

2011 Technical Conference Highlights

Submitted by Ed Kilpatrick

Colorado SWCS presented a technical conference in conjunction with the CACD meeting in Loveland, CO this year on November 14th and 15th of this year. The theme of this year's conference was Soil Health. Presenters on this topic included Storm Casper and Tim Steffens of the NRCS starting off on Monday afternoon with a general discussion of Soil health. Ed Kilpatrick of NRCS demonstrated NRCS Colorado's new Rainfall Simulator, showing the effects of Soil Health and residue cover on soil erosion and water infiltration. Dr. Kristine Nichols of USDA-ARS, Mandan, ND spoke on Monday afternoon with the first of 2 sessions regarding the role of soil microbiology in Soil Health. Brendon Rocky, a potato producer from the San Luis Valley of Colorado gave a presentation on his use of cover crops as green manure on their potato ground and its benefits as Monday's session closed.



Ed Kilpatrick showing off the Rainfall Simulator.



Slake test demonstration.

On Tuesday morning, Ed Kilpatrick demonstrated the Slake test of the soils that were used in the Rainfall simulator the previous day. Dr. Nichols continued Part II of her presentation on soil microbiology. Scott Ravenkamp, a producer from Hugo, CO and President of the Colorado Conservation Tillage Association gave a presentation about his first cover crop. The Tuesday session was capped with a panel discussion of all the presenters plus Grady Grissom, a rancher from Las Animas County using managed grazing on his 14,000 ac. Ranch. Panel participants fielded questions written out by the conference attendees.

Many positive comments were received on the information presented and the SWCS committee felt very fortunate to have a part in bringing this information to our members. A big thanks to all of the members of the Colorado Soil Health Team as well as to everyone that helped make this conference a success.



Conference attendees watching the Rainfall Simulator in action.