

FEATURE - SMITHSONIAN SOIL EXHIBITION

INTRO: USDA and the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D-C have joined forces on an exhibition highlighting the importance of soil to the United States and the world. Bob Ellison has more. (1:53)

SOIL IS SOMETHING MOST OF US TAKE FOR GRANTED. BUT WITHOUT IT THERE WOULD BE A SHORTAGE OF FOOD AND FIBER. THAT'S THE MESSAGE OF A JOINT EFFORT BY THE U-S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND THE SMITHSONIAN'S NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY. AGRICULTURE SECRETARY ED SCHAFER SAYS THE EXHIBITION CALLED DIG IT-THE SECRETS OF SOIL WILL HELP THE PUBLIC BETTER UNDERSTAND SOIL'S IMPORTANCE.

Ed Schafer, Agriculture Secretary: The soils that we depend on are diverse and they are complex. When we ask how we'll feed a growing world, the health of our soil is at the heart of that answer.

U-S-D-A'S NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE CONTRIBUTED TO THE EXHIBITION THAT FEATURES SOIL FROM THE STATES, THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA AND THE TERRITORIES. N-R-C-S IS U-S-D-A'S LEAD AGENCY FOR SOIL CONSERVATION.

Schafer: We work across this great nation with producers who rely on that thin layer of soil to produce the most abundant and high quality food supply in the world.

MEANWHILE, MEMBERS OF CONGRESS PRAISED THE U-S-D-A SMITHSONIAN EFFORT TO EDUCATE THE PUBLIC ABOUT SOIL'S IMPORTANCE.

Rep. Jim Costa, (D-CA 20th Dist): Because I think it would be very critical to ensure that people throughout the country make the connection between their soils and their water and the air that we breathe. We can't live without all three of them.

Rep. Tom Latham, (R-Iowa 4th Dist): But if you're a farmer you understand that the soil is the number one asset that you have. Without proper care of that soil you're not going to be able to make a livelihood for your family nor are you going to be able to produce the goods and products that the nation needs.

THE SOILS EXHIBITION WILL BE AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY UNTIL JANUARY TWENTY-TEN. AFTER THAT THE EXHIBITION TRAVELS ACROSS THE COUNTRY THROUGH TWENTY THIRTEEN. IN WASHINGTON D-C FOR THE U-S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, I'M BOB ELLISON.