

NRCS **NEWS RELEASE**

United States Department of Agriculture • Natural Resources Conservation Service
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Soil Health: Basics and Benefits

It's not difficult to improve soil health. Here's how: limit soil tillage; follow a diverse crop rotation; plant cover crops; and maintain soil coverage year round.

Farmers who manage their land in ways that improve and sustain soil health not only protect natural resources for everyone, but also benefit financially.

Healthy soils lead to:

Natural Resource Protection – Healthy soils have less runoff, less soil erosion, and more infiltration from rainfall which reduces pollutants reaching water-bodies, and thus improves water quality. Unhealthy soils, by comparison, can cause ponding and flooding issues and increases the need for fertilizers and pesticides.

Increased Production – Healthy soils have more organic matter and soil organisms, which improve soil structure, aeration, water retention, drainage, and nutrient availability. Healthy soils with increased organic matter improve crop yields and resiliency during drought. By contrast, unhealthy soils require increased inputs to maintain crop productivity.

Increased Profits – Because healthy soils require fewer inputs, farmers reduce the number of passes across a field, thus decreasing fuel and labor expenses, saving time and money. Crops are stronger and more resilient to drought, weed, insect, and disease pressures and weather extremes. Reduced inputs on fields with healthy soils often leads to comparable or higher yields.

Natural resource protection, increased crop production, and increased farm profits all begin with soil health.

If you'd like to learn more about soil health and the technical and financial assistance available to you, contact the Long Prairie NRCS field office at 732-6618 ext. 3.

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