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South Dakota Soil Health Coalition releases new children's book

PIERRE, S.D. – Just in time for the holidays, the South Dakota Soil Health Coalition (SDSHC) has released the perfect stocking stuffer for kids – a fun, educational and agriculturally accurate children's book titled, "The Soil Quilt."

Geared for third graders, "The Soil Quilt" uses the metaphor of a patchwork quilt that layers the planet to explain how a healthy soil covers the landscape.

"SDSHC did a survey with vocational ag teachers and students, and one of the take-aways was that the earlier we start teaching students about soil health, the greater impact it will have," SDSHC Coordinator Cindy Zenk said. "So we decided to create a book to help children learn about the importance of soil to our lives and our communities. We hope children will learn that what happens in the soil not only produces our food but also creates the diverse landscape we enjoy, strengthens our families, and builds our communities."

Published by Ag Storytellers, "The Soil Quilt" was written by Amanda Radke of Mitchell, S.D., and illustrated by Michelle Weber of Lake Benton, Minn. This is Ag Storytellers' fourth children's book, with previous titles including "Levi's Lost Calf," "Can-Do Cowkids," and "A Home Run for Peanuts."

"With their backgrounds in agriculture, Radke and Weber were the perfect team to make this book a reality," Zenk said. "Amanda's understanding of rural life helped her write a story that drives home the point that good soil health is about more than just growing food – it's about growing our families and communities. Michelle's artistic skills allowed her to bring Amanda's story to life through fantastic illustrations that highlight the beauty of life in Rural America."

“The Soil Quilt” is designed to be enjoyed at home and in the classroom. With a glossary of new vocabulary words to study plus a hands-on learning activity, the book is the perfect way to launch discussions about how everyone can play a role in promoting soil health.

“The mission of the SDSHC is to promote improved soil health,” Zenk said. “We hope young readers will enjoy this story and become passionate about the life beneath our feet and the impact it provides.”

The new book is available for purchase on Amazon or by reaching out to the author and illustrator. Radke’s website is www.amandaradke.com and Weber’s is webercustompainting.com. Also visit www.agstorytellers.com to learn more about how Ag Storytellers is promoting agricultural literacy, one book at a time.

For more information about SDSHC, check out www.sdsoilhealthcoalition.org. Make plans to attend the 2021 Soil Health Conference, which will be held virtually on Jan. 6-7, 2021.

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SDSHC is a producer-led, non-profit, membership organization created to promote soil health through education and research.

Ag Storytellers is a publishing company in South Dakota that works to promote agricultural literacy through accurate, engaging, and vibrant books for kids.