 2003 and 2004 describing WICST prairie restoration efforts and our work with rotational grazing in degraded oak savannas. A tour was led through the restored prairie plots to show the differences between high and low diversity treatments.

In addition to field days, WICST held its annual winter meeting on February 7, 2003 and February 13, 2004 discussing WICST data to a mixed audience of farmers, USDA staff, UW faculty, UW Extension, Ag consultants, UW students, and MFAI collaborators. Topics included comparison across systems of soil nutrient and physical properties; economic analysis of the WICST systems, including rotational grazing; a discussion on the Conservation Security Program by NRCS officials; and an update from several graduate students on the Linking Farms Project.

Local/Regional Research data from the WICST projects was presented in both oral and poster form at ASA, CSSA, SSSA annual meetings in Denver, CO (Nov. 2-6, 2003) and Seattle, WA (Oct 31-Nov 4, 2004). Posters were displayed at The Natural Areas Conference in Madison, WI (Sept. 26, 2003) and the 2004 North American Prairie Conference in mid-August.

John Hall and Ron Doetch (MFAI) along with local organizations and agency officials developed the SE Wisconsin Resource Conservation and Development District (RC&D) formed to cover 13 counties in SE Wisconsin. Hall represented WICST as chair of the Agriculture Issue Team for the new RC&D, and by serving on the NRCS State Technical Committee. Activities

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included hosting a farm tour that included the manure linking and organic grain trials at MFAI, and a presentation on “Diversified Farming Systems” at the annual Urban Rural Conference in October. We collaborated with Walworth County Extension and Town & Country RC&D to develop a Grazing Specialists position for the Southeast Wisconsin Grazing Network. The specialist is working with area NRCS conservationists to assist farmers in developing grazing plans that meet USDA program criteria for assistance.

Many face-to-face interviews with farmers, nutrient haulers, extension, ag consultants were conducted by grad students Amy Cook and Gregg Sanford to learn about current manure management strategies and to share with them our research ideas in the Linking Farms project. Interviews will be summarized in Amy and Gregg’s theses.

Table 1. Outreach activities involving the WICST project in 2003 and 2004.

EVENT	LOCATION	DATE	ATTENDANCE
2003			
Westside Madison Rotary Club	Madison, WI	February 4	45
WICST Winter Meeting	Madison, WI	February 7	30
Waunakee 4 th grade tour at plots	Arlington, WI	May 6	140
Agronomy Centennial	Madison, WI	May 22	200
‘Land Use in WI’ mini course at plots	Arlington, WI	Early June	20
VoAg Training Day at plots	Arlington, WI	June 26	11
Agronomy/Soils Field Day	Arlington, WI	July 9	140
Natural Areas Conference	Madison, WI	September 24	50
Prairies Jubilee at plots	Arlington, WI	September 28	100
Radio Tapes w/ Jeanie Gurnick	Madison, WI	October 2	> 100
ASA, CSSA, SSSA	Denver, CO	November 2-6	1500
Soil Mgt Short Course at plots	Arlington, WI	December 9-10	30
2004			
WICST Winter Meeting	Madison, WI	February 13	35
DeForest School tour	Arlington, WI	Early May, 2days	100
Holistic Mgt Grassland Monitoring Fld day	Arlington, WI	May 12	12
‘Land Use in WI’ mini course at plots	Arlington, WI	Early June	20
Tour for Australian scholarship recipient	Arlington, WI	July 29	2
North American Prairie Conference	Madison, WI	August 8-12	500
CESA #3 Fall Ag Day (grazing tour)	Arlington, WI	September 22	30
Prairies Jubilee	Arlington, WI	September 26	100
ASA, CSSA, SSSA	Seattle, WA	Oct. 31-Nov. 4	1500