

# ***Soil Health Field Day***

***Tuesday, October 7, 2014***

9:00 Registration and Refreshments

9:15 Welcome and Overview

9:30 Field Stations

Station 1: How Can I Tell if Soil is Healthy?.....Gordon Mikell

Station 2: Cover Crop Selection and Management.....Jason Carter

10:45 Biological Soil Testing: Methods and Interpretation.....Dr. Buz Kloot

11:15 First Year CIG Fertility Treatments and Results.....Gordon & Jason

11:45 Question and Answer Session.....All Present

12:00 Lunch.....Mr. Bunky's Market

12:30 Dismissal

## **Station 1: How Can I Tell if Soil is Healthy?**

During this session, led by NRCS Conservation Agronomist Gordon Mikell, participants will learn to recognize the indicators of healthy soil. Mikell will review the benefits of healthy soil, including how healthy soils reduce disease and pest problems. Participants will learn how improving soil health can reduce their input costs, improve soil structure, maximize water efficiency, and make their farms more drought-tolerant.

## **Station 2: Cover Crop Selection and Management**

Carter Farms owner/operator and Conservation Innovation Grant participant Jason Carter will discuss the selection and management of cover crops for maximum benefits, including weed suppression and pest control. Participants will receive information on the proper use of herbicides and insecticides in covers.

## **Biological Soil Testing: Methods and Interpretation**

Dr. Buz Kloot, Research Associate Professor with the University of South Carolina's Arnold School of Public Health, will teach participants to use the Haney soil health test to evaluate soil health and fertility. He will emphasize how soils with higher biological activity promote healthier, more resilient crops and reduce disease and pest problems. The hands-on training will enable participants to use the Haney soil health test to maximize nutrient efficiency and reduce commercial fertilizer inputs on their farms.

## **First Year CIG Fertility Treatments and Results**

Mikell and Carter will review results from the first year of treatments in Conservation Innovation Grant demonstration fields. The presentation will include the effects of the treatments on weed pressure, pest pressure, herbicide/pesticide applications, nutrient availability, and crop yields. Participants will receive yield results from different field fertility treatments, including no application of commercial fertilizer, reduced application of commercial fertilizer, and traditional application of commercial fertilizer.