

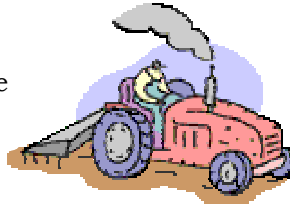
A Look at Illinois Agriculture

Taken from www.agclassroom.org/il

Capital: Springfield
Population: 12,831,970
Founded: December 3, 1818 (21st State)
State Bird: Cardinal
State Tree: White Oak
State Flower: Violet
Number of Counties: 102
Largest City: Chicago Population: 2,842,518

General

- In 2005, there were 72,500 farms in Illinois.
- Each Illinois farmer feeds 144 people.
- In **Illinois**, 31.6 million acres of land is used for **agricultural** purposes. 2.5 million acres are urban and built-up land. 1.8 million acres are **rural** transportation and governmental lands.
- Illinois' current director of Agriculture is Chuck Hartke.



Soil

- The average depth of top soil in Illinois is 12.6".
- Illinois has some of the richest and most productive **soil** in the world.
- All living things depend on soil as a source of food, so it is the responsibility of each generation to use soil wisely.
- The Illinois state soil is "**Drummer.**"
- Illinois has approximately 1,500 different soil types.



Climate

- The climate of Illinois is good for crop growth.
- Hot summers help plants grow and cold winters help soil replenish itself.
- Southern Illinois typically receives 40" of rain each year and Northern



Illinois typically receives 34".

- Winds from the Gulf of Mexico bring most of the **rain** and snow to Illinois.
- The Northern part of Illinois averages 25oF in January and 75oF in July. The Southern part of Illinois averages 36oF in January and 79oF in July.

Crops

- Corn and soybeans are the top Illinois crops.
- **Corn** plants grow seven to ten feet tall.
- Corn is **harvested** using a combine.
- Most corn is used for **livestock** feed, but can also be used for **ethanol** (a fuel additive), plastics, foods, and much more.
- Illinois produces enough corn each year to fill a train of box cars stretching more than 7,600 miles from here to Hong Kong.
- Most **soybeans** are used for livestock feed but can also be used for soybean oil, medicines, soy ink, paints, cosmetics, and much more.
- Illinois ranks #2 in the U.S. for both corn and soybeans.
- Illinois leads in the production of pumpkins and horseradish, both of which are **specialty** crops.



Animals

- There are 1,380,000 cattle, 4,050,000 pigs, 69,000 sheep and 200,000 horses in Illinois.
- Illinois dairy **cattle** produce over two million pounds of **milk** each year.
- Illinois **poultry** produces 1,044 million eggs per year.



Nuts About Nature

Compliments of the
Fayette County SWCD



WORD FIND

On the front page of this newsletter there are twenty, green bold words. Search for those words in our Conservation Word Find at the right.

L	D	L	I	E	T	I	H	W	D	G	R	O	R	E
I	L	F	A	I	A	T	T	B	R	U	M	T	R	B
V	E	E	L	R	J	D	E	K	U	O	X	O	E	E
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What on Earth is Soil?

Taken from www.epa.gov



- Soil makes up the outermost layer of our planet.
- Topsoil is the most productive soil layer.
- Soil has varying amounts of organic matter (living and dead organisms), minerals, and nutrients.
- Five tons of topsoil spread over an acre is only as thick as a dime.
- Natural processes can take more than 500 years to form one inch of topsoil.
- Soil scientists have identified over 70,000 kinds of soil in the United States.
- Soil is formed from rocks and decaying plants and animals.
- An average soil sample is 45 percent minerals, 25 percent water, 25 percent air, and five percent organic matter.
- Different-sized mineral particles, such as sand, silt, and clay, give soil its texture.
- Fungi and bacteria help break down organic matter in the soil.
- Plant roots and lichens break up rocks which become part of new soil.
- Roots loosen the soil, allowing oxygen to penetrate. This benefits animals living in the soil.
- Roots hold soil together and help prevent erosion.
- Five to 10 tons of animal life can live in an acre of soil.
- Earthworms digest organic matter, recycle nutrients, and make the surface soil richer.
- Mice take seeds and other plant materials into underground burrows, where this material eventually decays and becomes part of the soil.
- Mice, moles, and shrews dig burrows which help aerate the soil.