



**Groundwater Nitrate Work Group  
Monday August 27, 2018 @ 4:00 p.m.  
Land Conservation Department Conference Room  
Janesville WI**

**MINUTES**

1. **Call Meeting to Order:** Chair Sweeney called the meeting to order at 4:04 pm.

**Members Present:** Colin Byrnes, Wes Davis, Chris Murphy, Lou Peer, Rick Richard, Al Sweeney, Tom Sweeney, and Rick Wietersen.

**Members Excused:** Rich Bostwick, Nick Baker, Pat Muloolly, and Dave Rebout.

**Others Present:** Heidi Johnson, UWEX; James Stute, Michael Fields Agriculture Institute, Dave Gundlach, USDA-NRCS, and Nick Viney.

2. **Approval of Agenda:** Wes Davis moved the agenda as presented, seconded by Rick Richard. **Motion Carried.**
3. **Approval of Minutes from the July 30, 2018 meeting:** Lou Peer moved the minutes for the July 30, 2018 meeting as presented, seconded by Rick Richard. **Motion Carried.**
4. **Communications:** Tom Sweeney mentioned Wisconsin DNR Groundwater Division informed the Land Conservation Department of a new project announced by USDA-NRCS regarding Groundwater/Source water protection. Tom noted a few highlights regarding the projects application.
5. **Presentation by USDA-NRCS regarding Soil Nitrogen changes, additions and losses as it relates to the Nitrogen Cycle.** Dave Gundlach gave a presentation regarding the Soil Nitrogen cycle within the soils profile. Dave Gundlach fields a few questions regarding information as it relates to the presentation topic.
6. **Presentation by UWEX and Michael Fields Institute regarding the use of cover crops to limit soil nitrogen losses.** Heidi Johnson, UWEX began the discussion with some basic information of cover crops and the best type of cover crop for grain operations. Winter Rye was discussed as the best option for fall root growth, which in turn locks up residual nitrogen in the soils profile over winter. Early termination of the cover crop in the spring is very important for grain crops. Ms. Johnson referenced some Iowa farm research that stated there is potential for

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yield reductions. The caveat is the spring kill must be 100%, or the rye will use all the available sources of nitrogen, which in turn will reduce yields of grains. Also, the type of planting of rye is important to reducing slug populations. Aerial seeding is least desirable, since slugs love rye seed. The best is to plant with a no till drill. At this time Jim Stute, Michael Fields Agriculture Institute discussed the economics of cover crops. Mr. Stute distributed a three ring binder to each workgroup member. Mr. Stute commenced his discussion with cover crops importance in regards to overall soil health, which in turn relates directly to improvements in water quality. Mr. Stute cited numerous research papers in the distributed binders and reviewed the economics as they relate to southern Wisconsin. Overall, Mr. Stute noted that cover crops, specifically rye can hold up to 50 lbs. of nitrogen in the soil over winter for the following year's usage. Since the County Farm is the area of the pilot, it was noted that the area is considered a no fly zone for aerial application via plane. Helicopter application was discussed.

7. **Identify Best Management Practices to be used on the County Farm Demonstration Area and recommend list for consideration by the Agriculture and Extension Committee to be added to the County Farm Lease.** Tom Sweeney distributed a list of BMP's to the group. Dave Gundlach requested that references to USDA-NRCS technical guide be removed as they relate to conservation tillage and cover crops. This will give the workgroup more flexibility in the future if the standards are amended. The list of BMP's includes Nutrient Management, Nutrient Application Timing, Cover Crops, Conservation Tillage, and Nitrification Inhibitors. Colin Byrnes moved to approve the list with the aforesaid deletions, seconded by Wes Davis. **Motion Carried. Chris Murphy voted Nah.**

8. **Next Meeting date, time, and location:** Chair Sweeney asked the workgroup for potential dates and times for the next meeting. October 15, 2018 @ 8:00 am. Rick Wietersen will verify the use of the Health Department Conference Room.

9. **Adjourn:** Rick Richard moved to adjourn the August 27, 2018 meeting of the Groundwater Nitrate Workgroup at 5:41 pm, seconded by Lou Peer. **Motion Carried.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Thomas Sweeney  
County Conservationist

**Minutes are not official until adopted by the Groundwater Nitrate Workgroup**