



Jody Carpenter, WVU Extension Agent, gives a presentation in a soil testing pit about soil nutrient management to audience members at the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative field day hosted at Sickler Farm.

On July 26th, Sickler Farm, owned and operated by Jeff and Lisa Sickler, hosted a Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative field day. This event took place in the Tygarts Valley Conservation District near Moatsville, WV, and was organized in collaboration with several partners, including the Tygarts Valley Conservation District (TVCD), West Virginia Conservation Agency (WVCA), WVU Extension, the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), the West Virginia Association of Conservation Districts (WVACD), the Appalachian Grazing Conference (AGC), and the West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA). The field day's presentation was given by Jody Carpenter, a WVU Extension Agent headquartered within the district.

This field day focused on soil composition, nutrient management, and soil testing in relation to grazing operations at Sickler Farm. Carpenter provided valuable insights to both experienced and newer farmers, while outlining best management practices for grazing and nutrient management. This information helped attendees better understand soil composition and its direct correlation to sustainable grazing practices.



Audience members identify grazing forages in the Sickler Farms pasture.

West Virginia Conservation Agency (WVCA) Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative project funds several education and outreach objectives, with one component being in-person learning opportunities within West Virginia's Conservation Districts. This effort is administered by the West Virginia Conservation Agency (WVCA), funded by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and partnered with the West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA), West Virginia University (WVU) Extension, the West Virginia Association of Conservation Districts (WVACD), and the Appalachian Grazing Conference.

The primary objective of this grant is to produce educational videos focused on Soil Health, Grazing Techniques, Forages, Weed Control, and Nutrient Management for both cooperative and technical staff training. These videos are scheduled for production in the 2025 field season and will be available for use by farmers, youth, and industry professionals in 2026.



Field day attendees walk toward one of the Sickler Farms pastures.

In addition to the educational videos, each Conservation District has/or is to receive outreach funds. Each district has been allocated \$3,000 to host field days, pasture walks, workshops, and other community outreach events focused on conservation. These events will address topics such as soil health, grazing techniques, forages, weed control, nutrient management, and drought resilience.

The funds can be used to cover expenses such as speaker fees, literature, handout materials, and rental costs for tents, tables, chairs, facility usage, and portable sanitary facilities.



A cow grazes in the Sickler Farms pasture.

After the virtual pasture walks are recorded, Conservation Districts will receive Learning Stations at their offices. The purpose of these stations is to provide cooperators with a designated space and device to view the video modules created through this grant.

If you are interested in attending any of the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative events, please contact: East Area WVACD Outreach and Communication Specialist - Vanta Coda III wvacdoutreach@wvacd.onmicrosoft.com or West Area WVACD Outreach and Communication Specialist - Julie Simmons wvacdoutreach2@wvacd.onmicrosoft.com.