

Special Soil Quality Workshops Coming in May

How does tillage affect your soil? Can you improve soil quality conditions by changing tillage practices and farming systems? What signs does one look for to know how soils are changing?

Those questions and more will be answered in a special rhizosphere workshop led by Dr Jill Clapperton of Lethbridge, Alberta. Clapperton is considered the guru of the rhizosphere in many circles, being widely respected for her work on how soil biology and ecology interact with soil management systems to facilitate long term soil quality and productivity.

The workshop series begins at the Discovery Center in The Dalles, at 9 am on Monday, May 16, 2005. Pre-registration is requested by calling the Wasco Co Extension Office at 296-5494, by May 12. The \$10 registration fee will be collected at the door and does **not** include lunch. Lunch will be available at the Discovery Center Café. The initial session on May 16th will allow Clapperton and other regional experts to provide the background that will help land managers better understand the intricate relationships between soil quality conditions and tillage practices.

The next three days will be spent on the road as local farmers and orchardists have the opportunity to explore several soil pits up close with Clapperton. They will be examining soil conditions in their own production areas under different practices to see for themselves soil quality changes under varying practices.

Tuesday, May 17, orchardists and farmers are invited to meet at the Auction Yard on Highway 197, at 7:45 am. The group will caravan to see Clapperton at soil pits in a Wasco County orchard, various wheat farming systems (no-till, minimum till and plowed) and an undisturbed site during the morning. The follow up continues in Sherman County, beginning at 1 pm, at the Sherman Experiment Station in Moro.

Growers from further east will have the same opportunity beginning with a two hour seminar, May 18, at the Bill Jepsen ranch, along the Liberty School Road between Condon and Ruggs. The seminar will be followed by visits to demonstration pits. The program runs from 9 am to 4 pm, with a \$10 fee to cover lunch and refreshments for the day.

The two hour seminar and soils pit visits will be repeated again for Umatilla growers on May 19. Clapperton and various Experiment Station soil experts will be helping land managers get an up-close view of the quality factors in their area under their own conditions. The program begins at 9:15 am at the Adams Community Center in Adams. There is no charge for lunch that day and reservations can be made by calling 541-278-5403.

Those unable to attend the opening day seminars on Monday, May 16, will want to be sure to catch the seminar prior to the tour in their area.

