

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Soil and Plant Sciences Division

Soil Survey Region 5 Office



Ft. Morgan, Colorado, MLRA Soil Survey Office

Future Farmers Get Their Hands Dirty

Purpose

At the request of the Arickaree School Future Farmers of America (FFA) instructor, MLRA Leader Andy Steinert spent one of his February Wednesdays getting into the dirt with 11 high school freshmen. In southeastern Washington County, Colorado, the students are preparing for the District FFA Land Judging Contest on April 3. The contest will be in Sterling, 90-plus miles away from Washington County.

Andy was there to show the students how to describe soils and how to do soil texturing. To those ends, a soil core was collected from a nearby crop field and brought to the classroom for the students to get hands-on experience with identifying soil horizons, depth, and structure. Buckets of different soils were also available to allow the students the opportunity to practice soil texturing.

It's not Andy's first time teaching high school students about soils; this is something he's invited to do regularly in the little towns around Ft. Morgan. He'll be at that Land Judging Contest also, and one of his students will probably win.

Key Outcomes

These students are our future NRCS customers and stewards of the land. The schools and FFA organizations are our partners in educating our youth and next generation of farmers, ranches, foresters, soil scientists, and conservationists. They will go on to feed the United States and the world.

Soils education supports conservation planning in that soils, and knowledge of them, are the basis for all conservation planning activities. A conservation plan should not be made without first looking at the soils.

Teaching our next generation to understand the land is our best and most important step in our overall goal of *helping people help the land*.





FFA students in Anton, Colorado, look at box samples of soils from varying parent materials. The box samples are an easy way to show soil horizons, structure, color, and other soil features in a classroom setting.



Andy Steinert, MLRA Soil Survey Leader, lays out a soil core from a nearby crop field for FFA students to practice identifying soil horizons. The soil core was also used to show different soil structures, colors, textures, and other features of the soil.