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**Progress Report**

**PROJECT TITLE:** Maximizing Soil Warming and Health under Different Tillage Practices in a Corn-Soybean Rotation (no-cost extension)

**PROJECT NUMBER:** 4143-18SP

**REPORTING PERIOD:** April 1 to Oct 31, 2019

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR(S):** Jodi DeJong-Hughes

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1. PROJECT ACTIVITIES COMPLETED DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD. (*Describe project progress specific to goals, objectives, and deliverables identified in the project workplan.*)

* Conservation Tillage Conference (CTC )
  + All speakers have been confirmed.
  + Hotel logistics are at the final planning stages.
  + Advertising is in full swing.
  + All exhibitor booth spaces have been filled.
  + Committee members include UMN Extension, Stearns Co SWCD, Kuhn, and a private consultant.
* Life in the Pits field day
  + Field day was conducted on Sept 10 and 11 in Granite Falls, MN.
  + 22 people attended the first day and 35 on the second day. Participants included farmers, gov’t agency, and crop consultants as well as 13 students from Minnesota West.
  + Evaluations are being summarized.
  + Nic Jelinski, UMN soils professor and soil judging coach, brought out his soil judging students after the field day to help with their soil classification education.

2.) IDENTIFY ANY SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS AND RESULTS OF THE PROJECT TO DATE.

* CTC - we will hold the CTC in Mankato next year if we can find a favorable location.
* Life in the Pits – while the evaluations are not summarized yet, the field days were very successful. Most people have not seen 4 soil pits located in one field and commented on the differences in management and soil productivity.

3.) CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED. (*Describe any challenges that you encountered related to project progress specific to goals, objectives, and deliverables identified in the project workplan.*)

* CTC
  + The hotel underwent staff changes 3 times lately and all of the CTC logistics had to be updated 3 different times.
  + The hotel is not set up for a venue this large so we will be using every nook and cranny they have available. It’s not ideal but it’s what we have to work with this year.
* Life in the Pits
  + The weather did not work in our favor this year. It rained on set-up day making the uphill, field road impassable to vehicles without 4WD (ex. porta-potty truck and the city bus). We were able to hold the field day outside on the 10th but the 11th it rained again and even 4WD vehicles couldn’t make it up the steep field road. We gathered soil samples and held the field day indoors. It actually worked out very well.
  + The third day was supposed to be for women landowners, but I don’t think we advertised properly and only had 4 sign-up. We cancelled the third day and instead met with the land attorney and discussed other routes to educate land owners about soil health.

4.) FINANCIAL INFORMATION (*Describe any budget challenges and provide specific reasons for deviations from the projected project spending.*)

* There were no budget challenges during this project period.

5.) EDUCATION AND OUTREACH ACTIVITES. *(Describe any conferences, workshops, field days, etc attended, number of contacts at each event, and/or publications developed to disseminate project results.)*

* Life in the Pits
  + Gil Gullikson from Successful Farmer and Paula Mohr from The Farmer were at the field day. Gil did 2 Face Book Live videos. One has had 2,070 views and 859 for the other.
  + UMN, local radio and newspapers were also there gathering information for news articles.
  + Photos of the soil pits will be used at future winter meetings and field days for educational purposes.