

U of I's Research Station In Monmouth Doubles In Size

URBANA, ILL.

With a portion of the proceeds from the sale of gifted farmland, the University of Illinois purchased 80 acres of farmland less than one mile from its Northwestern Illinois Agricultural Research and Demonstration Center in rural Monmouth. That farmland combined with an additional 80 acres which was purchased by a local citizen group doubles the size of the original 160 acre Monmouth Research Center.

The land that was sold at auction was an unrestricted gift of farmland known as the Lucille Hart Sudbury endowment farm in Bureau County and has been a source of revenue since it was bequeathed in 2004 to the University of Illinois.

"The proximity of the 80 acres of farmland to the Monmouth Research Center made it a very wise acquisition for the College of ACES," said Robert Hauser, dean of the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences.

Hauser said that the landowner, John Diffenbaugh, was very supportive of the Monmouth Center as well and that Diffenbaugh's willingness to sell his adjacent farmland at this particular time will help the Center continue to be sustainable.

At the same time, 80 acres near the Center owned by Warren and Jeanne Spring also became available.

A grass roots group of concerned citizens which formed the Northwest Agricultural Education Foundation a few years ago raised the

money to buy the 80 acres of land from the Springs. The Foundation agreed to lease that farmland to the University of Illinois for one dollar per year and allows the University to use the land for research activities.

"The foundation was created to preserve the research center," said Les Allen, a local banker, farmer and member of the foundation. "If the Monmouth Field Station ceased to exist, the loss of the station would have a devastating impact on the Western Illinois region and its agricultural producers. We'd lose 30 years of research if it closed."

Allen said that Warren Spring passed away on November 2 at the age of 87.

The 160 acre research facility, established in 1980 near Monmouth in Warren County is a very productive site, from the standpoints of both crop yield and data generation. Each year, approximately 50 different projects are conducted by up to 12 campus-based project leaders and the center superintendent. Subject matter areas involved in these projects include soil chemistry and fertility, soil management, crop production, weed science, entomology, plant pathology, pest management and environmental quality.

"The purchase of 80 acres combined with the creative efforts of the Foundation has virtually doubled the Center overnight," said Eric Ade, superintendent of the Monmouth Research Center. "With twice the land, we will have much greater capacity for both research and production." △



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