

Director's Column-Sharing the Good News

Through my work and family activities I have an opportunity to attend a lot of meetings. At several of the past meetings I've heard concerns about how people tend to focus on the "negative". In my job that means we talk about what people are doing that impacts the environment in a negative manner, versus talking about all the good practices that producers have put in place. We focus on the number of fish kills or contaminated wells and don't talk about the millions of tons of fertilizer or manure that has been safely applied to fields.

I've been told that good news is not news; I disagree. There are stories of producers who are protecting/enhancing our environment, and there are stories on what negatively impacts the environment. Do we have issues that some producers need to address? Absolutely! Will we continue to identify these issues and work with producers, agency personnel and agribusiness to adopt farming systems that minimize these losses? Absolutely! But, can't we give both sides of the story?

This spring the southern part of the state had conditions (frost, ice) with a very high potential for surface water runoff and warnings were issued throughout the state. I am not aware of any fish kills or documented manure runoff events. I know a couple of producers who had issues with manure application or storage, who acted immediately to contain the spill and implemented emergency response plans. Both events had no documented negative impact on the environment. Can't we agree that taking the proper course of action is equally newsworthy? Have a wonderful summer, and enjoy the warmer weather.

"Nothing can stop the man with the right mental attitude from achieving his goal; nothing on earth can help the man with the wrong mental attitude."

~ Thomas Jefferson