

Large Group Meets Near Eden To Talk About Farming And Conservation

By Andrea Hansen Abler

A group of area farmers and those in the farming industry gathered at Second Look Holsteins outside of Eden on Wednesday, June 13, to talk about ways to succeed in farming and utilize conservation techniques.

This was the Sheboygan River Progressive Farmers first-ever Field Day event. Clint Hodorff of Second Look Holsteins offered to host the event on his farm bringing the large group to the area to talk about many different farming techniques.

The group is planning for this to become an annual event for its members and other area farmers. The goal is to make this event one of the ways in which the group works to share resources with the surrounding agricultural community. They are looking to lessen the environmental impacts of farming while maintaining and even enhancing yield,

productivity and profitability. The field day offers opportunities to share information, network and much more.

During the afternoon, attendees had four stations to learn from. One was on tillage techniques and an equipment overview, another talked about inter-seeding cover crops, a third talked about soil health and had a rainfall simulator, and the last station gave them information about the SRPF and its benefits for farmers.

Hodorff led the discussion on tillage techniques. He told the group how Second Look Holsteins manages their land. Hodorff explained that they do a lot of vertical tilling and low tillage with manure injection.

"We want to get the most out of those nutrients," Hodorff said. "We can't go true no-till but I do want to do what they call green."

Hodorff explained that they use the manure for

the nutrients in their soil so they need to do low tillage in some areas. The vertical tillage they started in the past few years and he said it seems to be working well for them.

He cautioned that different land areas need to utilize different practices. Hilly areas will have different soil than low lying areas and clay soil will be different than much of that in the Kettle Moraine area.

"You have to test it and see what's best for you," Hodorff said.

Another area talked about cover crops and the benefit of this practice. This is planting a second crop on a field to help with soil erosion, soil fertility, soil quality, water, weeds, pests, diseases, biodiversity and wildlife. The technique is starting to become more popular with farmers as a way to help enrich their soil and grow better crops.

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The Sheboygan River Progressive Farmers held their first ever Field Day on the Clint Hodorff farm outside of Eden on Wednesday, June 13. One of the educational talks was a tillage comparison to show those in attendance the advantage to no-till or low-till practices. Pictured above, Hodorff of Eden talks about how his farm — Second Look Holsteins — tills their field and how they use vertical tilling and as much low till as they can.

photo by Andrea Hansen Abler



The Sheboygan River Progressive Farmers held their first ever Field Day on the Clint Hodorff farm outside of Eden on Wednesday, June 13. One of the educational talks was a tillage comparison to show those in attendance the advantage to no-till or low-till practices. Pictured above, Mike Patin of the USDA talks about how water flows through soil and how much soil it takes with it when running off the land. He gave those in attendance suggestions on how to curb runoff and leave more moisture in your soil.

photo by Andrea Hansen Abler



Area youngsters enjoyed the free face painting during the annual Klotz's Piggly Wiggly Appreciation Day on Thursday, June 7. Lots of activities filled the parking lot for customers to check out.

photo by Arianna Strupp



Students from an area child care center listen as Campbellsport Police Chief Tom Dornbrook talks about the features of the department's squad car. He showed the students all the safety features and the computer system they use. This was one of the fun activities at the Klotz's Piggly Wiggly Appreciation Day on Thursday, June 7.

photo by Andrea Hansen Abler



Mike Haedt, president of Biomass Sales & Consulting, talks to a group about cover crops and the benefits they bring to your soil and your other crops. The Sheboygan River Progressive Farmers held their first ever Field Day on the Clint Hodorff farm outside of Eden on Wednesday, June 13.

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"If you want to do cover crops, you have to plan, plan, plan," said Mike Haedt, president of Biomass Sales & Consulting, LLC of Green Bay. "You have to think about soil as a living thing. What we need to create is a better root zone. These roots will communicate with each other and they will help each other out."

He stated that many of the popular cover crops are barley, radishes and clovers.

In a third station, they talked about soil health and had a demonstration with a rainfall simulator. Mike Patin, a district conservationist with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, collected soil from a farm that tilled the soil every year and from another farm that he has been working with to try to help strengthen the soil. He put the samples of the soil in the simulator and then had guests pour a bottle of water over both.

As the water flowed through, you could see how much soil was running off of the tilled soil and into a container and how little water stayed in the soil. While the other sample had hardly any run off and the water stayed in the soil for the crops.

"It's important to be priming that biology," Patin said. "The geology of your soil you can't change. But, you're going to have a healthier soil."

The final station talked about the Sheboygan River Progressive Farmers and what they can offer farmers. The group started a little more than a year ago as a way to test and explore farming strategies that lead to improved soil health, greater farming efficiency, sustain profitability and lessen the impact on the environment.

It covers the Sheboygan River basin, which includes all or parts of Sheboygan, Fond du Lac, Ozaukee, Manitowoc and Calumet counties. In Fond du Lac County, it includes Mullet River which is in the Eden area.

"I would say they are some of the most progressive farmers in the area," said Paige Frautschy of The Nature Conservancy. "They learn from one another. This group has really impressed me and can be leaders in the area."



The Sheboygan River Progressive Farmers held their first ever Field Day on the Clint Hodorff farm outside of Eden on Wednesday, June 13. The event was meant to help educate farmers on different ways to manage their land while protecting the environment and increasing the viability of their land. Area farmers were sharing what has worked on their farms and how they are hoping to continue these practices. Pictured above are members of the board of directors along with Paige Frautschy of The Nature Conservancy. Board members include Joe Wagner, Greenbush, president; John Helmer, Plymouth, vice president; Tom Stemper, Plymouth, treasurer; Warren DeMunck, Glenbeulah; Dan Roehrborn, Plymouth; Dennis Roehrborn, Plymouth; Nick Kleiber, Elkhart Lake; Mike Mulder, Plymouth; Joe Loehr, Mt. Calvary; Clint Hodorff, Eden; and Travis Luedke, Plymouth.

photo by Andrea Hansen Abler

One of the benefits from being a member of the SRPF is a cost-sharing program. As the group get grants, they pass some of that on to the farmers to try some of the new conservation practices.

"We wanted to make it easy to try something," said Joe Wagner of Greenbush, president. "We have programs that are tailored to try to help you share some of

those costs. This group has started out as a basic program, but we hope to grow and be able to offer more. We want to make sure we have something that is worthwhile."

For more information on the Sheboygan River Progressive Farmers, check out their website at <http://srpfarmers.com> or their Facebook page.