Free Deep Soil Sampling Available

Confidential Program Assists Growers and Lower Valley Groundwater Committee

The Lower Yakima Valley Groundwater Advisory Committee (GWAC) in partnership with the South Yakima Conservation District is offering a free deep soil sampling program for farmers in the Lower Yakima Valley Groundwater Management Area.

The GWAC is seeking volunteers to participate in the deep soil sampling program. The program is designed to help producers like you evaluate the effectiveness of your nutrient and irrigation water management application program. It is similar to the very successful Columbia Basin Groundwater Management Area program used by hundreds of producers in that area. Results of the program will be confidential; only you will know the results. The sampling is scheduled to take place in the September / October period after harvest.

Deep soil testing will be performed to determine the extent of travel of nitrates below the root zone and into the groundwater. The soil will be tested in one foot increments to a depth of 6 feet. This is important information to growers because nitrates migrating past the root zone provide no economic value and, in fact, increase the cost of crop production.

Growers are also encouraged to fill out questionnaires on their agricultural practices such as crops grown, plant nutrients applied, irrigation practices, and soil type. Obtaining this information together with the soil tests will help the Irrigated Ag Workgroup that reports to the Groundwater Advisory Committee to formulate plans to provide education and incentives to encourage farming practices which will reduce the transport of nitrates past the root zone. Participating growers gain both free soil testing and valuable
education while assisting the GWAC to understand what is happening in the soil and water in the Valley.

Interested landowners can pick up information packets from the South Yakima Conservation District. The packets will contain an identification number known only to the landowner. The packet will also contain barcodes containing the landowner’s identification number which will be attached to the soil samples and to the questionnaire.

The results of the soil testing will be tied to the identification number known only to the participating grower. The grower is welcome to share that information with the South Yakima Conservation District or anyone else to receive technical assistance but is under no obligation to do so.

To participate or for more information on the deep soil testing program, please contact Laurie or Landon at the South Yakima Conservation District (509) 829-9025.

*The Lower Yakima Valley Groundwater Management Area Committee (GWAC) is a multi-agency and citizen-based group coordinating the effort to reduce nitrate contamination in the groundwater within the Lower Yakima Valley. Its primary goal is to reduce concentrations of nitrate in groundwater to below Washington State drinking water standards. For more information, please go to: http://www.yakimacounty.us/gwma/.

***