



Contact:

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Have You Seen “Snirt” Lately?

Have you seen “Snirt” lately? You can find it in the road ditches next to unprotected crop fields, and wherever the soil is left uncovered and unprotected from the wind. If you haven’t guessed yet “Snirt” is a combination of snow and dirt. It is visible evidence of wind erosion, which in other seasons may go unnoticed. Of course the term dirt is a “dirty word”, but in this case well used because it is soil out of place.

The problem with wind erosion or any erosion is that soil is a non-renewable resource and cannot be built within our lifetime. It causes yield losses and increased fertilizer needs and disease pressure in crops. It also causes respiratory problems and is harmful for our lakes and streams where it may be deposited.

Just a thickness of a dime equates to 5 tons of soil loss per acre! This is a lot of soil that over many years adds up. Soil loss of 5 tons per acre per year is often termed “tolerable soil loss”, but this is misleading. Any amount of soil loss is not “tolerable” and is definitely not sustainable. If you are trying to improve crop yields, soil health, and productivity soil erosion is your number one enemy.

There are ways to reduce wind erosion including reduced tillage, cover crops, leaving crop residue standing, and planting buffer strips or windbreaks.

If you’d like to learn more about wind erosion or how to protect your land from erosion contact your local USDA-NRCS office at 320-732-6618 ext. 3.

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