



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: **Tim Ruzek**, Mower SWCD; 507-434-2603
cell: 507-993-2518; e-mail: tim.ruzek@mowerswcd.org

Mower SWCD to talk buffers, soil health at local event

Northern Country Cooperative hosting free seminar March 3 in Austin

AUSTIN, Minn. – Friday, Feb. 24, 2017 – Vegetative buffers and soil health will be part of an upcoming, free seminar offered in Austin by Northern Country Coop on agronomy and grain marketing.

Mower Soil & Water Conservation District's Aaron Gamm, a district technician, will speak at the March 3 event about Minnesota's state buffer law; its Nov. 1 deadline for buffers along public waterways; and the status of buffers in Mower County. A year ago, Mower SWCD announced its mapping inventory found that nearly 95 percent of Mower County's public waterways had an adequate level of buffers.

Tom Cotter, an Austin-area farmer who is part of the Mower Soil Health Team, also will speak about cover cropping in southern Minnesota and soil health.

Northern Country Coop is hosting the event at the Holiday Inn Conference Center in Austin to cover topics, such as the cooperative's Answer Acre Field Results; agronomy/spray clinic; grain marketing; Illinois state nitrate testing clinic; and soil and water health. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. with the meeting starting at 9 a.m. A noon buffet lunch will be served.

A month ago, Mower SWCD sent notification letters to about 300 landowners who have property appearing to need more vegetative buffers, encouraging their cooperation before the state's first compliance deadline this fall. Overall, those landowners need to establish perennial vegetation on nearly 280 acres of cropland.

Since the mailing, Gamm has been working with dozens of those landowners on options for adding buffer or to update records if they already have adequate buffers.

Cotter, who was named with his father, Michael, as Mower SWCD's 2016 Conservationists of the Year, will talk about how cover crops have increased grain quality while reducing chemical and fertilizer inputs on his farm. Cotter, who also raises beef cattle, also has seen increased water infiltration and greatly reduced erosion.

"This, in turn, has helped diversify our livestock operation," he said. "We now can graze two months earlier in the spring as well as graze early in the fall until mid-winter."

Other guest speakers at the event will include Northern Country Coop staff, including precision ag specialist Herb Dowse; agronomist Chad Steinkamp; and soil health consultant Dave Vaughan. Additional speakers are Juan Mayta of Climate Corp.; Jason Sigebiel of FC Stone; Rick VandenHuevel of VH Consulting; and Tyler Steinkamp and Keaton Kruger of Winfield United.

Northern Country Coop, a full-service cooperative serving farmers since 1908, has 12 locations in northern Iowa and southern Minnesota, including Adams, Alden, Brownsdale, Conger, Emmons, Lansing, LeRoy, Lyle, Oakland and Rose Creek in Minnesota; and Stacyville and Toeterville in Iowa. Its primary business is buying and selling grain; grain storage and drying; sales and services of seed, fertilizer and chemicals; feed manufacturing; lumber sales; and several other services.

Mower Soil & Water Conservation District

Since 1953, Mower SWCD has provided land and conservation services to Mower County landowners to help manage lands in a way that promotes a sound economy as well as sustains and enhances natural resources that are key to the state's environmental health. Mower SWCD is one of Minnesota's 91 SWCDs each are governed by an elected board.

Mower Soil & Water Conservation District 1408 21st Ave. N.W. Austin, MN, 55912 (507) 434-2603 www.mowerswcd.org

Agronomy and Grain Marketing seminar

Who: Northern Country Cooperative.

What: Offering a free seminar featuring speakers on various topics related to agronomy and grain marketing.

Where: Holiday Inn Conference Center in Austin, 1701 Fourth St. N.W.

When: 9 a.m. Friday, March 3; registration at 8:30 a.m. Noon buffet lunch afterward.

Online: www.ncountrycoop.com; www.mowerswcd.org

CONTACT

Tim Ruzek, Mower SWCD

507-434-2603; tim.ruzek@mowerswcd.org