



Invisible Network of Drains

By: Janith M. Chandrasoma

Crop Sciences

Have you ever wonder how Illinois is being so dominant in agriculture? Yes! You are right. You are standing on top of a wide drainage network that remove excess water from Illinois farm lands which made them suitable for farming. Currently there are 9.7 million acres of tile-drained land in Illinois that used for agriculture and pasture production. This image was taken when we dug up an exciting tile drain network to install a device called water in-line control structure. For our surprise we saw the original clay-tile that was installed may be 50 – 60 years ago still in one piece. Currently most tile drains are plastic and installed using powerful tractors. The color change in soil above and below this clay-tile drain shows the fluctuation of the water table. The blackish soil above the tile is where we need to drain and where it support optimum crop growth reducing excess water stress for plants.