

Madison County  
Soil Conservation District  
313 N Parkway  
Jackson, TN 38305

Phone: 731-410-4660

FAX: 855-584-5847

[www.madisonscd.com](http://www.madisonscd.com)

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Chairman, Don Johnson  
Vice-Chairman, Alan Ewell  
Sec. -Treas., Joel Haynes  
Member, Chris Couch  
Member, Matt Griggs

Serving to Conserve  
Madison County's  
Natural Resources  
Since 1941



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# NEWSLETTER

MADISON COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Serving to Conserve Madison County's Natural Resources Since 1941



Volume 20, Issue 1, Summer, 2019



An Excellent Stand of Soil-Health Winter Cover Mix including Crimson Clover – Bill Taylor

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## Board of Supervisors

**Don Johnson**  
Chairman

**Alan Ewell**  
Vice-Chairman

**Joel Haynes**  
Secretary-Treasurer

**Chris Couch**  
Member

**Matt Griggs**  
Member

The Madison County Soil Conservation District does not discriminate on the basis of a person's race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status.

The District is a recipient of taxpayer funding. If you observe an agency director or employee engaging in any activity which you consider to be illegal, improper, or wasteful, please call the comptroller's toll-free hotline: 1-800-232-5454.

Thanks for Making our Banquet Possible!

**GOLD Sponsors**

**Daryl Griffin**

**Don Johnson & Couch Farms**

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And Garden Center  
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Jackson, TN 38301  
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*Chris Couch Matt Griggs*

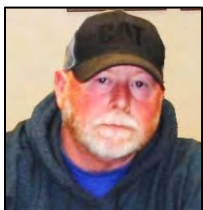
## Please Welcome Your New Board Members -

In March the Madison County Soil Conservation District held its Board of Supervisors Election. Chris Couch of the Huntersville Community and Matt Griggs of the Mason Grove Community were elected to their first term. Alan Ewell was elected to a second term. The District has an election every three years for three of its five supervisors. Allen Verell and Don Pearson chose not to be on the ballot. Allen had served on the board since 1995 and had served as its Chairman since 2003. Don had served on the board since 2013. Board members

Joel Haynes and Don Johnson were appointed to the Board by the State Soil Conservation Committee.

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## Board Selects Don Johnson to Chair the Madison County SCD Board –



Following the Supervisors Election in March the Board selected Don Johnson of the Huntersville Community to lead the District Program. Don has served on the board since 2003 and has served as Vice-Chairman 2013. Don is a full-time farmer and he is a life-long resident of the Huntersville-Denmark community. Don looks forward to working with his board and heading up the District program.

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## Allen Verell Retires from the Madison County SCD Board –



After Serving on the Madison County Soil Conservation District Board for 24 years and serving as the Board's Chairman for 16 years Allen decided it was time to move on and let someone else serve on the board. Allen was first elected to the Board in 1995. He was elected to the board a total of 8 terms. In 2003 the Board selected Allen to Chair the Board. He remained chairman until he retired this March. From 2003-2005 Allen served as the Area VIII Director of the Tennessee Association of Conservation Districts (TACD). Prior to serving on the board, Allen was recognized as the District's 1993 Conservation Farmer of the Year. The following year TACD recognized Allen as Tennessee's Conservation Farmer of the Year.

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## District Hosts Local Cover Crop - Soil Health Meeting



In Feb. thirty-five attended a winter cover soil health meeting held at our office. Sheldon Hightower introduced himself to the group as NRCS's new State Conservationist. Tyson Raper, a cotton specialist with UT, reported on cover crop field studies UT has been conducting. Dr. Lloyd Murdock shared test results the University of Kentucky has been doing on the use of annual Ryegrass to remediate fragipans. Dr. Murdock explained how fragipans were formed, how

common they are, and why and how they severely lower yields. Unlike traffic pans, fragipans, "pans", are naturally occurring cemented layers of soil that virtually stop water movement and root growth. Such pans are common in west Tennessee and affects 20% of Madison County Soils. Depending on the amount of soil erosion pans can start as shallow as the surface or start as deep as 36 inches. Deep pans have practically no effects on crops while shallow pans can make crop production unprofitable. Although shallow pans can be temporarily disrupted by plowing, they quickly cement back. Plowing is probably not a good remedy since that is usually the primary reason why the pans are so near the surface. Ryegrass produces an abundance of roots. Many of the roots can go several inches deep within the growing season. These roots create a chemical that dissolves the pan as they find their way through weak points in the pan. The research Dr. Murdock and UK has done is promising. Dr. Murdock's presentation piqued the interest of everyone in the room. Farmers from Madison, Chester, Gibson, and Lauderdale Counties attended. Marty Hinson with Cannon Packaging provided guests with coffee, juice, ham and biscuits, and chicken and biscuits. Anyone interested in cover crops and soil health is encouraged to attend our meetings. Cost-share money to seed cover crops, including rye grass, is available through the District and NRCS.

## Annual Banquet -

The Madison County SCD held its annual awards and appreciation banquet on Tuesday, February 26<sup>th</sup>. Over 100 guests attended the evening event. Daniel Graves was recognized as the District's 2018 Outstanding District Cooperator. Everyone enjoyed a steak or chicken dinner catered by Richard's of Bolivar. Sheldon Hightower, the new state Conservationist for Tennessee, introduced himself and addressed the guests. Matt Griggs was the guest speaker. Matt gave an interesting and informative presentation on his experience raising cover crops and developing soil health. The twenty floral plants that decorated the tables along with the banquet's beautiful floral centerpiece from Sand's Florist and four \$25 Four Seasons Nursery gift cards were given away as door prizes.



## Daniel Graves –

### *Outstanding District Cooperator of 2018*



At the District's Awards Banquet, Allen Verell, Chairman of the Soil Conservation District presented Daniel Graves a plaque recognizing Daniel as the District's Outstanding Cooperator of 2018. Daniel farms around 2,000 acres of corn, soybeans, and wheat in North Madison County and South Gibson County. Daniel has worked

closely with the District and NRCS to control soil erosion and to conserve the productivity of his soil. With technical assistance from NRCS and the District Technician Daniel has installed terraces, basins, diversions and grade stabilization structures over the years. After attending some soil health meetings hosted by the District Daniel became interested in growing cover crops. Following NRCS recommendations Daniel has planted a five species mix on 800 acres for the last two years. To offset the expense of his conservation work Daniel has enrolled in the cost-share assistance programs with NRCS and the District.



## Conservation Cost - Share Programs Available



**NRCS** - provides financial assistance **to farmers and landowners** for conservation work to address natural resource concerns. Funding is through the USDA-EQIP program. Practices include **soil health-winter cover crops**, gully control structures, livestock watering facilities, grass establishment, cross fencing, terraces, and others. The initial signup period for next year is ongoing and will likely end mid Nov. Contracts may be finalized before Spring work. EQIP application for fall practices should have been done last Fall. For details contact the NRCS Field Office, 731-410-4663.

**Madison County SCD** - provides Cost-Share Assistance **to District Cooperators** who apply conservation practices that address soil erosion and improve water quality. Funding is provided through a Tennessee Department of Agriculture Grant. Practices include **soil health-winter cover crops**, gully control structures, livestock watering facilities, grass establishment, cross fencing, terraces, and others. Signup is ongoing. Work can begin once your contract is approved by the Board and any design work is approved. Contact the district office, 731-410-4664.

**WRE** - NRCS has an on-going sign-up for purchasing easements to convert certain cropland back to wetland through the establishment of bottomland hardwoods. Easement acquisitions for Madison County are around \$2,400/acre for crop and pasture land and \$1,480/acre for woodland. For details contact the Jackson NRCS field office, 731-410-4663.

**CRP** - FSA administers the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). If you have some crop ground that you would like to take out of production and establish it to a conservation cover and earn an annual payment contact the FSA Office 731-410-4666. They anticipate a sign-up before the end of the year.

Interested in Local Soil Health/Cover Crop Round Table Discussions with other farmers?  
Give us a call 731-410-4660

### US Census of Agriculture 2017 – Madison County Highlights

Item	Corn (Bushels)			Beans (Bushels)			Wheat (Bushels)			Cotton (Bales)		
	2017	2012	2007	2017	2012	2007	2017	2012	2007	2017	2012	2007
Operations	54	101	107	80	105	106	33	45	43	45	54	75
Acres	19,955	36,775	25,733	37,975	28,636	26,687	12,116	10,525	8,785	22,177	26,092	35,376
Yield	3,099,752	3,792,387	2,431,365	1,731,510	1,039,993	334,763	919,373	713,330	371,525	43,620	49,559	36,023
Average	155	103	94.5	45.6	36.7	12.5	75.9	67.8	42.3	1.97	1.9	1.02

Cropland Acres			
	2017	2012	2007
Total Acres	107,562	117,891	134,447
Total Operations	417	483	599
Harvested Operations	285	315	353
Harvested Acres	94,994	101,366	101,248
Irrigated. Operations	32	24	27
Irrigated Acres	6,828	7,891	1,529

Misc. Data			
	2017	2012	2007
Cattle Operations	168	162	218
Head Including Calves	7,730	5,768	11,079
Fed. Govt. Payment Recipients	289	366	461
Fed. Govt. Payment Amount	\$3,371,000	\$2,288,000	\$5,548,000
Crop Sales	\$46,354,000	\$62,369,000	\$22,859,000
Hay Operations	181	178	225
Hay Acres	9,190	7,390	9,244