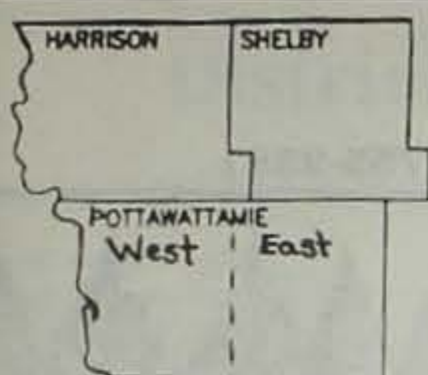




Volume 2
Issue 4

Quad-District Conservation Newsletter



Winter
1997-98

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Schimerowski Park - a jewel in a small town setting

by Lou Waite

In 1947, Stanley Schimerowski decided to create a pond on a tract of his land located near Earling in Shelby County. And so, as the story goes, he did! It was the first man-made pond in the county and so garnered quite a lot of attention.

Perhaps because the site was enjoyed by so many, in 1967, Stan donated the area to Shelby County, to be maintained as a park by the City of Earling. It became a part of the Shelby County Conservation Board Park System.

The county removed several old buildings on the site, built a shelter-house and provided picnic tables, grills, playground equipment, etc. Since it was located not far from Highway 191, the park attracted not only visitors from the surrounding vicinities, but from far and wide.

But Father Time and Mother Nature brought about changes, as they are destined to do. The pond silted in; the buildings deteriorated, and the area needed further landscaping and improvements. Last year, the buildings were re-roofed, some landscaping done and evergreen trees planted, as well as prairie grasses, etc., all done by the County Conservation Board. Budget concerns, however, prevented anything more extensive from being carried out. The silted-in pond, for example, would be too expensive to remedy.

Jim Schimerowski and his wife, Mary Lou, always maintained an interest in the park. Mary Lou, while serving two terms as Mayor of Earling, encouraged seeking ways of renovating the area, and perhaps adding to its recreational facilities.

That interest was maintained by current mayor, Jerry Bissen, and the park board: Dean Finken, Dean and Mark Langenfeld and the Schimerowskis. But who could help?



Seated, Mary Lou and Jim Schimerowski. Standing Darby Sanders, Shelby County Conservation Board Director; Jerry Bissen, Mayor of Earling; Ron Peterson, Civil Engineer; Jeff Darling, State Soil Conservation Technician and Jim Sharp, NRCS District Conservationist.

They consulted Darby Sanders, Shelby County Conservation Board Director. Gayland Hall, NRCS Soil Conservationist became involved, as did Ron Peterson, Civil Engineer, all of whom viewed the site and gathered data.

To make a long story shorter, it was decided the ponding area could be designated a shallow water wetland. Funding, therefore, could be sought from various sources. And so could be formed a sponsoring partnership of the NRCS, Fish and Wildlife Service,

County Conservation Board, City of Earling and the City and County Park Committees.

It could also involve some of the landowners around the area, if plans were realized. Through a continuous CRP lease agreement, protective buffer strips could be installed around the wetland area, with the cooperation of these landowners. These would be planted to native prairie grasses and wildflowers. This would not only enhance the beauty of the area, but attract wildlife and give visitors the opportunity to enjoy nature as it was meant to be.

Two structures would be built for erosion control. An additional shelter-house might be erected, and an observation deck installed over the water. A walk would be laid, leading from the city into and through the park, if enough funds were generated. An island in the pond would contain nesting barrels for wildfowl use. The area behind the dam would be dredged, and dirt fill added to the dam to re-create the ponding area.

It is indeed an ambitious undertaking, but with so many dedicated persons involved, one could almost make a wager that it will succeed. Darby Sanders, in fact, assured, "It will happen, one way or another."

Jim and Mary Lou have confidence in the outcome. Jim

said, "I think of the kids who will learn so much about ecology. The more they learn about the land, the more respect they will have for it when they reach adulthood."

Jim went on to say that not only would the area be a "nature lesson" for the young, but a place of peace and refuge for all. "For example," he recalled, "I once talked to a salesman who had been traveling through the area, saw the park, and stopped there to relax for a while and catch up on his paperwork."

Mary Lou added, "The personnel from the County Conservation Board are willing to hold sessions at the park for the children . . . or anyone interested. It will be an educational opportunity, especially for the kids, and a chance to view a real wetland up close."

Jim added a practical note, "If this all works out, there will be no cost to the taxpayer." His rationale was that NRCS cost share and other agency grant programs would provide financial aid. In addition, donations totaling \$2500 have been made by the Farmers Trust & Savings Bank and the Schimerowskis, to be utilized in the park improvement. Other local/area citizens may wish to add to this fund in the future.

The Schimerowski's seven

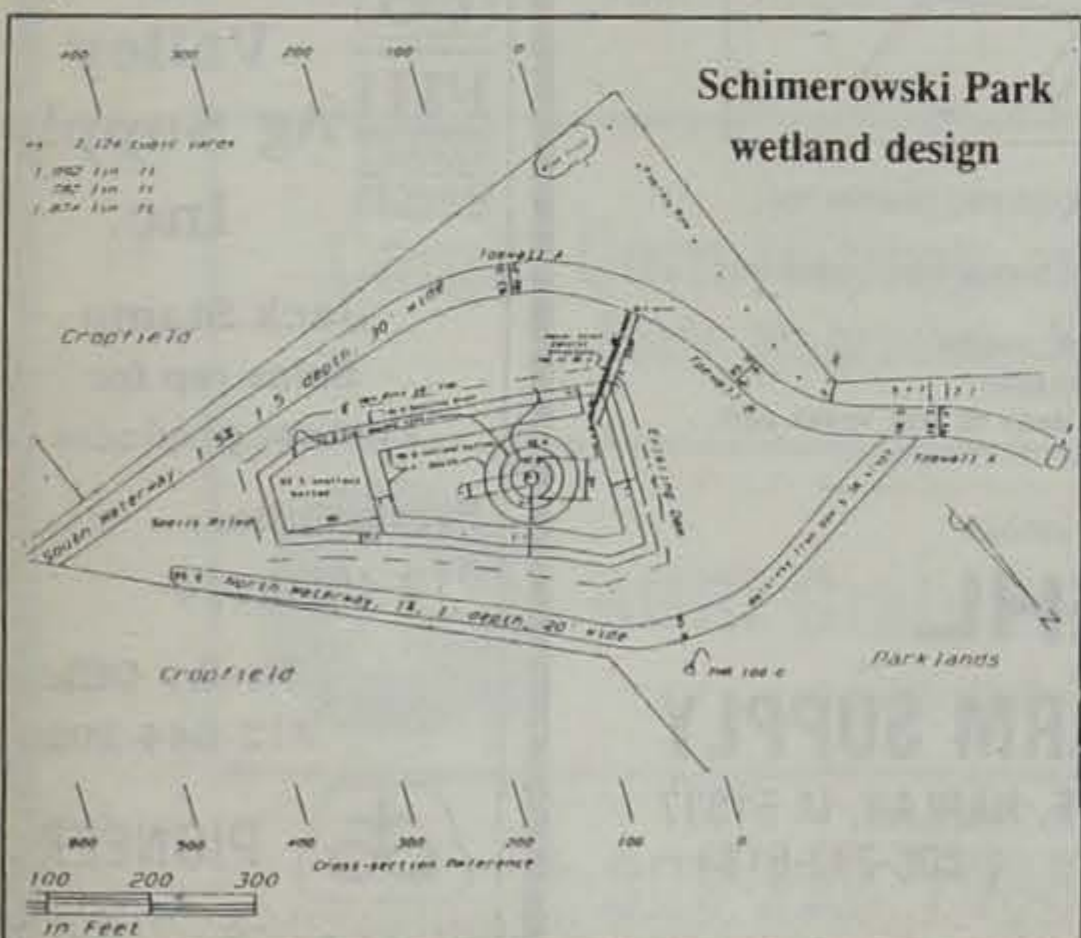
children are "all scattered throughout Minnesota, Montana, Ohio and Iowa". They have 16 grandchildren, and two "greats". But when the family members touch base with their roots, they surely will enjoy visiting the park. And perhaps take pride in the fact that it bears the family name, thanks to an ancestor who was generous and farseeing.

Jim and Mary Lou are "retired" from farming, but far from being retiring. They are active members of St. Joseph's Church. She still serves on the city council and caters for various social affairs. (Funeral dinner are catered free of charge). When they are not involved in community activities or humanitarian causes, the Schimerowskis like to travel.

Gerald (Jerry) Bissen, who is serving his second term as mayor, is also a retired farmer. He feels the wetland area would be a "tremendous benefit" for the city, county and even the state.

He and his wife, Sylvia, have nine children, 15 grandchildren and one great-grandchild. Their family, too, is scattered, but surely they share fond memories of the park as it was, and would enjoy seeing what it can and will be.

"The whole town is united toward this goal," Bissen noted. "With so much going for it, it's bound to happen."



1998 Cost-share policies

The Shelby County Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners have finalized the policies for State cost-share funds.

Applications for 1998 will be accepted beginning at 7:30 a.m. on January 2, 1998, at the Harlan NRCs office.

1) Sign-up will be divided into three categories: Spring, Summer and Fall. Names will be chronologically approved as that season's funds become available. There will be no assurances of any fall allocations. The priority system adopted and cost-share rates will apply as follows:

HIGH PRIORITY

1. **TERRACES - Topsoiling is required on terraces** and is included in the following rates:

Narrow Base (A) -- 50% of \$1.15 per foot, or 50% of the cost, if less.

Grassed Backslope -- 50% of \$1.40 per foot, or 50% of the cost, if less.

Broadbase -- 50% of \$.90 per foot, or 50% of the cost, if less.

Estimated cost on tile, intakes and outlets: Payment based on 50% of estimated cost, or 50% of the cost, if less.

6" tile - \$1.30 per foot (not to exceed 200' below terraces)

5" tile - \$1.05 per foot (not to exceed 200' below terraces)

8" tile - \$1.80 per foot (not to exceed 200' below terraces)

6" intakes - \$150.00

12" intakes - \$400.00

Outlet - \$100.00

2. **WATER & SEDIMENT CONTROL BASIN (638)**

50% of \$.80 cubic yard or 50% of cost-share, if less, not to exceed \$3500.

3. **UNDERGROUND OUTLET (TILE)**

Tiling will be cost-shared at 50% of the estimated cost, or 50% of the cost if less, and only 200' per intake.

MEDIUM PRIORITY

1. **GRADE STABILIZATION STRUCTURE**

Grade stabilization structures built to NRCS specifications will be cost-shared at 50% of estimated cost or actual cost, whichever is less, not to exceed a maximum of \$3500.

2. **GRASSSED WATERWAY**

Waterways staked and constructed to NRCS specifications will be cost-shared at 50% of \$.75 per foot, or 50% of the cost if less. Tile is eligible for cost-share where the subsurface drainage is required to permit establishment and maintenance of the waterway. Total waterway/tile cost-share at 50%, not to exceed a maximum of \$3500.

3. **WATERWAY OUTLET**

Outlets constructed to NRCS specs will be cost-shared at 50% of the estimated cost or actual cost, whichever is less, not to exceed a maximum of \$3500.

SUMMER INCENTIVE -- 60% COST-SHARE

Funds for summer construction can only be obligated after June 1 and the terraces must be completed by August 15. No extensions. People receiving summer cost-share funds will need to build terraces during the summer. Extensions will not be granted due to the operator having corn or beans to harvest. The district will help stake out areas for small grain where the terraces are to be constructed.



Fall applied N = no-till opportunity

by Bill Hammitt

Many acres of anhydrous ammonia were applied this fall, due to the unusually nice late November weather. This will give many farmers an excellent opportunity to try no-till corn on their soybean ground next spring.

Soybean ground is often tilled in the spring because spring ammonia application may cause seedling injury to corn plants in some no-till situations. This isn't a problem with fall-applied ammonia. There is also much less compaction from fall application, and the winter freeze and thaw leaves the soil mellow for planting.

If you are a farmer in this situation, with all or part of the ammonia already applied, don't let this opportunity pass you by. Try some no-till corn and save some soil, time and fuel.

Windbreaks & Wildlife

by Donna Arkfeld

Windbreaks can support wildlife which add beauty and pleasure to our lives. They also sustain birds that eat insect pests, improve hunting opportunities and provide a focal point for family outdoor activities. Windbreaks help wildlife and in some areas are essential to survival of the wildlife we enjoy. You can add wildlife benefits to windbreak plantings whether your main goal is to shelter crops, livestock, roads, a home or farmstead.

A place to nest

Windbreaks provide nesting habitat for a wide variety of birds and other species. Species, including squirrels and cottontail rabbits, nest in windbreaks, and white-tailed deer with fawns use them for cover.

Food and foraging sites

Windbreaks provide food for wildlife as well as protective cover when they forage in adjacent areas. Food potentially available in windbreaks includes fruits, nuts, acorns, seed, foliage, and insects or other invertebrates.

Shelter from predation -- escape cover

Windbreaks provide escape cover and refuge for many wildlife species. Pheasants can often stay near windbreak cover while feeding. During midday loafing periods, the woody vegetation offers refuge from people and overhead predators.

Shelter from weather

Shelter from the wind is a critical aspect of wildlife survival in winter. An animal maintains warmth by avoiding exposure to the wind, ideally in a warm, sunny



spot and by fluffing feathers or fur coats. An animal must balance the needs of finding food against the increased exposure to wind when foraging.

Applicants for all department programs will be given equal consideration without regard to race, age, color, sex or natural origin.

- Information source:

University of Nebraska Extension Service.

Windbreak cost-share funds are available

by Joann Schulte

Cost-share dollars are available for windbreaks through the REAP Program (Resource Enhancement and Protection). Under the REAP program, the windbreak needs to meet Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) specifications. To be eligible for the program, the applicant must produce either food or fiber. Funds are available at the 75% cost-share rate up to \$12 per tree, \$2.25 per shrub and \$700 total per windbreak.

If you are interested in receiving assistance, contact the Shelby County Soil and Water Conservation District at 712-755-2417. Your application must be approved by the District Commissioners and the windbreak will be planted during the spring of 1998.

The best time to plan a windbreak is now!

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Aust retires after 42-year career

Erwin Aust, Projects Coordinator, Iowa State office staff with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, located in Council Bluffs, retired December 31 of last year.

"Ernie", as he is more familiarly known, completed an almost 42-year career with the USDA, Soil Conservation Service/Natural Resources Conservation Service in Iowa. To all who knew him -- his peers, his friends and co-workers -- he was a dynamic, highly motivated individual, successful at whatever he set out to do.

He began his career as a student-trainee in Storm Lake in 1955. After graduation, he was employed in the Chariton and Osceola areas until 1958, when he began service with the United States Army.

He reported to the Oakland office in 1962, and in 1965, became district conservationist at Hampton. In 1970, he and his family made their home in Shenandoah, where they still reside.

Ernie held the position of Area Conservationist for 24 years, the longest tenure of any SCS employee in Iowa. In 1994-95, he became planning staff leader in the state office in Des Moines.

Following that, he served in the position from which he retired.

Ernie stated that he has always been dedicated to giving good service to the public, and lending support to field office staff. His goal was to see effective conservation measures carried out on the land. He strove to provide leadership during the transition from voluntary to compliance conservation and the adjustments which personnel, conservation districts and farmers had to make. "Thanks to all of them", he noted, "conservation efforts have continued. Many conservation programs and support to rural areas was made in my area of Iowa. In addition to the traditional programs, numerous watershed projects have been organized and completed. These have provided recreation and water supplies, along with gully erosion and flood control."

Ernie also helped organize the multi-county Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) programs in southwest Iowa, and gave them support. "As far as interest and concern are involved, I will always continue support of them," he stated.

Ernie and his wife Pat are parents of seven children. The five eldest are graduates of Iowa State University, their parent's alma mater. The two youngest are pursuing degrees at Creighton University and Simpson College.

Favorite Recipes of NRCS personnel

Crock Pot Scalloped Potatoes

1 can Cheddar cheese soup
1 can cream of chicken or cream of mushroom soup
1/2 lb chopped ham
1 onion, chopped
Sliced potatoes
In a crock pot, cook on high for 5-6 hours, or on low for 7-8 hours.

Baked Hash Browns

2 lbs. hash browns, thawed
1 tsp salt
2 Tbsp minced onion
1 can cream of chicken soup
1 cup sour cream
1/2 cup melted margarine
Mix and pour into baking dish. Bake at 325 degrees for 45 minutes.

respectively.

The Austs will continue their residency in Shenandoah. "We'll enjoy having more time to spend with our children and grandchildren," Ernie said. "but I will always have an interest in the land and the people who care for it."

Iowa Watersheds annual meeting

The third Annual Meeting of Iowa Watersheds was held Tuesday, December 16 in the Farm Bureau Auditorium in West Des Moines.

Roger Schnoor, Chairman, welcomed those present and gave a brief overview of the organization's beginning, accomplishments to date, and plans for the future. Among the goals for 1998 were increasing the membership, continuing to work toward gaining financial assistance to small watershed projects and organizing a Watershed in Operation Committee.

A panel composed of Dr. Jerry Hatfield, National Soil Tilth Laboratory; Dr. Gerald Miller, Iowa State Extension Service and Linda Kinman, Iowa Association of Water Agencies, presented "Using a watershed-based approach" toward conservation planning. Discussed were non-point pollution, inventory, accessibility and evaluation of the quality of water. Also discussed was the fact that producers and their suppliers treat manure as a waste rather than a nutrient. It was brought out that very few people see the economical value of manure.

A question and answer period preceded lunch. During the afternoon business session, ballots were cast for 3 three-year terms and one two-year term on the Watershed Board of Directors.

Successful candidates were Don Avery of Ottumwa, Leland Carmichael of Red Oak, Roger Wolf of Des Moines and Larry DuVal of Onawa.

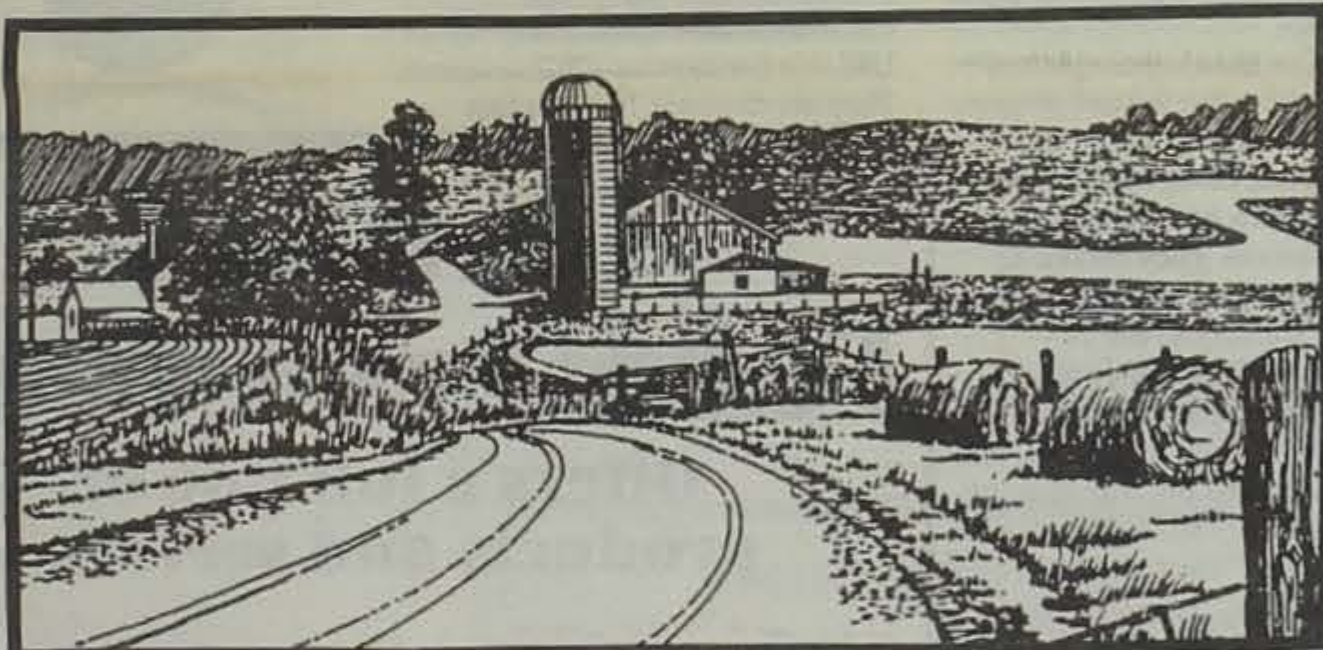
It was announced that a Spring Watershed Workshop is planned for April in southeastern Iowa, with the Soap Creek Watershed Board as hosts. Other sponsors will be Iowa Watersheds, Monroe SWCD and County Board of Supervisors (BOS), Wapello SWCD & BOS, Davis County SWCD & BOS and Appanoose SWCD and BOS. The date, meeting location and program details will be announced at a later date.

Representing the Quad District was Michelle Zimmerman, East Pottawattamie Resource Planner. Lou Waite of the Harrison District, who serves as newsletter editor, was unable to attend. A bouquet of flowers presented in appreciation of her efforts was returned to her by Bob Grote, Jack Wendt and Mick Leinen, Mosquito Creek Watershed directors from Portsmouth, who were also in attendance.

Zimmerman commented "Remember, everyone lives in a watershed. That is why it is so important to support watershed planning, management and operation and maintenance concepts to address the preservation of natural resources."

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by Lou Waite

As youngsters, William ("Bill") and James Coulthard, living in Las Vegas, Nevada, enjoyed visiting the family farm in Harrison County, Iowa. Almost every summer and autumn, they experienced rural life and times with their grandfather, David Lloyd Coulthard and their father G. William ("Bill"). During these ventures to Iowa, their father, Bill, would reminisce about his own boyhood and youth on the farm, adding to the lore and allure of the place.

Today through a trust established by their father, now deceased, the sons and their mother, Diane Coulthard Kneeland, are owners of the land. Unlike those who might not wish to cope with the inconveniences of being "absentee" landholders, they are carrying on family tradition. Having recently acquired more land in the area, Coulthard Trust and Coulthard Family Farms presently encompasses over 2800 acres.

Having these facts, one would envision vast fields of corn and soybeans, or perhaps feedlots filled with livestock... typical Iowa farm scenes... but this is not so! All of the "livestock" on the Coulthard land is wild and free.

Free to shelter or nest in 99-foot-wide grassed buffer strips which parallel each waterway, are pheasant, quail, wild turkey, and other small furry or feathered creatures. They are free to feed in a number of food plots, with even more planned for the future. Each plot is from 5 to 7 acres, and cropping is rotated to maintain production. Critters may find refuge in the tall native grasses and wildflowers planted around and among various windbreaks and tree plantings.

Diane Kneeland's love of trees is illustrated by the following story, which Bill verified as true. It seems there was a fence line infiltrated by tree growth to the point that it had to be constantly repaired. When Diane was told the only way to remedy the situation would be to remove the trees, she said "No! No trees are to be cut." So the final solution was to make a "living fence" by adding four more rows of trees to those already existing. This created an effective barrier, and addition of native grasses and wildflowers made it

attractive as well as excellent wildlife habitat.

Sandy ground along a river has also been planted to prairie grasses, and a 10-acre area is being established as a wetland through the continuous CRP program. Several ponds with nesting islands for ducks and geese will be increased by a new 10-acre addition. The tree population will also be enhanced, with plans to plant 2,000 additional each year.

The Coulthards hope to attract and provide habitat for more wild turkeys, as well as pheasants, quail and other species of wildlife. They hope to see more migratory birds, such as ducks and geese, and provide food and habitat for them. Deer are already plentiful in the area, but they as well as the smaller animals are welcome.

Not to give the wrong impression, there is extensive cropland. It is custom-farmed, with mainly corn and soybeans produced. As Bill agreed, when the quip was jestingly made, "there has to be some way to pay for all the native grasses and trees" planned for the farm. Anyone also pricing certain grass and wildflower seed mixtures would concur.

Bill Coulthard is a trial attorney with the law firm of Harrison, Kemp and Jones in Las Vegas. He is following the profession of his father before him. He and his wife, Heather, have one son, Lane William, who is two. Bill said although he loves wildlife, he also likes to hunt and is an avid outdoorsman. Heather, however,

does not share this hunting interest as an active member of the local chapter of the Humane Society. She is an avid connoisseur and collector of antiques. During trips to Iowa, she always finds time for a visit to Walnut.

Bill is on the board of trustees for the Nevada chapter of The Nature Conservancy and active in Ducks Unlimited, etc. He is also associated with various organizations relating to his legal profession.

James, a commercial real estate broker with Diversified Realty in Las Vegas, holds an office with the local chapter of Ducks Unlimited. He is also an active member of The Nature Conservancy and other conservation agencies. James has taken a very hands-on approach to the farming operation and wildlife enhancement projects. In the fall however, the best place to find James is in the duck blind.

Gary Thien managed the Coulthard ag interests for 20 years while associated with Council Bluffs Savings Bank, which later became Firststar Bank. After forming Thien Farm Management, Gary continues as manager of the family's personal properties, while the trust remains with Firststar Farm Management.

"The Coulthards have always been very sensitive toward property management, conservation and environmental concerns," Gary noted, "and this has passed down to each generation. They choose to use chemicals and tillage systems which are friendly to the environment. Technological advances in the past 20 years... new machines, new chemicals, etc... have changed the way farming is done, and they have kept up with those changes. They are also protecting and preserving wildlife and wildlife habitat. They are concerned about the farms, but also about the people who operate them and have become personal friends with them. My job has always been to meet their goals. They are fine people and always fair. I appreciate them as clients and enjoy working with them."

Gary is an accredited farm

manager and rural appraiser. He is Director of District Four (Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Missouri) for the American Society of Farm Managers. He also served three years as an USA-ID (foreign aid) international consultant to the Czech Republic and Slovakia. He commented that during his tenure, no-till farming was being implemented in those countries.

Jim Young of Firststar Farm Management in Sioux City has been manager for Coulthard Trust during the past two and one-half years. He said he felt the Coulthard operation is extraordinary and certainly commendable. "They are creating a wonderful wildlife refuge, but also practicing good conservation and maintaining a viable ag operation," he stated.

The Coulthard acres are among 4,000 personally managed by Young, primarily in Iowa. His major responsibility with Firststar is heading the department of farm management, but he keeps in close touch with "what's happening" with his clients. He also owns and operates three farms near Bronson, Iowa, which gives him "hands-on" experience.

Russ Kurth, District Conservationist said, "The Coulthards have taken advantage of USDA's continuous CRP program. They are entering 10 acres as a

shallow water wetland, which will benefit wildlife. Plans are to construct a dike to contain water on their land. This past spring they planted a 2.4 acre windbreak which consisted of 400 trees and 2,600 shrubs.

"They have also planted over 50 acres of filter strips along the streams which run through their land. The filter strips have been seeded to native, warm season grasses and will provide wildlife habitat. The strips will also improve water quality by filtering sediment and nutrients from the runoff water."

Bill Coulthard gave eloquent, final expression to his thoughts, saying, "Our goal is to pass along to our children what was given to us. This land was my grandfather and father's love, and now it is mine, my mother's and James'. We want to create wildlife habitat and resources for future generations to enjoy, and for them to learn from, as we have learned. I think as landowners, we have an obligation to do this. It is more than an obligation for us, however. It is our dream and our desire."



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Young cattle producer looking forward to first production sale



A Charolais calf from the Dubas/Funk herd with the scenic Loess Hills in the background.

by Lou Waite

Patrick (call him Pat) Dubas grew up on a farm near Fullerton, Nebraska. As a Four-H member, he showed cattle, and while in high school was a member of FFA (Future Farmers of America) and a recipient of its State Farmer Award. He enjoyed working with cattle, and gained a great amount of knowledge and experience while still a youth.

"After high school, I worked for Larry and Mary Ann Schwarz at Archer, Nebraska," Pat recalled. "They became good friends as well as employers, and I learned so much from them." With a smile, he added, "They taught me a lot about the operation, but also about life in general."

Pat well remembers his first experience with rotational grazing

while with the Schwarz operation. "I took 200 cow-calf families to Rose, in western Nebraska, to be grazed on summer pasture. On August 1, I got a call from the landowner who said the grass was gone, and 'come get the cattle!' Now you don't just find available grass that late in the summer, so I made a lot of frantic phone calls before I finally found a place for them. That taught me a good lesson, which is that proper management is the true key to success in rotational grazing. It also made me feel that I wasn't crazy about trying it again."

Pat later progressed to becoming feed-mill manager at a 15,000 capacity feed lot at Columbus, Nebraska. There he furthered his knowledge of livestock nutrition and management procedures.

A mutual friend introduced him to Dale Funk, owner of Lumberman's Brick and Supply Company in Omaha. Dale owned farms in Iowa's Harrison and Monona Counties and was looking for someone to manage a cattle operation there. He offered Pat the position.

"I'll admit I wasn't eager to try rotational grazing again, and that was what Dale wanted", Pat said, with a wry grin. "Moving to Iowa and tearing up roots in addition to trying something I found questionable wasn't too appealing. But Dale was pretty persuasive so eventually, with an OK from the family, I accepted."

That was two years ago, and led to the establishment of Dubas-Funk Purebred Charolais. The cattle are owned individually, but



Pat Dubas and Gayland Hall, Soil Conservationist, review an EQIP plan for pasture management.

the herd is combined under one company title. Ear tags identify "whose are whose", and all are maintained on Funk's farms.

Some corn is grown on the farms, but 350 acres of pasture is utilized for the cattle operation. On the Harrison County, Lincoln Township farm where Pat lives, 200 acres of pasture is divided into 12 paddocks. Fencing between

paddocks is 14-gauge electric wire, with four strands of barbed wire around the perimeter. Through assistance of NRCS and the EQIP program, a new well was added in the spring of 1997. 3,000 feet of underground pipe carries water to each paddock.

Of the 140 cows in the herd 20 will calve in the fall. Pat retains

Continued on Page 7



FARMERS & MERCHANTS

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Famous Quotes in Agriculture:

"Farming looks mighty easy when your plow is a pencil and you're a thousand miles from the corn field"

... Dwight D. Eisenhower

"Treat the land well. It was not given to you by your parents. It was loaned to you by your children."

... African Proverb

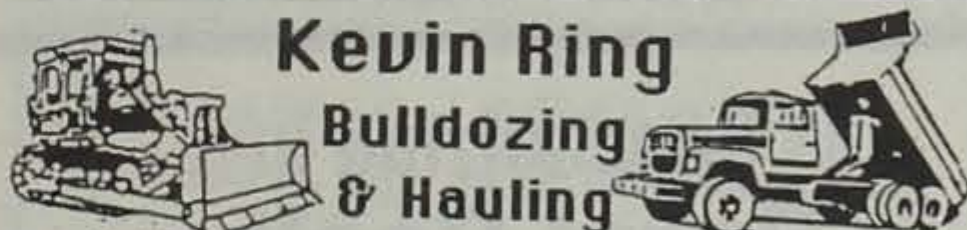
"The land must be conserved with care since it is intended to be fruitful for generation upon generation. You who live in the heartland of America have been entrusted with some of the earth's best land: the soil so rich in minerals, the climate so favorable for producing bountiful crops, with fresh water and unpolluted air available all around you. You are stewards of some of the most important resources God has given to the world. Therefore, conserve the land well, so that your children's children and generations after them will inherit an even richer land than was entrusted to you. But also remember what the heart of your vocation is. While it is true here that farming today provides an economic livelihood for the farmer, still it will always be more than an enterprise of profitmaking. In farming, you cooperate with the Creator in the very sustenance of life on earth."

... Pope John Paul II
Des Moines, Iowa
October 4, 1979

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Shafer utilizes continuous CRP to establish contour buffer strips



John Shafer discusses his farm plan with District Conservationist Russ Kurth.

by Lou Waite, AIS

John Shafer was born on a farm near Logan, and lived there until 1947 when his family moved to a farm northwest of Woodbine. But once he reached adulthood, John had other ideas about how he wanted to make his living.

He spent ten years as an employee of Gate City Steel in Omaha, and the next 27 at the Kellogg Company plant there. But when the family farm became

available for purchase in 1973, John contracted with his mother and father to become owner of a portion of it. He also bought a tract of land in Adams County, north of Lake Icaria. John resides in Underwood with his wife, Donna.

"I watched the price of farm land go way up during the next years," he recalled, a bit ruefully, "and that wasn't good. But then I watched it go way down, so in 1988 I bought another farm." Then John added, with a grin, "I

haven't decided yet whether that was good or not!"

He said that the last farm had been in CRP, but when the contract expired, his new bid was not accepted. "So, I decided to farm it, and protect the soil the best I could," John said, with a shrug. He has since found enjoyment in managing his farms and "working on them once in a while." He also said he was "lucky" to have operators, such as Larry Buss in Harrison County, whom he could "trust completely" to carry out the farm operation.

The farm which had been in CRP had some old terraces, but these had to be repaired or restructured to be of any great

benefit. John used a chemical "burn-down" to remove the old vegetation in the areas which would be farmed, leaving the grass undisturbed where a series of buffer strips were to be located. He decided to use a no-till method of raising corn and soybeans, to further prevent erosion. The extensive system of buffer strips would not only keep the contour lines defined, but also add what John laughingly described as a "double indemnity" erosion control factor.

"Russ (Kurth) was very helpful with the technical side of this," John commented, "to get the strips laid out properly so as to be the most effective." The farm is hilly, with some D slopes, and on these steepest slopes the grassed strips were retained. The waterways are all grassed, and there are some "doodle dams" which have helped prevent the soil from being washed away. Two larger water and sediment control basins more recently installed will be an added deterrent.

John said he will frost-seed red clover and alfalfa into the existing brome in some areas. If successful, he will continue, or otherwise try some other seeding plan. "I don't mind trying something new," he admitted. "You never know what works unless you try!"

John also said he looks forward to spring, when the buffer strips will be greening, in contrast to the areas where crop residue remains. "It should be a striking sight to people passing along the highway or side road," he mused. "It should get some attention. There are going to be an awful lot of those green stripes showing up."

"It should be good for wildlife, too, and I hope there will be enough pheasants attracted to keep

the balance of nature and also keep the insect population down. I enjoy wildlife, and take pleasure in just driving around watching it, but I also like to hunt. I guess that might be hard for some people to understand."

Wife Donna recently retired from longtime employment with AT&T. The Shafers have four children, Jeffrey of Detroit, Kelli (Haynes) of Oakland, Mark of Omaha and Lisa (Zigrang) of Hancock. There are seven grandchildren.

The family attends St. Patrick's Church in Neola, where Donna is past member of the Parish Council. She also spends time carrying out duties as a hospital volunteer. The couple hopes to someday do some more extensive traveling.

Meanwhile, John said with a chuckle that his hobby must be farming. But in a more serious manner, he said, "We have to try to take care of the soil. If we don't, we could lose in just a few years what it took millions of years to create. It is good that we have had an agency like NRCS to help with the planning and costs involved. The staff has been very helpful to me, and I appreciate that."

Russ Kurth, District Conservationist, said "Contour buffer strips are a good option for erosion control in Harrison County. With the continuous CRP program, landusers can seed buffer strips for erosion control and receive CRP rental payments. Until the continuous CRP program, only livestock producers were interested in continuous buffer strips."

Kurth said that he would like to see more producers who have CRP contracts expiring look at entering some of the land back into CRP as contour buffer strips, as did Shafer and several other producers in the county.

"This fall, we laid out several systems which have even-width crop strips and the point rows and odd rows are in the buffer strips. A good contour buffer strip system will also have grassed waterways and field borders," Kurth concluded.

Those wishing more information about the continuous CRP program and buffer strips are asked to inquire at their local NRCS office.

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Young cattle producer . . .

Continued from Page 5

the "top end" of the heifers, which are sent to McCook, Nebraska to be AI'd (artificially inseminated), which Pat feels improves genetics. Those heifers, when they calve, will do so in a 45-day AI period.

"I am looking forward to our first annual production sale, which will take place in March at Dunlap Livestock Auction," he informed. "We will sell 25 young bulls at that time, and hopefully gain some recognition."

Two young bulls will be kept to join the three bulls already with the herd. The "bottom end" of the heifers will also be sold. "We cull closely (critically)" Pat said. "I'm particular about that, and some would probably say too particular. But I feel this is important in maintaining top-line genetic quality."

Pat said he felt he and Scott Pape were among the first in the area to take rotational grazing to a higher level. While Pat jokes that Scott "raises the wrong breed of cattle", he also said that he appreciates "consulting with him and sharing experiences." Pat commented that he has also benefited from attending grazing seminars, such as the one held on December 18 in Logan.

He is working through the EQIP program to utilize a tract upon which the CRP contract had expired. In the spring, he did a controlled burn to invigorate the grasses . . . brome, little blue stem, orchard grass and timothy . . . already existent. Next spring, he will interseed red clover and alfalfa into the thatch, using a no-till drill.

Through the REAP Forestry program, a windbreak was established in 1996 on the farm where the Dubas family lives. Pheasants Forever also contributed some funding for the project that year.

Cost-share funding through EQIP is also being used to remove old timber and fences, put in a well and set up paddocks. It will also be used for interseeding, setting up streambank shoreline protection and nutrient management. The well

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Some of the Dubas/Funk cattle, just prior to being taken to a sale barn. Dubas, in the background is urging them toward the loading chute.

will be centrally located, and water piped to each of the ten paddocks planned to be established during the first two years.

"We certainly appreciate the help we are getting from this program," Pat affirmed. "This will allow us to enlarge our herd and raise more of the heifers. My goal is to sell at least 60 bulls at the annual production sale in the future."

Pat noted that it takes 2 1/2 to 3 acres to sustain each cow-calf pair. "Of course, Charolais are bigger than some breeds, with the cows averaging 1400 pounds", he stated. "When we sell the young bulls in March, they will weigh 1100 to 1200 pounds at approximately 1 year of age. Buyers for the most part are wanting bigger calves, so we are working toward the last of January or early February as a

calving date.

"Gayland (Hall: NRCS Soil Conservationist) has been very helpful with the layout and plans. We also had some personnel from Plymouth and Crawford Counties look at our operation and give us suggestions.

"I have learned from various seminars, pasture walks, talking to other graziers and my own personal experience that you not only learn from the mistakes you make, but also from what you have done right," Pat said seriously.

"Not many people can go to work each day and say they are really happy with what they do. But I love working with cattle and with the farm, and I feel blessed to be able to do those things and enjoy them."

But family comes first, Pat stated, and what spare time he has he enjoys spending with them.

He met his wife, Colette, in Fullerton, when she was a "city kid" and he a "farm boy". He described her as someone who loves to read, and who enjoys her "quiet time, whenever she can find it." Colette is a substitute teacher for various schools districts in the county.

Their daughters are Nicole, 12, Tracy, 8, and Lauren 3. Nicole is a 4-H member, and last year showed the champion feeder heifer and feeder bull (Charolais, of course), and was also recognized as champion junior showman. Tracy is interested in 4-H and will

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1 Tbsp butter
1 lb. hamburger
1/2 cup chopped onion
1 1/2 tsp paprika
1 cup sliced mushrooms, undrained
1 can mushroom soup
1/2 cup sour cream
1 Tbsp parsley
Salt and pepper

Melt butter in skillet. Add meat and onion and brown. Stir in paprika, mushrooms and soup. Simmer 10-15 minutes. Blend in sour cream and seasonings. Do not boil after sour cream is added. Serve over noodles or rice.

become a member in another year. Both enjoy sports and their parents enjoy watching them compete. Pat serves as a softball coach and likes to play golf when time permits.

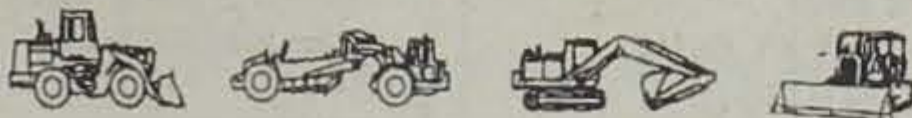
Lauren recently said to Pat, "Daddy, I love you because I go to the cows with you." Obviously, here is another champion showman in the making.

Pat is a member of the Iowa Cattleman's Association and the National, Iowa and Nebraska Charolais Associations, respectively. He is a member of the Knights of Columbus, and both he and Colette belong to the Woodbine Parent-Teacher Organization. The family attends Sacred Heart Church in Woodbine.

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GOOD DEALS...AND A GOOD DEAL MORE

Kenny Leonard wants to leave the land "better than left to him"

by Lou Waite

Kenneth Leonard (everyone calls him Kenny) is a fourth generation farmer and "proud of it!" He rented a farm after graduation from high school, and 40 years ago, he bought it. Still later, he and his wife, Bette, purchased another farm, and own 300 acres altogether. They now reside in Logan.

Sons Mike and Steve farm their parent's land, as well as other tracts they own or lease . . . 1,000 acres in all. Kenny assists with labor whenever possible. "Hard to get out of the habit, you know," he said with a grin. He also helps with his son's 1200 capacity farrow-to-finish hog operation.

Kenny has 30 Black Angus (a few "mixed with Hereford") stock cows, rotationally grazed on 40 acres of pastureland. They are bred to Limousin herd bulls, and the calves are sold. Replacement heifers are purchased from other sources.

On his farms, corn and beans are grown, using a minimum-till residue management system. All the required grassed waterways and field borders are in place.

The farms had some "old-fashioned" terraces built by previous owners, Kenny said. These have been repaired or replaced, and new terraces constructed. Two large structures (dams) have also been installed to control erosion.

"There were some ditches 40 to 60 feet deep," Kenny recalled. "I pushed in a lot of them, but some had to be filled with a bulldozer. Building the dams also helped, and we can farm right across where those ditches once existed. It's even easier with the big equipment used today. But I have always said that if I can leave the land better than it was when left to me, I would be satisfied."

Kenny noted that Cecil Branstetter has always been the contractor he hired, and he expressed appreciation for the work which has been done.

"Of course, he learned all he knows from his father-in-law, Pete Dinsmore," Kenny said with a chuckle. "Pete was one of the



Dennis Perkins and Kenny Leonard are involved in an overview of the Leonard farm operation.

best, and a good friend of mine."

In a more serious manner, Kenny added, "But I'll give Cec credit. He learned his lessons well, and has always been prompt and efficient in what he does."

Going on to express appreciation for the state and federal cost-share he has received throughout, Kenny stated, "The staff at both offices (NRCS & FSA) has been just the best. They have always been great working with me, and NRCS especially in planning or designing something which met my needs. To be honest, I probably couldn't or wouldn't have done as much without the financial aid. And I know a lot of others who feel the same."

Then with a twinkle, he added,

"Guess that's one way they get us to leave the land better than we found it!"

Kenny remembers the 20-plus years he served as a committee member for what was then ASCS. He also pre-measured fields to determine program acres and setaside, and bin capacity for commodity credit loans.

"I guess I could tell some stories about that," he said, with another chuckle, "but on second guess I'd better not!"

When asked if he had any hobbies, Kenny jokingly answered that his only hobby has been farming. On reflection, however, he said he has always enjoyed pitching horseshoes, and has fond memories of those who shared that sport. He also said that he and

Bette enjoy traveling, not only around United States but twice to Europe, and they plan to see more of the world. The couple attends the First Christian Church in Logan.

The Leonard's immediate family (of Logan unless otherwise noted) includes Steven, his wife Sharon and three children; Judy, her husband John Forsen and two children of Herman, NE; Vicki, her husband, Randy Koenig and two children; Anne, her husband Tom Stoner and two children; and Mike, his wife Rhonda and three children. There are 6 great-grandchildren, including a set of twins.

Kenny commented "I feel we've had a good life. Oh, it was tough when we started out, and

there were times when we didn't know if we could make it. But we did, and I've never regretted a thing! I'm glad our kids could grow up on a farm, and they still have farm interests. Steve's son, Matthew (who is 17) wants to be a farmer. And Judy's son Shawn farms near Mondamin. I'm happy to know the tradition will be carried on."

Anyone knowing Kenny would agree where the credit for helping keep the tradition alive and flourishing should go.

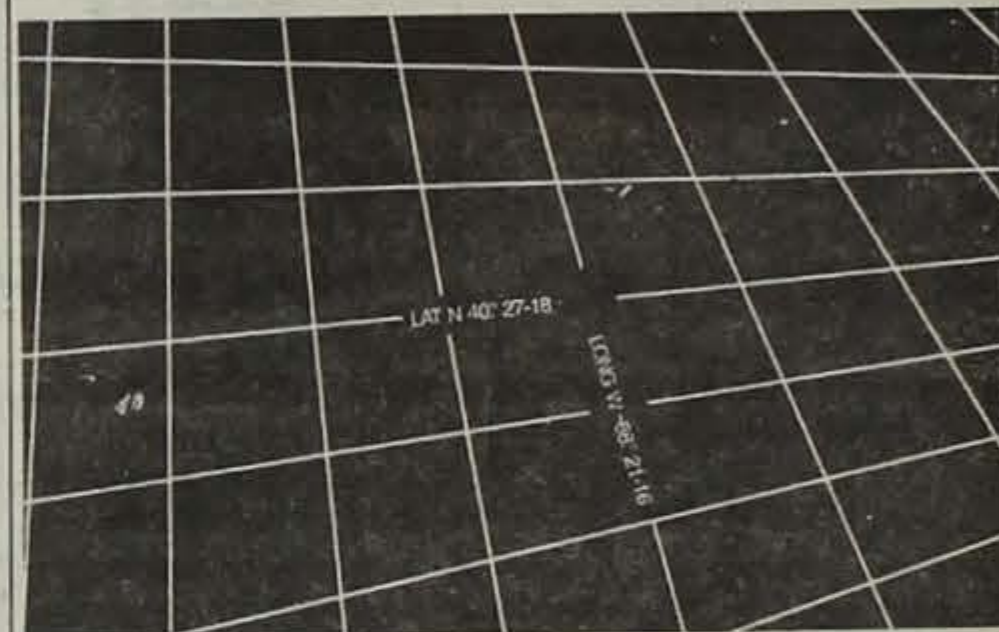
And his descendants for generations to come will agree that he has been true to his goal. He is leaving his part of the world a better place, in more than one way.

See before and after photos of Leonard farm on Page 9

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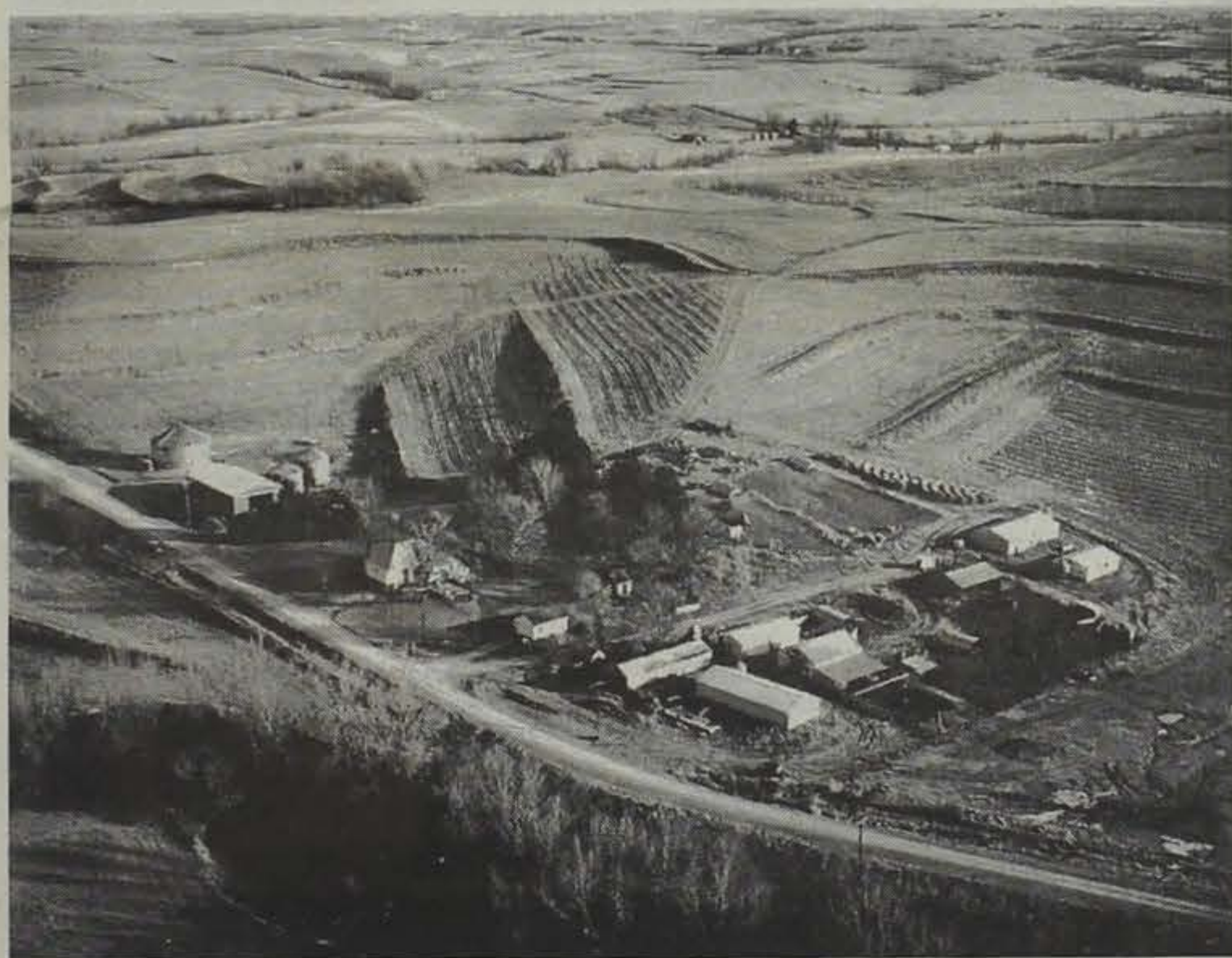
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Leonard farm showing improvement

Continued from Page 8



The Leonard farm as it appeared in 1951. Note the triangular area in the background of the scene.



The Leonard farm in 1991, taken from a slightly different angle, shows the conservation practices which have been applied in forty years. For example, compare the triangular area shown in the 1951 photo. More buildings have been added and more work done since this photo was taken.

Newsletter wins award

Notice was received on January 5 that the Quad-District Conservation Newsletter was North Central Regional Runner-Up in the National Association of Conservation Districts newsletter contest. The contest is sponsored by NACD and the Equipment Manufacturers Institute.

Awarded will be a check for \$50 and a plaque, to be received around the first of February.

"Excellent" ratings were received for attractiveness, graphic quality, body copy, headlines, composition, regularity and circulation.

"Outstanding" scores were for variety and relativity of subject matter. Judges comments included "This is an excellent cooperative venture and is very nicely done."

Loess Hills Grazing Attraction

The second annual Loess Hills Grazing Attraction will be held Wednesday, February 4, at St. Patrick's Parish Center in Dunlap. The Center is located at 312 South 3rd Street, immediately adjacent to Highway 30.

Registration will be held from 9:00 to 9:30 a.m. Registration fee for those who have not pre-registered (see below) will be \$15 at the door.

NRCS and ISU Extension personnel, coordinators of the event have stated, "The goal of this conference is to provide a research-based foundation for planning, starting and using a rotational grazing system for pasture and livestock management."

Among the displays will be those of Jerry Rosman, Animal Nutrition Consultant; Ted and Donna Bauer of Audubon Graziers; Cogdill Farm Supply; Doug Hirt, Cow Herd Improvement Program; Schmidt Fencing; Kentucky Graziers; Premier Fencing Systems and others. Representatives of these will be introduced following the welcome.

Dr. Steve Barnhart, ISU Extension Specialist will present a *Forage ID Review. Motivations*

for Intensive Grazing will be given by Tony Harvey, ISU Extension Northeast Area Livestock Specialist. *Dividing Pastures into Paddocks* will be the topic of Dr. Dan Morrical, Livestock Specialist of ISU.

After an 11:00 break, the *Case Farm Study* will be presented, followed by reports from groups on case farms.

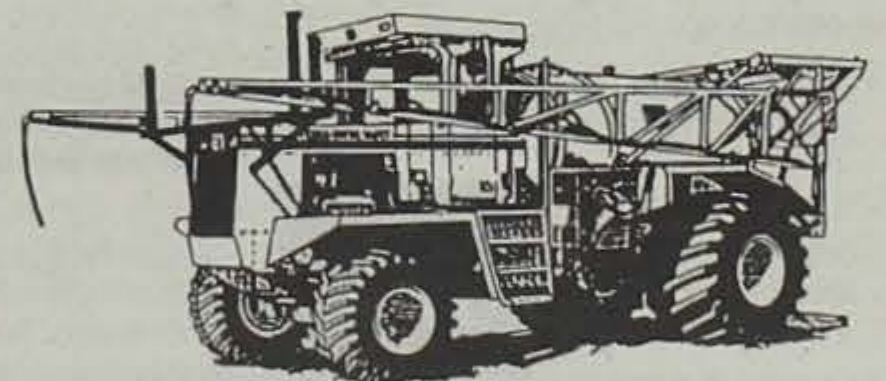
Lunch at noon will be catered by Staley Food Service, Charter Oak.

At 1:00 p.m., Tom Gould, NRCS Grassland Conservationist, will give details of *Fencing System Improvement through EQIP*. Dr. Barnhart will follow with a session on *Pasture Management*.

Following an evaluation period, participants will be given the opportunity to view the displays and/or speak with the presenters.

Those who register by January 23, 1998, will pay a \$10 registration fee. This includes lunch and refreshments, handouts, etc. Checks should be made payable to "Extension Trust Fund" and sent to the Harrison County Extension Service, 304 East 7th St., Logan, IA 51546

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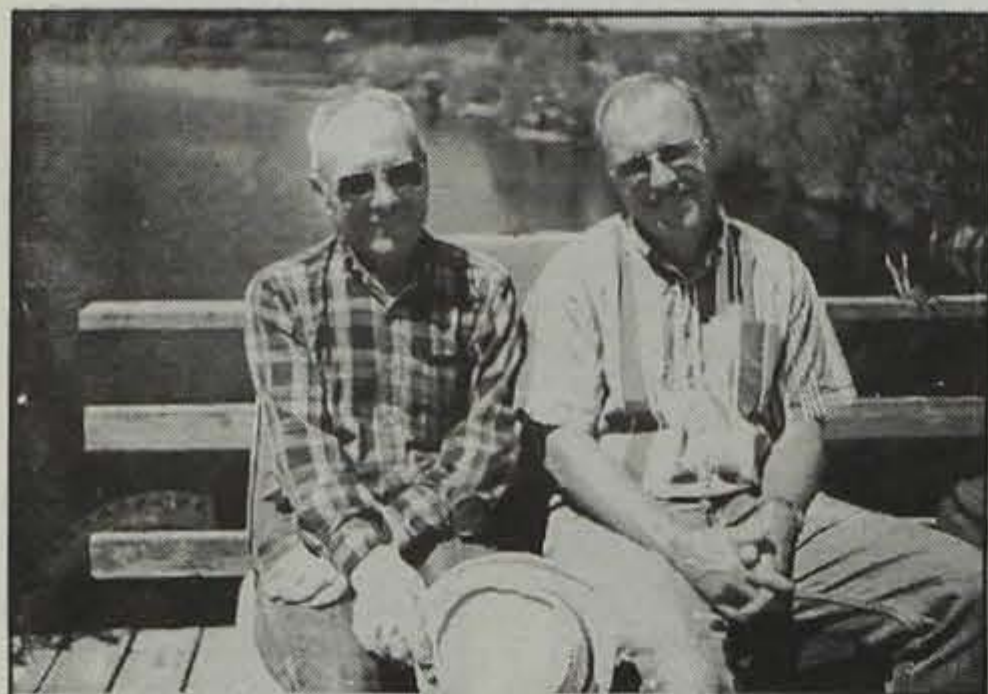
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James Henry takes pride in what he does; others in knowing him



James Henry and Greg Mathis, seated on a fishing dock at one of James' ponds, seem to be enjoying an inside joke.

Lou Waite photo

by Michelle Zimmerman

Seventy-nine years ago the mold was broken when James Henry entered into the world. And Grove Township has not been the same since!

"James has been a driving force in conservation", stated Terry McClain. "For example, James has 'taught' numerous neighbors how to build terraces. James has also devised practical solutions to technical problems for cooperators and Natural Resources Conservation

employees."

Other traits Terry mentioned James has is sharing ideas, enjoyment and knowledge of nature with others. James loves to fish and has a strong appreciation for wildlife and conservation.

Paul Pilling is a neighbor to James. Paul and his brother moved in with James and his family when Paul was six years old. They were raised together as siblings . . . worked side by side on the farm; played football, baseball and basketball and cohorted villainous advantages



One of the ponds on the James Henry farm.

Lou Waite photo

together. Paul stated that he has lots of respect for James. He also mentioned James as being a hard worker, NOT afraid of change(s) and also that the world needs more people like his sibling. James, . . . "leave the land in better shape than you found it!"

James built his first pond in 1942. The pond was built because his dad wanted to walk out his back door to go fishing. His family has always had a great desire to create wildlife habitats for the sheer pleasure of doing so. In 1989, a pond consisting of four acres of water was constructed.

"This pond was built as a neighborhood project", James explained. "Today, there is a lack of neighborhood interaction."

James said without the assistance of his neighbors, the pond would not have been built in one year. His colleagues were Lawrence Frain with loader; Hollis Frain with scraper; Paul Pilling with scraper; Whitie

McClain with dozer and James Henry with scraper. Other operators included Rich Henry, Larry Pilling, Glen Forward, Kennal Petersen, Bob Petersen and Bob Husz. These neighborhood project members all used John Deere tractors with duals.

The first pond has led to building five other ponds and a waterfall in the last fifty-six years on James' home farm.

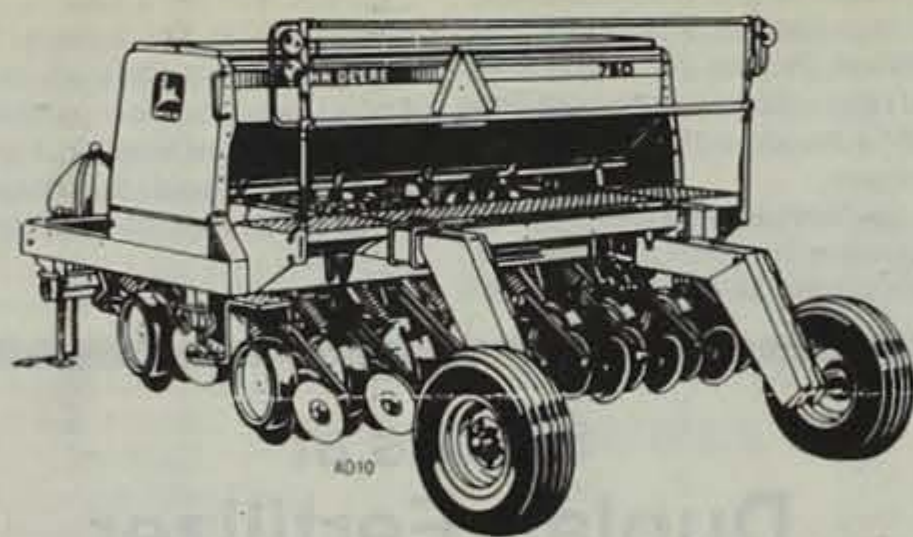
Besides building ponds, James built the second terraces in Grove Township. And as of today, James continues to fine-tune his terrace system. He has constructed all of the terraces on his Grove Township farm. Over the years, this has come to a total of seventeen and one-half miles.

James takes great pride in showing others what can be accomplished with just "normal" farm equipment. Besides not only practicing what he preaches, James served four years on the East Pottawattamie Soil and

Water Conservation District board. He utilized his knowledge and shared it with others in the county as a commissioner.

James married Annie Petersen in 1939, and they started farming in 1940. Their only child, Rich, entered into the world in 1946. The Henry's are blessed with two grandchildren, Angie and Robbie.

As you can see, James Henry is a unique individual . . . the mold was definitely broken! I am glad to have had the opportunity to work with James on several projects. I wish there were more people like him in the world . . . saving the soil, creating wildlife habitat and enjoying life!



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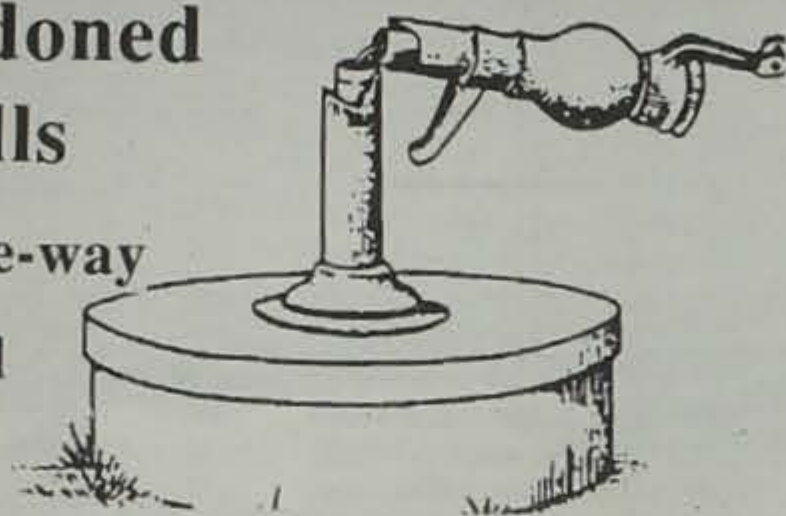
GOOD DEALS...AND A GOOD DEAL MORE



An aerial view of the James Henry ponding system

Abandoned wells

a three-way hazard



According to Michelle Zimmerman, County Resource Planner, abandoned wells are not only a danger to the environment, but to people and animals as well. Michelle is also the designated agent for well closures in East Pottawattamie County.

"Water quality is affected," she said. "For example, ag chemicals and sediment are deposited into the wells. In addition, people and animals fall into old wells through openings hidden by weeds or debris, causing injury or sometimes even death."

"Everyone remembers the little Texas girl who fell into an old well shaft some years ago. It was due to heroic effort that she was saved, but others have not been as fortunate."

Animals are also endangered, Michelle pointed out, as many farmers who have lost farm animals can verify. Wild animals also are caught unaware, fall into the wells and expire. Farmers operating machinery have also found themselves having to dig their equipment out of a caved-in well.

"No one likes to hear of these things happening," Michelle said, "and there are many old, abandoned wells still in existence."

There are, however, less abandoned wells today when compared to 10 or 15 years ago. During the months of November and December last year, 40 well "closures" were carried out in Michelle's county.

"The Pottawattamie County Planning and Development paid \$200 for each well closed," Michelle said, "and our SWCD Commissioners paid the rest by utilizing Local Option Sales Tax (LOST) funds. After we publicized the program, most of the farmers

Managing resources on your farm

by Bernie Bolton
East Pott commissioner

Farms are diversified and differ tremendously throughout the state of Iowa. They differ in soil types, erosion potential and suitability for one's own personal needs.

As a farmer and conservationist, one must ask a few questions of themselves. What crops do I wish to grow? Are these crops economically and environmentally feasible? What are the capabilities of this farm to produce commodities? Do I want livestock included in my farming operation? Am I interested in protecting wildlife on my farm? These are just a few questions you might want to ask yourself.

As I travel through the state of Iowa, I see an array of conservation practices implemented on farms. Grassed waterways, bufferstrips (both along the creeks and the side hills), contour farming, field borders, water control sediment basins, and in our district, terraces. Many of us think of these practices first, but there are examples of practices which are of equal importance and should not be overlooked.

Throughout our district there are cooperators wanting to work with CRP, EWP, crop rotations, no-till, strip cropping, residue management, pest management, nutrient management and manure management. We also have individuals working with woodlands, grazing systems, pasture and hayland plantings and other ways to improve their livestock operation.

In addition to cooperators working with crops and livestock,

came to us for help in closing wells on their land."

The landowner is asked the depth and diameter of the old well, and the identity of the person who will close it. This must be a registered well-driller, or the farmer with a designated agent, such as Michelle, supervising.

"First we pour a layer of sand into the well," she said, "then add a layer of bentonite. Bentonite is a clay which, when wet, expands and hardens, effectively 'plugging' or sealing the well shaft. Another layer of sand is added, and another layer of bentonite. Then the top four feet of the well casing is dug out and the cavity filled with dirt. The well is then officially closed."

Michelle has personally participated in a majority of the well closings, and is available to assist with others. To make an appointment, or for more information, call 712-482-6408 and ask for her.

"I'll be happy to help," she said. "I feel this is something which really needs to be done. It has been neglected perhaps too long."

Posters wanted

by Michelle Zimmerman

Do you like nature or conservation? Are you in Kindergarten through the 12th grade? If so, why not share your creativity with the Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners? Enter the Poster Contest!

The theme this year is *Wonders of Wildlife*, emphasizing the relationship between wildlife habitat and proper land

management. This is especially true of land managed for urban and suburban home sites, farms and private production lands.

Grinnell Mutual Reinsurance Company and the Auxiliary of the Conservation Districts of Iowa are co-sponsors of the poster contest.

Open to all students in Iowa in grades K through 12, the contest has the following grade level divisions:

- 1) K - 1
- 2) 2 - 3
- 3) 4 - 6
- 4) 7 - 9
- 5) 10 - 12

Posters should reflect the contest theme. Posters should be made on regular poster paper with the size being no smaller than 14 by 22 inches and no larger than 24 by 16 inches. Any medium may be used -- paint, magic marker, pencil, ink, cut and paste, crayon charcoal, or whatever inspires the artist.

Judging of each poster will be based on the conservation message contained (50%); visual effectiveness (25%); and universal appeal (25%).

For more information, to obtain an entry form or to submit your poster, contact your local Soil and Water Conservation District office.

Posters are due by Friday, February 27, 1998.

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Griswold Farms, Inc. no "sloppy operation"

by Lou Waite

Barney Buttner of Omaha grew up on a farm on the east coast and in 1950 he came to Nebraska. For the next 25 or 30 years, he would come to Iowa each year during the pheasant hunting season.

"I used to admire the good farms in Iowa, and you can easily tell a good farmer from a sloppy farmer," Barney said. "But at that time, I never dreamed I would own one some day."

"Some day", however, came for Barney about 10 years ago, when he purchased a farm in Wright Township of East Pottawattamie county near Griswold. "I'll admit I bought the place as an investment," Barney said, then added with a chuckle, "and I've been investing in it ever since."

Some of the further investment was for improvement purposes, both esthetic and practical. Old buildings on the farm were removed and the remaining house and grain storage facilities repaired and remodeled. The house is utilized as non-farm rental.

Formerly used for a cattle operation, the land has since Barney's ownership been chemically treated to restore the soil fertility and make it more productive.

Drainage tile was installed in a 48-acre tract, and a terracing program was initiated. "It'll take years to complete the terracing," Barney said, "but we plan to continue until it is finished."

The plural "we" was used because, although Barney says he visits Griswold Farm "eight to ten times a year", he has tenants who operate the farm and a consultant farm manager.

"I have an excellent combo taking care of things," Barney said. "I don't have to worry, for I have every confidence in them and their abilities."

Not having to worry means that Barney and his wife, Phyllis (a retired mechanical contractor) can

continue enjoying winters in Hawaii, and fishing trips to Mexico, as well as other well-earned leisure pursuits.

Their children are Kristine of Kansas City, Richard (a physician) of Omaha; Stephen (a teacher in the United Arab Republic); Philip (real estate agency owner) in Omaha, and John, also of Omaha.

Terry Whiley is operator of the farm, with his father Larry also sharing labor and equipment. Of the 565 total acres, 465.9 are row crop and 36.8 permanent pasture.

Corn and soybeans are rotated, with a no-till residue management system incorporated on the hill ground, and some of the non-highly-erodible land tilled. Bottom land, which was formerly in pasture, has since been "sodbusted", and is now being farmed.

Wooly Cup Grass has been one deterrent with the no-till, it was noted, but using Roundup Ready soybeans has helped that. On one test plot, Lightning, an Am Cy product, was used, while on another smaller test plot, they tried Liberty Link herbicide. Another plot was planted with Poast resistant corn.

There are certified wetlands along Walnut Creek, which bisects the farm. Riparian grass strips have been planted along the stream, and all the grassed field borders are in place.

Kelly Summy, owner of Midwest Ag Services, Inc. in Council Bluffs and manager of Griswold Farms, Inc., said that while no-tilling helps with the erosion problem, in this case it was not the total solution.

"Gullies were a big concern," Kelly said, "and we just couldn't keep the grassed waterways from being eroded. We kept redoing them and repairing them, but nothing helped. When we consulted the NRCS office about help with waterway repair, they suggested we build terraces, which would more efficiently alleviate the problem. The landowner agreed."



A tranquil winter scene on Griswold Farms, with snow lining the terraces in the background, and highlighting the no-till residue in the foreground.

"There were some old broadbase terraces on the farm, but they were inadequate. Last year 7500 feet of terraces were constructed, but unfortunately that is just the tip of the iceberg, so to speak. It is estimated that 5 miles of terraces will be needed to complete the program. The good thing about it is that the landowners (including Steve Starman, a stockholder) are willing to do whatever is necessary to take care of the problems. Even with cost share assistance, which we certainly appreciate, it gets expensive."

Kelly is manager of 50 farms . . . a total of 16,000 acres . . . in western Iowa and some located in Missouri. His wife, Inez, works with him in their business. Kelly is also a real estate broker, licensed in Iowa and Missouri, and a certified general real property appraiser. He is a board member and past officer of the Middy Optimists Club, and enjoys coaching youth sports and participating in family activities.

He and Inez are parents of Tara, 15; Amanda, 12; and Evan 9. The family attends Salem Methodist Church in Council Bluffs and is

active in church affairs. Inez teaches Sunday School, and has held administrative positions on the church board, as has Kelly.

"As a farm manager, I certainly want to recognize landowners such as Barney. He, like the others with whom I work, is very receptive to ways of improving the land. After all, only by sharing conservation concerns, and cooperating in the effort to alleviate them, can we preserve and protect our natural resources."

As Barney Buttner expressed it, "We have to look at the bottom line in any business. But I personally take pleasure in driving through the countryside and seeing the farms that are being well cared for. As I said, you can easily see the difference between a sloppy farm and a good one."

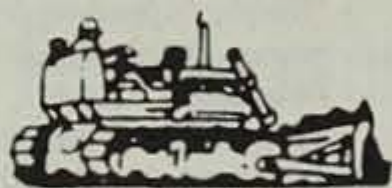
Greg Mathis, East Pottawattamie District Conservationist, would undoubtedly declare Griswold Farms, Inc. one of the good ones.

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Bernie Bolton: 18-year "veteran" commissioner

by Michelle Zimmerman

Why would anyone be interested in becoming a soil and water district commissioner? Why not ask eighteen-year-veteran Bernie Bolton about the challenges and rewards of being a commissioner?

Here is how the legacy started. Bob Bingham, commissioner at the time, asked Bernie to sit on the board as an assistant commissioner. Cliff Stille and Ervin Roos, commissioners at the time, also assisted in molding Bernie for the future chairmanship, which he held for twelve years. In addition to serving as past-chairman, Bernie also is Regional Director for Region 5. Some of his duties included serving as liaison between the county districts and the state organization of Conservation Districts of Iowa for the last nine years. He has filled the office of secretary for the Conservation Districts of Iowa for the last six years.

Besides serving as a district commissioner, Bernie has been an active member of various organizations. He serves as delegate for the Pottawattamie County REAP Committee. Other positions he holds or has held in the community include 4-H leader, member of the Extension Council, Pottawattamie County Cattleman's Association, and 4-H County Committee. He has filled positions at the national, state and local levels of the American Shorthorn Association. He has also served in numerous capacities for the Oakland Methodist Church.

I have known the Boltons for twenty years. I grew up with the Boltons in 4-H and they are my second family! This past summer, while fitting (grooming and preparing for show) and showing cattle at the Iowa State Fair, we started reminiscing. It had been quite awhile since I had worn that hat. It was an exuberating time!

Bernie and Norma's family consists of:
1) daughter, Lori; son-in-law Lyle Obrecht and their children Tiffany, Bethany and Chad 2) daughter Kisha, son-in-law Mark Martens and their children, Morgan, Bolton and Kyra. 3) daughter Erica.

Bernie and Norma began farming with his parents thirty-seven years ago. As a cooperator, Bernie implements as conservation practices: contouring, terracing, minimum tillage, no-till, crop rotation, waterway and headland establishment, rotational grazing and strip cropping.

Since his beginnings as a commissioner in 1981, Bernie said he has seen many changes in conservation. These have included a tremendous increase in no-till acres, less conventional tillage, more interest in field borders, windbreaks and ponds, improved contouring, and increased terracing. He claims with pride that East Pottawattamie "still has one of the highest amounts of terrace footage in the state".

As a commissioner, Bernie lobbied with state legislators to promote interest in preventing streambed degradation, and helped initiate various projects in southwest Iowa. As a result, the

Golden Hills RC&D organization was established.

More recent changes Bernie mentioned as having seen as a commissioner are working with the County Board of Supervisors in creating a County Resource Planner position. He also helped administer LOST (Local Option Sales Tax) funds.

He noted that he had witnessed a change in the trend for installing bench terraces to constructing narrowbase terraces.

He said he felt that commissioners and NRCS staff have become more customer-oriented, with different techniques being developed. A problem foreseen with the district is struggling with urban sprawl. He also pointed out the need for education of both city dwellers and rural residents about the effects of wind and water erosion.

As has been evidenced, becoming a soil and water district commissioner obviously has its rewards and challenges. This is not to mention the enormous number of individuals with whom contact is made at the county, state and local levels. But Bernie is one who has met the challenges, and hopefully may reap the rewards he so richly deserves.

I have enjoyed working with Bernie and admire his dedication to promoting soil and water stewardship.



Continuous CRP a mixed blessing

by Russ Brandes
E Pott Commissioner

Do the deer and beaver raise havoc along your streams with your expensive crops of corn or soybeans?

Do cave-ins and holes in your corn rows next to the creek leave you "white knuckled" while combining after dark?

Does the concept of improving wildlife habitat, improving water quality by filtering soil, fertilizer and pesticides, and slowing water runoff appeal to you?

Then the continuous CRP sign-up could be the alternative you have been seeking, from your cash-flow statement to your conservation ethic -- both of which can be passed on to future generations.

Continuous CRP sign-ups can be taken any day of the year, and basically focus on grass filter strips (along creeks, streams and ponds), grass bufferstrips and waterways.

Filter strips and waterways pay annual rental rates based on the type of soil, so better soils pay more dollars. Strips along bodies of water also offer a 20% incentive bonus, plus \$5.00 per acre maintenance fee, and cost-share on seeding. Bufferstrips pay annual rental rates based on the soil type(s), plus \$5.00 per acre maintenance fee.

America has decided to have cleaner water, and is willing to help with this part of your master plan. If you have some interest in this you may call the local NRCS or FSA office. The staff can provide the numbers you need to make a sound financial and environmental decision.



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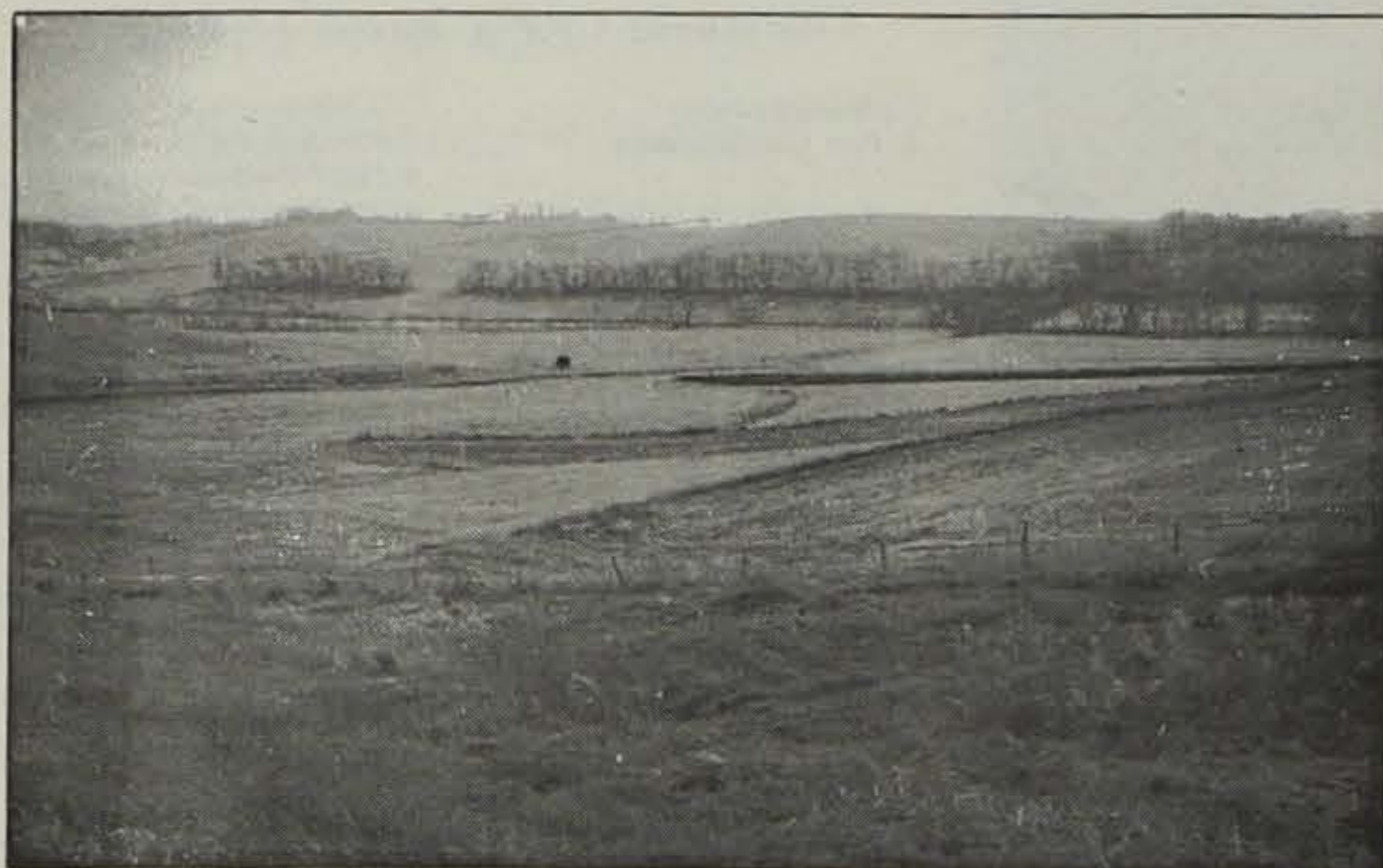
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The ditch, shown along the line of trees in the background, had been widening and deepening each year, and was endangering a county road, Highway 92 and various bridges. This photo was taken prior to the beginning of construction.



In the center background of this scene, taken early in the construction stage, may be seen the "borrow" area. Dirt taken from the hillside was used to fill the gully and build the dam.

Twin Ponies Watershed

by Tom Bottoms
and Lou Waite

Technically labeled Site 17-A, the last structure in the Twin Ponies Watershed project in Pottawattamie and Mills Counties, has taken a great amount of time, effort, planning, cooperation, expertise and, of course, money to complete. But the benefits which will be more and more evident as time goes on, are immeasurable.

Landowners Gary Goodman, Andrew and Frances Gohlinghorst, Chester and Norma Sperry and personnel of the Asmus Land & Cattle Company will come to know those benefits. Sponsors of the project, which include the West Pott Soil Conservation District, the Pott County Board of Supervisors and the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) will come to know the benefits. And most importantly, generations to come will benefit most of all.

It actually all began some 6 or 7 years ago, when some of those same landowners came to what was then the Soil Conservation (now Natural Resources Conservation) Service office in Council Bluffs. They were concerned about a ditch reported to be 60 to 90 feet deep in places, which was encroaching upon their lands, and working its way back to the county road and Highway 92, endangering not only the roadway, but a number of bridges.

The ditch was a tributary of Pony Creek and contained in the Twin Ponies Watershed, so the NRCS staff was concerned. Since it also threatened the county roads, the highways and bridges, the county board of supervisors were concerned, as was the DOT. When these entities decided to co-sponsor the project, relevant to each agency's concerns, the ensuing project was completed without any cost to the landowners within the project area.

Twin Ponies Site 17-A
Watershed drainage area is 1,357 acres, or 2.1 square miles.

According to Larry Hammitt, Civil Engineering Technician and Government Inspector, from the Council Bluffs NRCS engineering office, the actual clearing of the site began on April 17, 1997, and the seeding was completed on November 25. 113,000 cubic yards of earth fill was used. The resulting dam is 1100 feet from end to end, approximately 60 feet tall; width toe to toe (bottom of the dam) is 400 feet and the top width is 14 feet. 200 feet of 36" diameter reinforced concrete pipe was used. The dam has three upstream berms.

Once the dirt was removed from the borrow area, terraces were built there to control erosion. The final phase included fencing, seeding with brome, alfalfa and Birdsfoot trefoil, then mulching with prairie hay to protect the raw dirt over the winter.

Larry's duties were to observe every phase of the construction, making certain that plans and specifications were met. "I helped stake the entire area, along with Bennie Floyd, civil engineering technician, prior to construction, and I have filled three field books and three job diaries with data since then," Larry said.

Some of the data entry had to do with earth compaction tests, concrete testing, etc. "We tested each load of concrete for 'slump' (measurement of amount of water in the concrete), air content (air in concrete to protect it from cracking during freeze-thaw cycles) and temperature," Larry informed. "We also took a minimum of 3 concrete test-cylinders, 6 inches in diameter and 1 foot long, from each concrete placement. These cylinders were stored in a controlled atmosphere for 28 days. At the end of that time, they were compressed to failure, to determine the strength of the concrete in pounds per square inch (PSI). In order to meet NRCS specifications, the cylinder must break at over 4000 PSI. On this project, there was one placement which did not meet this criteria, and had to be replaced.

"The compaction of earthfill is routinely tested as well. In order to meet NRCS specifications, the earthfill must be compacted to a density of 95% of maximum density and the moisture content must be within a range of 1% below optimum to 3% above optimum."

Larry commented that now the project is completed, degradation of the ditch will stop, the bridges and roads will not be endangered, and the structure will aid with flood control.

"The site has the capacity to store 50 years of sediment," Larry pointed out, "which equates to 2 inches off the entire drainage area. In 35 to 50 years, it will be silted in, then it can be tilled and farmed, for the benefit of future generations."

As was said earlier in this feature, that's what it's all about in the long run.

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Larry Hammitt, civil engineering technician, is shown using a Lietz set 4 total station. It is used to electronically measure angle and distance, as well as obtain other statistics. In the photo, the instrument is located over a point which is on the center line of the fill. Hammitt was completing the final checkout of the structure. Note the computerized data collector, shown at the bottom right, which records and stores all information.

Henry Tordoff photo



A close-up view of the tributary of Twin Ponies Creek shows a portion of the gully which at this point was 35 to 40 foot deep.



Further into the construction, this photo shows water collected in the small ponding area, designed with a drawdown to keep it at 8 acres. If allowed to fill completely, the water would cover 27 acres.



In the final phase of construction the borrow area is being landscaped (smoothed) and top-dressed by a bulldozer, scraper and grader. In the foreground is a section of the completed dam, with the ponding area at the left. General contractor was Thompson Construction of Arlington, Nebraska with Mathers Construction of Correctionville as subcontractor.



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Charlie Branham takes well-deserved "retirement"

by Lou Waite, AIS

Charles Branham, who prefers to be addressed as "Charlie", grew up on a farm near Campo, Colorado. "We lived in the southeastern high plains," he explained, "in drought and dust-bowl country." Then, with a chuckle, he added, "I never even saw rain until I was fifteen!"

He received a degree in Agronomy from Panhandle State College in Goodwell, Oklahoma, and ensuing career activities brought him to Iowa in 1969.

As a Soil Scientist, Charlie was a member of a party making the first soil surveys of Grundy County. Later he was involved in doing the same for Butler, Fayette and Franklin counties. He was "party leader" in devising soil survey maps and soils manuscripts for Pottawattamie County.

In 1985, he was assigned to the Area Office in Council Bluffs as a Soil Scientist. He has since served 21 SWCD districts in 20 counties of southwest Iowa.

The "tools" of Charlie's trade have basically been a soil probe, acid bottle and clinometer. The probe, of course, is used to extract a soil core. The application of acid tests whether or not the soil is calcareous (alkaline) and the clinometer determines the steepness of slope, ie a "C" slope has incline of from 5 to 9 percent.

The information gained is used to create the soil maps and the data for the mapping unit. Numbers

represent the soil type and letters indicate the slope. A number following the letter indicates the erosion phase.

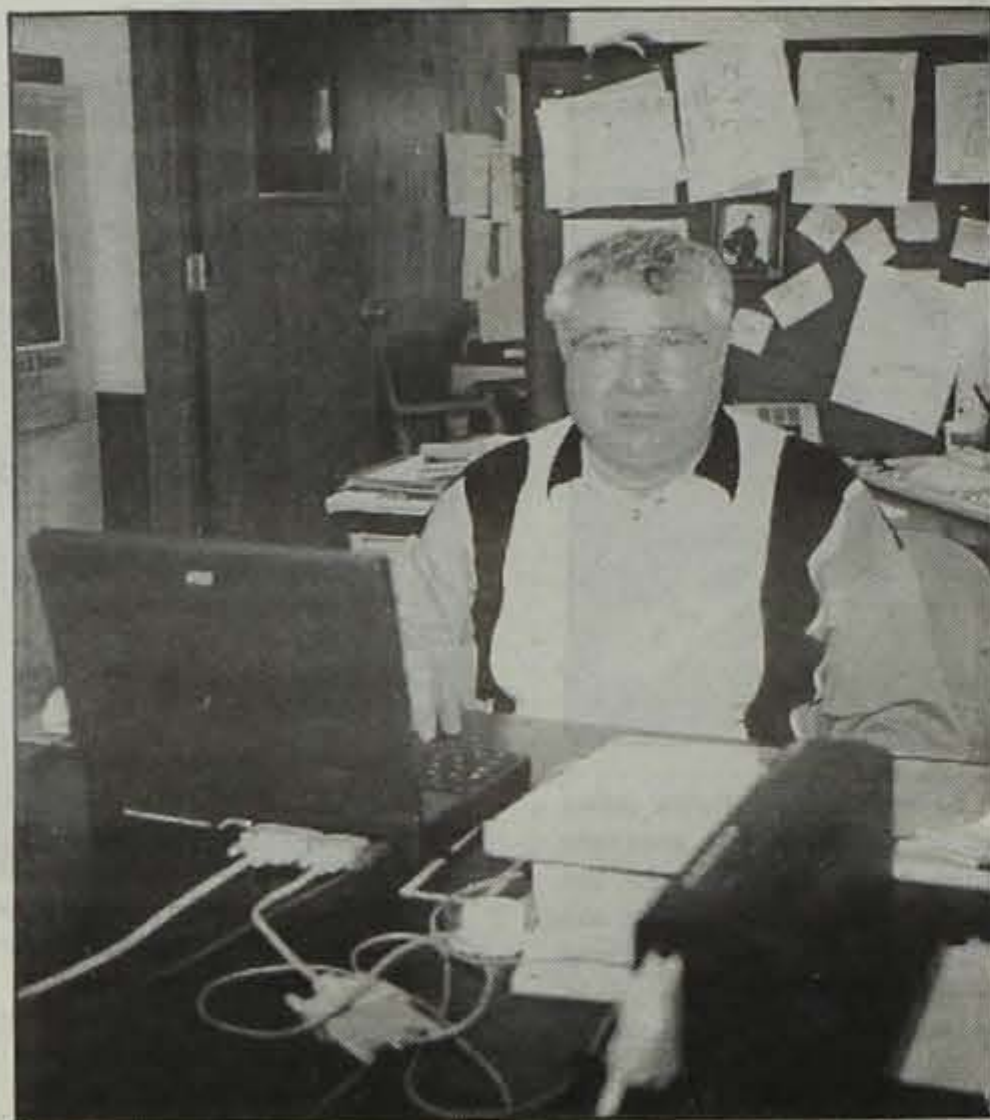
For example, if the soil map reads 10D2, that means it is Monona silt loam, 9 to 14 percent slope, moderately eroded (3 to 7 inches of topsoil remaining). Loess soils, dominant in this area, are basically Ida and Monona silt loam, and very susceptible to erosion.

One can only imagine the time and technology involved with surveying and mapping every county in this manner. It had to have been somewhat tedious and stressful. But Charlie stated that he found it interesting and rewarding.

In the last decade, Charlie noted, there has been an increased impetus on wetland definitions. Farmers who wished to change the drainage system on wetland areas, for example, first needed a determination of whether or not that was possible. "Sometimes they didn't like what I had to tell them," he said, with a shrug of the shoulder, "but I have to follow the guidelines set out by those who make the rules."

The criteria for determining a wetland, Charlie said, is that it contains hydric soil (poorly drained), hydrophytic vegetation and obvious hydrology (saturated on the surface for an extensive length of time).

During the years, there have been significant changes which have impacted his job-relations,



Charlie Branham will no longer have to worry about his laptop computer "crashing" in the midst of a program.

Charlie confirmed. "For one thing, Iowa was once very progressive in soil mapping," he said. "There once were 17 or 18 mapping crews in the state, but now there are only 3 or 4. And where there were 50 soil scientists serving the state, there are today under 20. We used to have a State Soil Scientist, but now we have a liaison from the regional headquarters in Minnesota."

One reason for this is that once the initial surveys were made and the soil mapping completed, activities now have only to do with updating information, or adding to it.

Another change Charlie noted is the advance in use of electronics. Where once everything

was recorded and accessed manually, computers today have the information readily available.

"When I began, just getting all the information together... formulated, calculated and written down... was a tremendous job," Charlie recalled. "Then I would talk one of the office clerks into typing the manuscript for me. Now almost all the information is on software, and the computer does a lot of the work for us. A laptop computer can be carried along, and information entered directly, with no handwriting involved."

The main software program has been ISOIL, an acronym for the Iowa Cooperative Soil Survey Soil Information System, and

ICON. Used greatly in conjunction with the CRP program, ISOIL will provide an interpretation map; identify the soil structure, subsoil, P & K, depth of bedrock, sand and gravel; drainage class, erosion class, etc. Statistics for multi-sections or multi-townships are available, and all this by application of just a few keystrokes. "Once", Charlie said, "we had to find all this out the hard way."

But from the hard way to mastering computer technology, Charlie maintains he has enjoyed his job. "I have worked with some very good people, in all levels of the agency," he said, "and especially enjoyed the associations at the local level. And I want to say the farmers I have served are the best in the world! They are good, honest, hard-working people, and it has been a pleasure to work with them."

Charlie and his wife Sheila were married in 1969 in the "Little Brown Church" in Nashua. They became the parents of two children, Shane and Megan. The family was saddened by the loss of Sheila three years ago.

Shane lives in Council Bluffs, as does Megan (Berry), and Charlie is proud grandfather to Justin Tyler Berry, who is three.

Charlie admits to loving travel, reading, sports (on TV), fishing and boating. While he said his retirement plans aren't definite, a trip through southwestern USA is first on the agenda.

"From there, who knows," he said, with a lift of the eyebrow. "I'm just going to relax and go with the flow."

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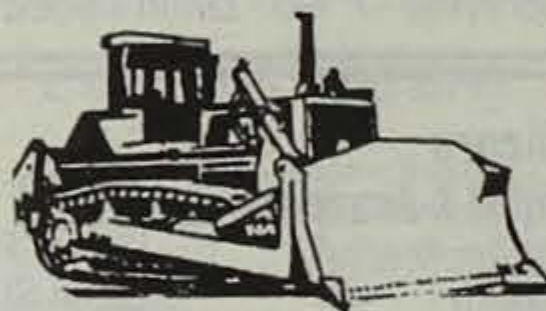
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Letters from our readers



Tracy Bruun's pleasant smile greets those who visit the NRCS office in Council Bluffs

Tracy A Bruun

Tracy A. Bruun recently accepted the position of State Secretary at the West Pottawattamie field office and began her duties there on November 21.

A native of Council Bluffs, Tracy had previously served eight years as Farm Manager with Firststar Bank of that city.

She graduated from Thomas Jefferson High School, received her Associate Ag degree from Iowa Western Community College, and a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from the University of Nebraska/Omaha.

Her husband Tom is an officer of the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT), serving southwest Iowa. They have one son, Derek, and expect a new arrival next May.

Tracy said that having been a farm manager, she is more familiar with conservation procedures than she otherwise would have been. She

added, however, that "trying to keep all these government programs straight" is more of a challenge than anticipated.

"But I have a great and fun group of people with which to work," she added. "That is a tremendous benefit. I will do my best to serve the producers of the district while becoming more familiar with the wider aspect of the job."

For pleasure, Tracy enjoys riding her horse, "Flicka", kept at the farm of her parents, Don and JoAnn Blocker, south of Council Bluffs.

To Lyle Peterson, DC
From Clifford Johnson
West Pott CFO 1942-1976

Dear Lyle,

Thanks for sending me the Quad District Newsletter. I enjoy reading about the happenings of districts in southwest Iowa, especially the West Pott reports.

However, I do feel like I should go back to the Summer Edition about "In the beginning." You did include some key people who had a part in the beginning and progress of West Pott, but several people were excluded who were very important leaders in the early years. They include Harvey Hansen, Fred Hopp, W. C. Strohbehn, Louis Fahrenkrog, Eldon Ravlin and Guy Moss. I also had an active role in organizing the district and served 35 years as secretary.

To start the program, our Extension Supervisor advised the co-agents about the new program, available through USDA. Our Farm Bureau board (Extension Board) appointed a soils committee to take the necessary steps to form a district. This committee included Don Anderson, Ernest Harms and Fred Hopp. They prepared the petitions necessary to get signatures to form the district.

We started in the fall of 1942, but because of bad weather, dirt roads were impassible and also in the spring of 1943. We selected several farmers in the township to help to get -- I believe it required 1,000 names of farmers and landowners. We had forms in banks and farm supply places, etc. and we finally got the job done. The committee then applied for approval through the State Department of Agriculture.

Many of our meetings were

held in commissioners homes where we had "pot luck", and then we would hold the meeting and the wives would visit about their own interests.

By 1947-48 our district had made great progress and we put together brochures, pictures, news stories and completed a large entry form for competition in the awards program offered by Goodyear. Enclosed is a picture and story of that event.

(Editor's note: Here are some quotes from the enclosed clipping. The story which appeared in the Better Farming Methods Magazine in 1949 was written by Johnson):

"Sixty three farmers representing eight midwest states, grand award winners in Goodyear's 1947-48 Soil Conservation Awards Program, enjoyed an unforgettable outing and vacation at Goodyear Farms and the Wigwam Guest Ranch, Litchfield Park, Ariz. early in December. States represented were Iowa, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio and Michigan.

"Upon arrival at Wigwam, all of us were outfitted with levis, cowboy shirts in bright colors, ties and sombreros.

"The huge Goodyear Ranch is operated with 64 tractors and 45 autos and trucks. At the time we were there, they had 8000 cattle on feed. Part of the cattle were raised on the ranch, but most of them were purchased. We also saw large Igloo storage bins that hold three carloads of grain each, and cotton picking done by hand and machine.

"The ranch used to be a desert area. With the aid of big machinery, the desert land has been leveled, irrigation developed

and crops established. There are 12,000 acres under cultivation. Sixty nine deep wells furnish the water from an average depth of 450 feet. It takes about 36 inches of water per acre to produce a crop. The principal crops are cotton, alfalfa, barley and sorghum grains. Others include citrus, beet seed and wheat.

"One of the things I concluded was that it takes a lot of effort, money and desire to farm the desert, as compared to Iowa. Farmers in midwestern states could increase their production, conserve moisture and soil, build up more fertility and establish more beautiful country homes if they could appreciate the value of the property that is at their command. Midwest farmers haven't "scratched the surface" toward getting good land use and much of our effort in the future should be in that direction!"

(The letter continues)

Let me add to the Brome story. Our State Extension Agronomist located some certified Lincoln Brome Grass Seed in a Western state. We took orders and brought in a truckload of brome that was distributed from an old garage in Weston. We bought more the next year and then seed companies made it available and we produced some of our own seed -- by Harms and Anderson. That was the start of a wonderful improvement program for pastures. I thought you might be interested in this information.

By the way, we had to put chains on our cars many times to get through the mud and snow.

Thanks,
C Johnson



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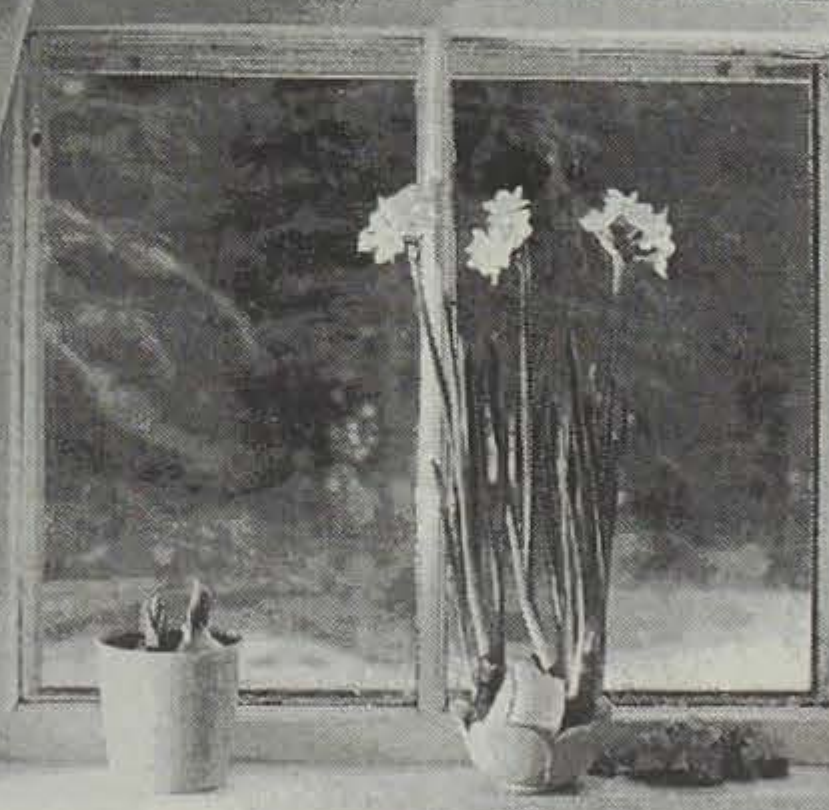
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West Pottawattamie SWCD State cost-share approval policy

ATTENTION; WEST POTT COOPERATORS AND CONTRACTORS NEED TO READ THE NEW COST SHARE APPROVAL POLICY. THIS POLICY IS EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 1998.

Applications may be signed at the district office any time after January 1. Approvals will be made on a monthly basis as needed.

The applications will be approved based on **need and contractor priority.**

The landowner contacts the contractor who notifies NRCS when he is ready to start, so terraces can be staked. The contractor will give the district construction priority 2 to 3 jobs ahead, and will follow these priorities.

Applications will be approved at the end of April for spring construction; by the end of July for summer construction, and by the end of September for fall construction. Summer construction is from June 1 to September 15.

The landowner is notified by letter of the cost share approval. Upon receipt of the letter, the landowner has ten (10) days to contact the district office to accept or decline the cost share.

After the terraces are staked, the landowner/agent is notified of the estimated and eligible cost amount.

The landowner has thirty (30) days after layout to complete the work or the application may be cancelled.

The terraces must be checked

by the contractor and the checkout notes are to be signed by the contractor and landowner, then returned to the district office.

One original copy of the terrace (expenses) bill must be brought to the district office, and a voucher signed by the landowner. Contractors will be encouraged to list additional hourly work on the same bill as the terrace work.

The terraces will be spot checked by NRCS to make certain they meet specifications before being certified for payment.

Terraces which are built over and beyond NRCS specifications will not be cost shared.

Seeding and fertilizing forms which are sent out must be signed and returned after the seeding is completed. Vouchers will not be approved until the signed seeding form is returned.

The Board approves applications and vouchers for payment. Payment is based on 50% of the estimated cost or 50% of the bill, whichever is less.

The vouchers are sent to the State Division of Soil Conservation office in Des Moines, and checks are mailed back to the district office within four to six weeks.

The landowner must sign a 20-year maintenance agreement and receipt of payment before receiving the cost share check.

The following cost share limits apply:

The annual cost share limit is \$2500 per landowner, per year.

The earthwork costs are based on \$.50 per cubic yard.

Yardage is based on a 15-foot frontslope for grassed backslope

terraces. For terraces with intakes and narrowbase and broadbase (conventional) terraces, the yardage is based on NRCS specifications and design.

Cost share on intakes will not exceed amounts of Golden Hills RC&D averages.

There is no cost share on seeding or fertilizer, and none on topsoiling.

Poster winners

Division 2 winner

Erik Pedersen, son of Dan and Sheila Pedersen, was the first-place winner of the Region 5 Soil Conservation Poster Contest, sponsored by the Ladies Auxiliary of the Iowa Association of Soil C Conservation District Commissioners and Grinnell Mutual Reinsurance Company.

Erik, currently a fourth grade student, received a \$35 cash award for the first place entry in division 2 (grades 2 & 3.).

Poster winners were judged on conservation message, visual effectiveness and universal appeal. Regional contest winners were entered in a state contest from which four winners were chosen.

The West Pottawattamie SWCD would like to once again congratulate Erik on a job well done!

Division 4 winner

Alisha Renaud, daughter of Rudy and Shirley Renaud, was the first place winner of the Region 5 Soil Conservation Poster Contest.

An eighth grade student from Lewis Central Middle School, Alisha was awarded a \$35 cash prize for her entry in division 4 (grades 7-9).

Alisha and her parents attended

CRP continuous signup criteria

Continuous signup for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) began September 4, 1996 at local FSA offices, and is available indefinitely. The continuous signup process does NOT have a competitive bidding process.

Its purpose is to provide management flexibility to farmers so that they may implement certain practices on their cropland. Acreage will be automatically accepted into the program, providing the acreage and producers meet certain eligibility requirements.

Eligible land for enrollment includes cropland that has been planted or considered planted to an agricultural commodity in any two of the five crop years 1993 through 1997 that is physically and legally capable of being cropped.

The acreage must also be determined eligible and suitable by the Natural Resources Conservation Service for any of the following practices:

- Contour grass strips
- Filter strips
- Riparian buffers
- Shelter belts
- Field windbreaks
- Grassed waterways
- Shallow water areas for wildlife.

the district commissioner's October meeting to receive recognition for her good work. Julia Gubbels, County Resource Planner, presented Alisha her award-winning poster, a certificate of achievement, a monetary award from the Grinnell Mutual Reinsurance Company and a plaque from the district.

The West Pottawattamie SWCD also extends congratulations once again to Alisha.

The following practices may have a contract for 15 years:

- Field windbreak
- Shelter belt
- Filter strip
- Riparian buffer.

To be an eligible participant, landowners must have owned the acreage or operators must have leased the acreage for one year before offering it for CRP. Any combination of continuously leasing or owning the acreage by the same producer for one year would also make it eligible.

Maximum payment rates are based on site-specific soil productivity and local prevailing cash equivalent rental rates. The following practices can receive an additional 20%: field windbreak, grass waterway, filter strip and riparian buffer. The additional 20% payment is based on the average rental rate determined by the predominant soil types and is calculated before the maintenance cost.

The effective date of the CRP contract is the first day of the month following the month of approval. Producers may defer the effective date for up to six months. The contract shall not be less than 10 years, nor more than 15 years in duration.

Additional information on the CRP program is available from local FSA, NRCS and SWCD offices.

Quick n' easy potato recipes

Microwave Potatoes for two

- 2 medium potatoes
- 6-oz ham or Canadian bacon
- 1 Tbsp chopped onion
- 1 Tbsp flour
- 1/4 tsp pepper
- 1/8 tsp. salt
- 3 Tbsp shredded Cheddar cheese
- 1/2 cup skim milk

Grease a shallow 9x9 microwaveable casserole. Layer 1/3 each of the potatoes, ham and onion. Sprinkle with 1/3 of the flour mixture. Repeat layers and top with cheese. Pour milk over all. Cover with plastic wrap, leaving one corner open. Cook on high power for 12 minutes. Let set 2 minutes before serving.

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Jensen's long awaited project finally a reality

by Lou Waite

Robert and Marian Jensen farm 1200 acres in section 28 and 33 of Neola Township, West Pottawattamie County. They raise corn and soybeans, some alfalfa and oats, and have 40 acres of pasture.

A major part of their operation, however, is the production of 1500 to 2000 head of Shamrock (hybrid cross) hogs and 60 to 70 Black Angus cow-calf pairs. After calving, the cows are placed in a dry lot and feed hauled to them. The calves are retained on pasture until ready for market.

Robert said that in 1990, tentative plans were made to erect a building for their hog operation. "But we discovered that the neighbors objected to that idea," he confided, "so we gave it up. It appeared they weren't as opposed to cattle, so we put the hog building in another location where it would bother the least."

The next goal was to have a waste management/treatment system. Robert, as an SWCD Assistant Commissioner, was aware that cost share was available at that time through the Organic Nutrient Management Program (ONMP). "The problem was," he

said with a chuckle, "we had spent all our money on the hog building, and didn't have our half of the cost share. And, when we did have the money, the state no longer offered that particular program!"

Later at a commissioner's meeting, Bob learned of cost-share assistance available through the Environmental Quality Improvement Program. This time, everything fell into place, and a waste treatment system was completed on the Jensen farm last fall.

To briefly explain the system, a sediment control basin was first constructed to store the solid waste matter (manure). An L-shaped intake pipe is inserted in the concrete floor, with the short end of the L above the ground. As the basin fills with liquid from the waste, holes in the pipe allow seepage, and the liquid drains through an outlet in the toe of the terrace. It flows into a ditch or waterway and is carried away. Once the liquid has been filtered in this manner it is usually potable.

The solid waste is removed and applied to cropland as an organic fertilizer. "Saves a lot of money," Bob stated.

He also saved expense by doing much of the work on the



Marian, who is actively involved in the Jensen livestock operation, views the almost completed waste disposal area which will add efficiency to their management practices.

Henry Tordoff photo

system himself. "We poured the concrete just before the combine went to the field," Bob said. Poles were placed around the intake pipe prior to the cement being poured. Boards were nailed to the posts to form a sturdy barrier and protect the pipe from livestock damage.

The area was seeded with rye, to help prevent wind and water erosion this winter. Bob plans next spring to permanently seed with a mixture of brome and "something else" he hasn't decided upon as yet. He will also install fencing, which weather delayed his doing last fall.

"The terrace lies east and west," Bob noted, "and protects an area which will be ideal for weaning calves. But we won't really realize the benefits of the system until we can fill the area with livestock, and analyze the results. This was a long time happening, and we did a lot of studying before we decided to go ahead with it." With a wry bit of humor he added, "You know, you don't want to get yourself stuck in

a crack and get pinched!"

Bob admitted that there was a lot of "red tape" and paperwork involved in the project. He also noted that although the news media has been publicizing problems the "mega-farms" have been having, rules and regulations are a necessary evil.

"We need the mega-farmers," he said, "but we need more (smaller producers) raising livestock. The packers go where the cattle are found. Some of the laws are going against the mega-farms, but sometimes those laws are used against the small farmer who isn't creating the problem."

While the waste treatment system won't be in full function until later this year, Bob said he is pleased that a long-time wish has been fulfilled. "EQIP is helping the small producer," he affirmed, "and NRCS has been a great help. Lyle Peterson, Lois Crawford and Tom Bottoms all had a part in it. This is something I wanted for a long time, and I finally have it."

The Jensen's are also following an EQIP nutrient management plan, which includes soil testing, planning for cropping needs and nutrient application, and keeping accurate records. In the Jensen's

case, manure management is part of the plan.

Marian is actively involved in the entire operation. She is in full charge of the farrowing, and assists with field work, etc. Their son, Jeffery, an eighth grade student at Underwood, is "chief assistant."

"He planted the soybeans that won a Master Grower's award," Bob said with a chuckle, "and he insisted the plaque we were presented be in his room!"

Cheese Potatoes

2 lb. bag hash browns
2 c grated Cheddar cheese
16-oz carton sour cream
1/2 c chopped onion
2 cans cream of celery soup
1/4 c margarine
1 tsp salt
Pepper to taste
1/4 c butter, melted
2 c Corn Flakes

Mix ingredients except for 1/4 cup of melted butter and Corn Flakes. Spread into a 9x13 pan. Toss Corn Flakes in melted butter and sprinkle on top of potatoes. Bake 1 hour at 350 deg.



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REAPing the benefits

by Chad Graeve
Pott County Naturalist

The citizens of Pottawattamie County are REAPing the benefits of a special program in Iowa. In 1989, the Iowa General Assembly passed the Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) Act, and enacted one of the premier conservation laws in Iowa. As it turns out, the REAP program has proven to be one of the nation's leading programs for conservation of natural resources, and in 1992 the program was awarded the Public Land and Open Space Protection award by the National Environmental Awards Council.

The REAP program is intended to be a long-term integrated effort to renovate and expand public parks and open spaces, preserve historical resources, improve roadside vegetation management, increase soil and water conservation and strengthen environmental education. It was originally intended to be funded at \$30 million per year for ten years, but has been funded at \$9 million for the past several years. This year the REAP Congress will try to convince the General Assembly to increase funding to \$12 million. Additionally, revenue from the Natural Resource license plates is added to the REAP fund to facilitate expanded conservation of natural and cultural resources.

Since 1989, funds in Pottawattamie County have been used at the city level for the ISD Nature Center Trails, the Wabash Trace Trailhead Park, the Avoca Arboretum and Nature Trail and the Walnut Wetland and Open Space. Historical Resource development funds from the REAP program have been utilized for the Dodge House, Shea House, Avoca Museum and microfilming of Council Bluffs newspapers at the public library. Roadside Vegetation funds have been used for outdoor

classrooms and demonstration plantings at several Council Bluffs schools and for a roadside inventory throughout the county. The Soil and Water Conservation District has also received over \$248,000 for various soil and water conservation projects.

The Pottawattamie County Conservation Board has utilized \$242,596 in REAP funds since 1989 for various park improvement and development projects and for environmental education. Additionally, the Conservation Board has received funds through the competitive grants program for land acquisition at the Hitchcock Nature Area. In 1991, the PCCB acquired the Hitchcock Nature Area through assistance from the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation and a \$322,000 REAP grant. Since then, the Conservation Board has been awarded \$225,300 for four additions to the park. The most recent acquisition, 74.5 acres on the southern end of the park, is a valuable addition to this Loess Hills preserve. It increases the amount of native remnant prairies and oak woodlands and helps conserve the rare plants and animals which thrive in the Loess hills communities. Without the generosity of the previous landowners and the aid of the REAP program, these types of additions would not be possible.

Anyone who wishes to express support for Iowa's Unique conservation program is encouraged to contact state legislators and share their views. Also, on March 5, 1998, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources will host the bi-annual Regional REAP Assembly in Oakland. This meeting will serve as a forum to gather information and public reaction to various projects and will provide an update on projects related to REAP in this region.

No-till is the answer

by Darrell Stamp
E. Pott, Chairman

Southwest Iowa has had an extremely nice fall and this leads to cooperators doing recreational tillage. This is a major concern of mine!

Why not consider no-till in your conservation plan? No-till is defined as soil left undisturbed from harvest to planting except for nutrient injection. I feel there are more opportunities NOW for no-till than ever before!

I have no-tilled corn and soybeans since 1980. Some advantages I see to no-tilling are saving Iowa's rich, valuable topsoil, less trips over the fields, less compaction from equipment, lower input costs on machinery and less time spent. Nor does my equipment bounce across the fields with no-till as it did with conventional tillage. I don't see nearly as much erosion as I did when I was doing conventional tilling on my farms, due to managing last year's residue. (I do bale some of the stalks and stubble for bedding). But I believe it is important to leave the majority of the residue --- this stops the impact of the raindrops pounding the bare soil.

Seed and chemical companies are making strides in developing new products to help cooperators adapt to no-till in their farming operation. They have invented BT corn, Poast tolerate corn, Roundup Ready corn and Roundup Ready soybeans. With the increased weed pressures associated with no-till, companies have developed chemicals to suppress weed populations and control new weed problems. (This does include Woolly Cupgrass). Implement companies have also adjusted to no-

Water quality workshop held

by Julia Gubbels
County Resource Planner

How many of you are concerned with the quality of water? Water quality plays an important role in the health, abundance and diversity

Scholarship available for high school seniors pursuing ag related degree

High school seniors who plan to pursue an ag-related field of study need to know that scholarship help is available. Scholarships are co-sponsored by the Conservation Districts of Iowa and Auxiliary. High school counselors may be contacted to obtain a scholarship application form and criteria sheet.

The point basis of the scholarship is as follows:

- Need - 45 points
- Leadership - 30 points (including service, character and self-motivation, 10 points each)
- Scholastic achievement - 25 points.

It is requested that application information be typewritten. It must be returned to the local SWCD offices no later than March 1, 1998.

Further information may also be obtained from any of the local offices.

till farming with narrow-row planters and drills.

How much easier would it be if everyone would develop the right attitude toward farming -- toward soil and water conservation -- toward no-till today! Many are seeing the advantages of adapting to no-till.

of life. Water equals survival! We have the same amount of water as we did millions of years ago, and through the water cycle, we continually re-use the same water. Diverse use and increased demand for water has put enormous stress on our water supply.

The water quality of streams, lakes, rivers and oceans has declined, due to pollution (point and nonpoint). The need to keep water "clean but not necessarily pure" prompts us to protect and preserve our natural resources. This is why we need to monitor our water.

Iowa is in the beginning stages of setting up a volunteer water monitoring program. The volunteers would gather, analyze, observe and educate the public and other agencies about the data. The data obtained would establish a baseline for the primary problems and long-term trends in the water sources.

County Resource Planner Michelle Zimmerman and I attended a workshop on volunteer water monitoring, held in Boone.

If anyone is interested in becoming a volunteer or who knows of a group interested in monitoring a pond, stream, lake or river, please call Michelle at 482-6408 or Julia at 328-2489.



Quiz Quorner

- Q. What are the five great lakes?
A. Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie & Superior
- Q. What is the term used to describe the area drained by a river and its tributaries?
A. Watershed

Quad-District Quarterly Conservation Newsletter

715 N 2nd Ave
Logan, IA 51546
Lou Waite, Editor
712-644-2210
FAX 712-644-3247
Published four times yearly
USPS No. 170



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