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MINER INSTITUTE GETS GRANT FOR TILE DRAIN WORK

Chazy, NY – Aug. 26, 2011 – Miner Institute was recently awarded a \$117,000 grant for a three-year project to demonstrate the use of drainage water management to reduce nutrient losses from tile drainage effluent. The award is through USDA-NRCS' Conservation Innovation Grants Program for New York and is a collaboration among Miner Institute, Cornell University, SUNY Plattsburgh, and the Clinton County Soil and Water Conservation District. The project team is led by Dr. Eric Young, Research Agronomist at Miner Institute. The goal of the project is to demonstrate the use of drainage water management technology to reduce nutrient loss from subsurface tile lines as compared to the standard practice of free-drainage through tile lines.

Subsurface tile drainage is a key practice utilized by farms in Clinton County and Northern NY to improve soil drainage, increase crop yields, and reduce surface runoff and erosion. However, under certain conditions, nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrogen can be mobilized from soil to tile lines and enter surface waters. Drainage water management utilizes inline water control structures to raise the water table in the field to a desired level, usually to within one foot of the soil surface. Research has shown that this water table management can reduce the total amount of nutrients and water leaving the field compared to unrestricted free-drainage, primarily through a reduction in water volume and greater nutrient sequestration in soils. The project will take place on a 14-acre poorly drained crop production field at Miner in Chazy, NY.

The benefits of drainage water management have been documented in other regions of the US, but little work has been performed in the Northeast. This project will quantify the reduction in water volume and nutrient loading as a result of drainage water management using replicated tile lines, and will also evaluate the relative costs and benefits associated with drainage water management. Results from the project will be applicable to other areas with similar climate and soils and help to refine current best management practices for tile drainage in New York.

For more information about this project, please contact Eric Young at 518-846-7121, ext. 113 or young@whminer.com

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