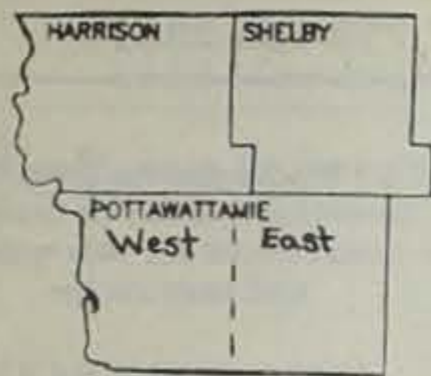




Winter
Volume 1

Quad-District Conservation Newsletter



1996-97
Issue 4

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Upper Mosquito Creek Watershed in need of further funding to control ongoing streambank erosion

by Lou Waite
NRCS/AIS

Michael T. (Mick) Leinen, Robert (Bob) Grote and Jack (Buzz) Wendt have served on the board of the Upper Mosquito Watershed in Shelby County for many years. They have been friends for just as long. They have shared many concerns as friends, but as watershed committee members, they have one major concern which unites them: the ongoing need for more watershed treatment and funding.

"I think the people who control the funding of these things have finally realized what we out here have known for a long time," Wendt said. "Watersheds protect much more than the farmland, but also bridges, roadways and the like."

Grote chimed in to state that continuing erosion has almost "taken out the only railroad line through the county". The track is sinking, he said, and the railroad company is forced to spend more and more money for repairs to keep in operation. "It's a terrible cost," Grote emphasized, "and just a band-aid. It's just like where rip rap was put in the creek to try to control bank erosion. It caused the creek to change course and cave off the land of the farmer on the other side."

Leinen commented that more structures like the one installed between Panama and Earling are needed. "That has worked really well," he said, "controlling the stream and protecting five bridges which exist in less than a mile. This should prove to anyone that such treatment does work. I really don't understand why the

legislature cannot see that!"

Mosquito Creek originates in lower Crawford County, flows south through Shelby, Harrison and Pottawattamie Counties, emptying into the Missouri River just south of Lake Manawa. At the turn of the century, it was a slow-flowing, winding stream and much of the land along it was marshland. In 1915, the creek was dredged and straightened. This

turned it into a fast flowing stream with a lot of fall. From Panama to Persia, the fall is as much as 7-8-9 to 1, the most of any stream in Iowa. Grote noted that the elevation is 1198 feet at Portsmouth, while it is only 900 feet at Omaha. "That's a big difference which is really felt when the big rains come. Water flowing that fast and dropping that much does a lot of damage," he confirmed.

In 1957 the Watershed was divided into two portions, upper and lower. Leinen, Grote and Wendt as members of the Upper Watershed board have seen many changes since that time. For example, they can remember when the creek used to be 16 feet wide and 12 feet deep. Now they estimate the width in places to be 100 feet, while the depth is 50 feet or more. The greatest problems are between Panama and Persia and one of these is that the soil, when wet, "just slides into the creek in big chunks".

The watershed board members maintained they were "just trying to stay active, so 'they' (state and federal funding agencies) will know we are here". The three men agreed it is hard to keep the local

interest, because the ones who were concerned 40 years ago are "no longer around", and the younger ones do not realize how much damage has been done throughout the years.

Leinen said, with great conviction, "If we don't get something done, we will lose the bridges, and there will be no money available to replace them." He also pointed out that not only Mosquito Creek needs treatment, but the larger tributaries which flow into it, as well as many laterals. All agreed that if proper treatment had been done 20 years ago, this problem would not be as critical, and some of the smaller laterals would never have existed.

The same is true of Mosquito Creek itself, they affirmed. "That creek used to be gravel bottom," Grote said, "but now it is all mud. Once the creek bottom has eroded down past the gravel layer, the only thing which will stop it is to control it. That's what we are trying to get everyone to realize. It will take money, yes, and that is what we need. But every year nothing is done costs much more, in loss of farmland, bridges, roadways, railways and in the long run, will adversely affect

everyone."

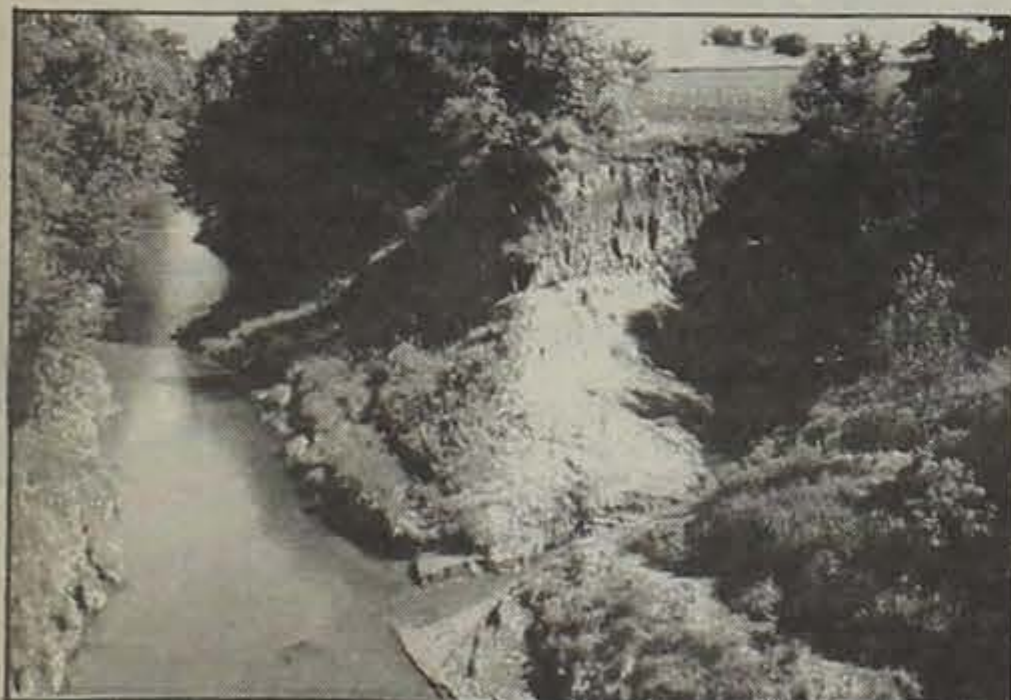
Leinen pointed out another problem, which is the danger to those farming land adjacent to Mosquito Creek. "Several farmers can tell of having two to four or more rows less when they harvest the fields than they had when they planted in the spring," he said. "The erosion causes them to fall into the stream, and if the farmer was not aware of this, it could bring about a serious mishap. This certainly is something to be considered as machinery gets bigger and bigger."

While some construction has been ongoing, applications for PL566 (Small Watershed Program) funding have never been approved. "They said at one time that the benefits would not warrant the cost," Wendt said, with a wry smile. "I guess they had to give some excuse. I know the criteria has changed, and maybe we could apply again and have a better chance, but now they say there is no money. It's funny, but if we did get funded now, it would probably cost ten times as much as it would have years ago. It's hard to understand how they (USDA personnel at federal level)

Continued on page 2



Mosquito Creek is each year coming closer to swallowing up this section of the only railroad line to serve the county. Repairs are expensive for all entities involved, and never ending, as well.



An example of ongoing stream-bank degradation is this area on Mosquito Creek, north of the Highway 44 bridge near Portsmouth.

Mosquito Creek

Continued from front page

think, sometimes."

Next spring will see the 40th anniversary of the formation of Mosquito Creek Watershed. A tour will be held the second week of June, and other events are planned. Mick Leinen, Bob Grote and Buzz Wendt will be involved in the process. They hope the occasion will arouse public awareness, and that articles such as this will do the same.

Some years ago, a representative of Jim Lightfoot's office visited the watershed and stated that it definitely would be funded. Later a group of state and federal conservationists also viewed the sites, and it was felt they agreed funding was merited. That was years ago, but the watershed committee members are still waiting and hoping.

Over the years, the farmers having been doing their part, installing terraces, and small structures, using cost share through NRCS and their own funds. They are using minimum till and no-till, installing grassed waterways and using other means of upland treatment. But as was pointed out in one report submitted to the project judges, "It is too little, and too late to solve the problem."

Leinen, Grote and Wendt wonder why it was decided to cut the funding for PL566. Even in these times when there is so much competition for federal dollars, they wonder why projects which benefit only a small sector of the population receive approval, while ones which would preserve the very earth which sustains mankind are judged to be undeserving.

"Mick" Leinen wonders. While retired after a lifetime of tilling the soil, he still cares about what happens to it. Mick lives near Portsmouth in the house in which he was born, and where he and his late wife brought up their 11 children. One of his sons operates the family farm. Mick is a member of the Farm Bureau, the Community Betterment



Left to right, longtime Mosquito Creek Watershed directors "Buzz" Wendt, "Mick" Leinen and Bob Grote.

Association, the Athletic Association, and is an assistant Commissioner of the Shelby County NRCS. He served 15 years with the former ASCS

Township Committee, part of that time as chairman. He attends St. Mary's Catholic Church in Portsmouth. In the past, he has been a basketball and baseball coach, and still maintains an avid interest in sports. He has 18 grandchildren and "three and three-fourths" great grandchildren.

"Buzz" Wendt also wonders. Still actively farming near Portsmouth, he also raises purebred Limousin cattle, selling the preconditioned calves and breeding bulls. He belongs to the Farm Bureau, is a council member of St. Mary's Church, and enjoys hunting, fishing and camping at Prairie Rose Lake near Harlan. He is retired from an over 30-year tenure with the local volunteer fire department, having served two terms as chief. His wife Elaine is

owner and operator of the *No Sweat Fitness Center* in Harlan.

They have eight children and 20 grandchildren. His friends added that Jack is also an expert "chef", much in demand to volunteer his services for various fundraisers, appreciation days, etc. "He makes the best fried chicken you ever ate," they declared.

Bob Grote is retired from his position as postmaster in Portsmouth. He resides in town, but owns 160 acres of farmland, which is rented to his nephew. He is a member of the Shelby County Area Economics Development Board, a veteran of WWII and member of American Legion Post 547 at Portsmouth, and is a retired volunteer fireman. He attends St. Mary's Church, and is a member of the choir.

Bob said he would like to preserve for the future the same mode of travel he has known. His concern is not only for the land,

but for the bridges, roadways and railroads. "I know we are at a critical stage," he said, "and I don't want to see it worsen. I think of what could happen to a school bus, for instance, crossing a bridge which has had the approach eaten away after a heavy rain. An in addition, Mosquito Creek is dropping the water level in the farm wells. The creek is deeper than the wells, so the water depth is also lower in the wells than it once was. That could change in a dry year, of course."

As for the statement which

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came from Washington D.C. saying that watershed funding should be cut because watersheds are "not friendly to the environment," Buzz Wendt snorted, and made the comment. "That obviously came from someone who doesn't know what the h--- they are talking about!"

The others agreed, unequivocally.

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Schechinger says aid to graziers is long past due



Schechinger's flock of sheep on the move from one grazing area to another.

by Lou Walte
NRCS/AIS

When Tom Schechinger of rural Harlan decided to raise sheep, he said he knew that in order to make a living, he would need to become really good at it.

He had already determined it would require less capital to raise sheep than cattle, for example, but he also knew that the ovine creatures would be more work.

"My goal was to develop an intensive grazing system, so I wanted to rent good ground, not steep hillsides. But I found it difficult, because the landowners all wanted to keep a corn base on the land, rather than to have it grazed."

Meanwhile, Tom was attending sheep symposiums and grazing seminars, as well as consulting other graziers and "university experts." And, once he felt he had enough information he began, as he said, "to put it all together." He utilized several small acreages, such as water treatment facilities, orchards, farm building sites, etc.

He began by stocking 5 "dry" ewes or ewes with single lambs per acre. Then he added or decreased the number as the season progressed and/or as the rainfall amount dictated. He found the carrying capacity of most of the blue grass or brome grass sites was between 4

and 5 head of 140-lb. ewes, or 560 to 700 pounds, respectively, per acre in an average 180-day season.

He followed a similar procedure on his own 35-acre tract. The first few seasons, he fertilized with slow release nitrogen at a rate of 40 lbs. in May, along with 2-4D + Banvil, to help with thistle control. An additional 40 lbs. of N was broadcast during the second week of August. He found, however, very little response to the added nitrogen, or not enough to justify the cost. This may have been caused by prior severe compaction, or low PH, but if so, these conditions have "hopefully" been corrected.

In 1992, Tom tried rotational grazing by dividing his pastures into paddocks of various dimension, defined by the lay of the land and existing fences. "At the end of the season, however," he said, "I found the ewe days per acre disappointing, and similar to the previous two years."

In 1993, he decided to go to intensive grazing where ewes could be rotated every 3 to 5 days, and he rented 45 acres of "good ground" from a neighbor. This land adjoined his own 35 acre tract. He seeded it with a Brilliant seeder, which had 2 sets of cultipacker rollers, and rolled it again to insure good seed-

to-soil contact. His choice of varieties and amounts of seed were as recommended by one of the "experts" he had consulted. That same year, he rented an additional 35 acres of brome pasture, "in the bluffs east of the river" south of Harlan, and expanded his operation to the point he maintains it today.

Tom uses 3 strands of high tensile wire between paddocks, but those holding baby lambs may require 4 to 5 strands. The fences at the outside, however, must be at least 7 strands, in order to try to "keep out the dogs and the coyotes." Tom said that there is help from USDA through an animal damage control program, targeting coyotes which are doing the killing. But the program itself may or may not be continued, according to budget resolutions.

"At this time, they try to trap the coyote," Tom informed, "but they must be certain to trap the exact animal which is causing the problem, or it will return again and the problem continue. I would like to see USDA have someone in each of these ten counties to help with coyote control, instead of just one man to cover all of them. Among other reasons, the traps need to be checked often, so that if an animal is caught, it doesn't have to suffer until someone finds it. I have

talked to USDA personnel about this, and they agree, but must try to get additional funding in order to implement it."

To anyone considering the raising of sheep, Tom recommends they look at the pounds of lambs per acre. "Instead of having big 220 pound ewes with one lamb, they should try a more prolific breed, using 130 pound ewes with a 1.5 or 2 lamb average," he advised. "They also need to look at the pound of ewe per acre ratio. A ewe eats a certain percent of her body weight, therefore to increase the pounds of lamb, you may need to decrease the size of the ewes, then use a larger buck to produce the desired size of lambs."

"For example, if you have a 300-lb buck and a 200-lb ewe, you have a total of 500 pounds, or an average of 250 pounds per parent. If you take that 250 pounds times 70% percent, the result is 175 pounds. This tells you you could take the lamb to 175 pounds before you would lose too much feed conversion. But, packers don't like 175 pound lambs, so they would be docked. Why breed them, then?"

"It is better to have a 250-lb. buck and a 130-lb ewe, which totals 380 pounds, or a 190 average, times 70%, which gives you a 133 lb. lamb. Packers like lambs between 110 and 135 pounds. But you just have to keep



Tom Schechinger

trying different things... different breeds, until you find what works best."

He has found that 50 percent alfalfa in the paddocks provides a cheaper cost per ewe, per day, but sometimes causes problems with bloating. He has determined that blooming alfalfa give less bloat problem, but it is best to "stay away from dewey mornings." Giving them a little corn before turning them out will also help acclimate them to alfalfa, he said, with less chance of bloating. "You can reduce risk of bloat with proper attention and careful management," Tom affirmed.

Sheep will go out early in the
Continued on page 4

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Schechinger

Continued from page 3

morning and eat their fill, then come lie down until evening, when they go back and graze again. Tom, therefore, puts the animals into the paddocks about noon, when they are not hungry. On the most recently established 45 acre tract, he has five 9-acre paddocks, split with electric net fencing. The 30 acres of grass on his own farm adds 3 more paddocks. Grazing is rotated every three days, on an average 39-day cycle. This varies in the spring of the year.

In the fall, the sheep are turned into stalk fields, also on a rotational basis. They are first prepared for this by feeding each one ear of corn and perhaps some hay daily. The animals are moved often, otherwise they would quickly eat the "good stuff" in each field, leaving only "junk". But again, before moving them to a field with more than the normal amount of corn on the ground, they are prepped by giving them extra ears of corn. Sheep will also eat bean pods, so bean fields are utilized in the same manner.

"I have found it best to calculate 2 ewes per acre for 60 days, or 120 ewe days per acre, for corn or bean stubble," Tom said. "It varies, of course, but I start with that. Then I walk the fields, and if I find an ear of corn within the first 15 minutes, I figure the sheep can, too. If not,

I move them. I also check the condition of the sheep periodically. This gives me an indication of when they need to be moved."

Currently, Tom has 750 ewes and 20 rams. The ewes are Polypay, Texas Rambouillet and blackface, along with 150 Romanov/Cheviot and Cheviot ewes. He "feeds out" between 2500 and 5000 lambs per year. Son Shane sees to the feeding of the 40 or 50 lambs which are orphaned each season. These are also sold.

Tom wants to go to a smaller ewe and is in the process of selling his bigger breeds, allowing for the gradual expansion of Cheviot/Romanov-cross ewes. Some of his equipment will also need to be changed in order to accommodate this smaller, cross-bred ewe. These Cheviot/Romanov-cross ewes will be bred to Suffolk, Hampshire and Columbia rams. Once he has the size ewes he desires, he will then run 15 130-lb. ewes and their lambs per acre for 180 days. Cheviots are better foragers, he feels, and he hopes to produce and sell 3, 4 or 5-way cross lambs.

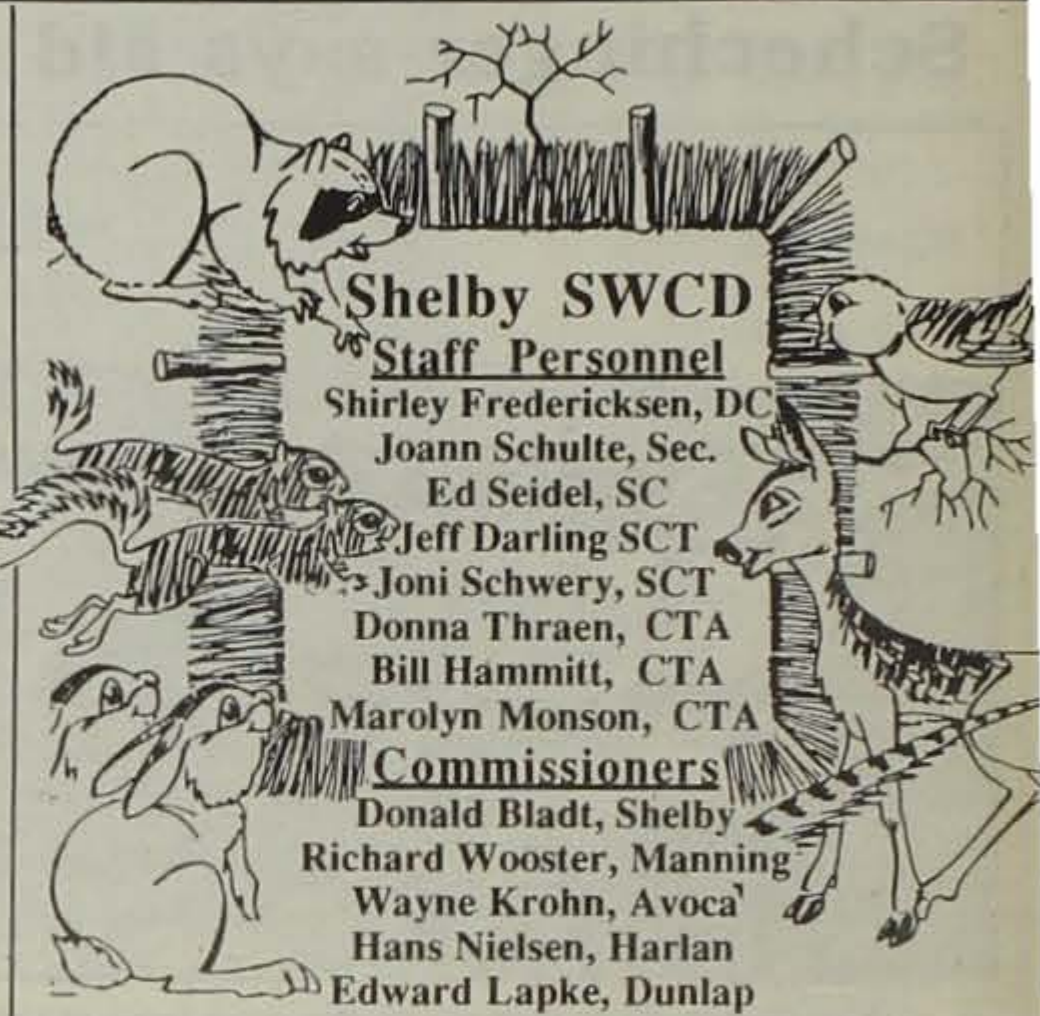
He and wife Kay recently purchased a 176 acre tract east of Harlan, which he will eventually incorporate into his sheep operation. He plans to have 32 paddocks, and move the sheep more often -- "every day or two". This will achieve better parasite control, he said, and should keep the ewes

milking better. He keeps records on computer, but admits this practice could be expanded to contain more pertinent data.

The sheep are sheared annually, but Tom admits he raises the animals for the meat, not for the wool. "If wool grows too fast, the kinks per inch are less, so it is not worth as much," he pointed out. "Breed type and other factors also reduce the value of the wool in the Midwest." Paul Hoffmann of Battle Creek is the shearer, and the wool is sold through auspices of a cooperative wool pool. It is hauled to Spencer or Greenfield.

Kay works with the school lunch program at the Harlan Junior High School, and is a part-time postal employee. Shane, 15, attends high school, and Nicole, 7, is in the first grade. The family is active in community, church and school affairs.

Tom said he has always appreciated his association with the Soil and Water Conservation District, and hopes to someday expand his rotational grazing program with the help of cost-share funds. "I feel this year, pasture ground with good enough fence for sheep will be hard to find in this area," he said, "and the cost-share money for fencing, etc., is not always available. But I must say that I feel it is time the government, if they're going to



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subsidize, should include the graziers, and perhaps prefer them over the corn growers.

"It was once thought that we (the farmer) had to grow more to feed the world. Then they decided that too much was being raised, so they took land out of production with setaside, CRP, etc. But now, they are saying perhaps they were wrong, and supplies are short. So maybe they will go back to fence-row to fence-row corn and beans again! Will there still be money to subsidize grazing then, I wonder? In my opinion, government programs in the past have discouraged Iowa's

grass farmers and the grazing livestock industry here in Iowa.

"I've learned a lot about grazing in the last six years, and if the past is any indicator, I'm going to learn a lot in the next six years as well. But I raise sheep because I enjoy raising sheep," Tom confirmed, with a wry smile and a lift of an eyebrow. "I enjoy working with them, and it's physically safer than raising cattle. It is also something I can do until I am at least 75 or 80!"

Then with another grin, he added, "Especially since there may be no social security by then!"

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East Pottawattamie
SWCD/NRCS

Third dry fire hydrant installed in county



Volunteer fire department members observe the laying of pipe for the third dry fire hydrant installed in East Pottawattamie County recently. The hydrants provide water for firemen to use when large, readily available amounts are needed.

by Greg Mathis

The third dry fire hydrant was installed in East Pottawattamie County on November 11 at the Macedonia Rock Quarry. It was a cool and overcast day, but the twenty-five people from Macedonia and Carson volunteer fire departments made it almost a county fair type atmosphere.

Dick Blackburn provided the backhoe to dig the four foot deep trench from the water's edge. The volunteers connected the eight-foot sections of six-inch PVC pipe to make a 100-foot dry fire hydrant.

Bruce Damgaard directed the placement of the pipe into the trench and thirty

feet out into the pond. Bruce is the dry fire hydrant coordinator for the county. He has worked closely with the East Pottawattamie Soil and Water Conservation District and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. (Bruce managed to get only two people thoroughly soaked from placing the pipe into the trench!) The finishing touch was placing the bright, red hydrant head onto the top of the riser.

This hydrant will provide the communities of Carson and Macedonia access to large volumes of water in the event of an emergency. The other dry fire hydrants were installed this past summer. They are benefiting the communities of Walnut, Hancock, Avoca and Shelby.

The dry fire hydrants were installed with money from the LOST (Local Option Sales Tax) funds.

Shelby SWCD/NRCS

Improving farmsteads a breeze with windbreaks

by Donna Thraen
SC Technician

Would you like lower utility bills? Would you like to improve the weight gains of your livestock? Would you like more wildlife around your farmstead? If the answer to any of these questions is "yes", the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service advises you to plant a farmstead or feedlot windbreak.

Farmstead windbreaks reduce wind erosion, conserve energy, reduce heating bills and beautify a farmstead. They also serve as a sound barrier and provide food and cover for wildlife. And, livestock gains more weight when windbreaks protect them from winter winds and snow.

Windbreaks consist of several rows of coniferous trees or a combination of coniferous and deciduous trees that are planted usually on the north and west sides of a farmstead or feedlot. One or two rows of shrubs are also often added.

Establishing a windbreak slows wind on the downwind side of the windbreak a distance of 10 times the height of the trees. The tree rows also act like a snow fence, trapping snow within the windbreak.

Of course, there are other benefits from trees, too. Trees provide oxygen, reduce air pollution and provide beneficial shade in the summer. Windbreaks really provide something for

Loess Hills Grazing Conference



Pasture management is very important in the fragile Loess Hills, where this herd of cattle was snapped earlier this year. Those attending the Loess Hills Grazing Conference will learn more about this practice.

The Loess Hills Grazing conference is scheduled for January 8, 1997, at St. Patrick's Parish Center in Dunlap. Registration will be at 9:30 a.m., with lunch served at noon. Adjournment will be at three in the afternoon.

Iowa State University Extension Service and Natural Resources Conservation Service personnel from a four-county area will sponsor the session.

All those with an interest

everyone.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service has detailed information about how to properly establish a windbreak, including locations which are best avoided for safety reasons.

For technical assistance in establishing a windbreak, contact the NRCS office. Spring cost-share is available from the SWCD for farmstead and feedlot windbreaks.

Please stop at the office and sign up today!

in grazing land management is invited to attend, according to those in charge.

Topics will include forage management, paddock layout and management, watering systems, year-round grazing systems and the new federal cost-share incentives available.

There will be equipment displays and numerous informational publications will be available.

A producer panel will end the session with discussions of their individual planned grazing systems.

Gayland Hall, coordinator of the conference, said, "This will be an opportunity to visit with people who have lots of hands-on experience."

To pre-register, a fee of \$10 may be sent to Gary Guge at the Harrison County Extension office, 304 East 7th St., Logan, IA 51546.

For those not pre-registering, a \$15 fee will be charged at the door.

Shelby SWCD/NRCS

Conservation still required in new Farm Bill

Eligibility for USDA program benefits still requires conservation compliance, sodbuster provisions, and wetland conservation (swampbuster).

The Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 allows for flexibility in planting operations. Following an acceptable conservation system to control erosion is still required, however, to remain eligible for USDA program benefits.

Bringing new land into production (sodbuster) requires a conservation plan prior to planting the crop.

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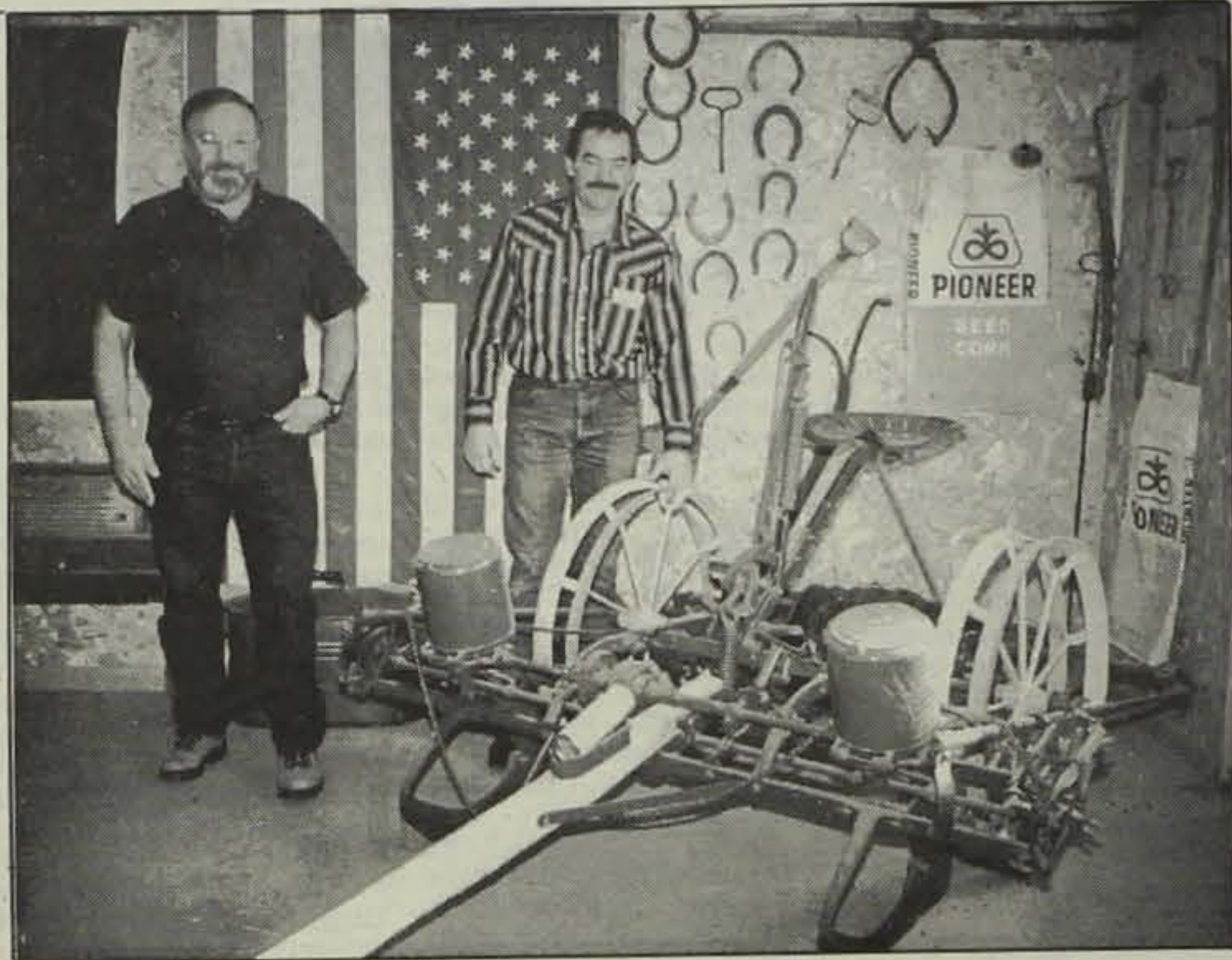


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Jack Stamp "practices what he preaches" when it comes to no-till



Jack Stamp shows DC Russ Kurth this old, horse-drawn John Deere planter, one of a variety of antique implements and farm artifacts which he collects.

by Lou Waite

Jack Stamp of Persia is a fourth generation "steward of the soil", and part of the land he farms was purchased by his great-grandfather in 1899. Another tract once belonged to his great-uncle. Both are part of 2500 acres the Stamps operate, owned and rented. While his parents, John and Betty Stamp, are technically "retired", Jack said they still assist when and where needed.

Last year, Jack planted 1,100 acres of corn, and 1,000 acres soybeans. The remainder of the land is in pasture or CRP. He uses a 100% no-till residue management system, which he began implementing in 1989.

"I went to some no-till meetings in Ames," Jack informed, "and attended various no-till conferences, field tours, etc. I also talked to farmers who had done it. Some landlords felt they couldn't afford the expense of building terraces, but were willing to let us try no-till as a viable option. NRCS conducted no-till tours in the hills over by Pisgah. This gave us the opportunity to see the results of the practice, and also the equipment needed. They were very helpful to us in getting our operation set up effectively."

"I find no-till much more cost-effective," Jack said. "You save fuel, time and labor in making less trips across the field, and the chemical costs have remained about the same. Actually, one person can now do what it once took three people to accomplish."

With a wry smile, Jack confided that one obstacle to convincing landlords to try no-till is the "bare ground syndrome". They have to get used to seeing all the residue on the land, with no black dirt showing. "But my landlords have found that the end result is good, with less soil loss, and the residue helping hold the fertilizer on the steeper slopes," he said. "They are convinced."

Jack applies Dual to the corn ground in the fall or spring, depending upon the weather, and follows with Marksman when the corn has spiked or has two leaves showing. For the beans, he uses Roundup with Sencor for burn-down, and comes back with Pursuit and Sceptor 25 to 30 days later. Beans are planted in rows 10" apart, using a no-till drill. For corn, he uses row-cleaners with 3/4 inch wavy coulters ahead of the planter unit.

Anhydrous is usually applied in the fall, but Jack noted that this year the weather was not "too cooperative". A monitor is used which is set to apply the fertilizer at the desired rate. This can be varied as circumstances necessitate.

"All this works really well with narrow base terraces," Jack

said. "We have lots of these terraces, and I found that in spite of all the rain this year, they did not break as did many of the broadbase structures. No-till also prevents a lot of ditches from forming, and actually our yields on the hills have increased."

"I noticed that following the heavy rains, the fields which were no-tilled absorbed the water much better. On the low ground which had been tilled, the water remained for a week or so, delaying planting that much more. So all in all, no-till was a good move for us."

The Stamps have utilized a crop scouting service provided by Agriland Farm Service Cooperative. "With no-till, you have to be out there walking the fields, to stay on top of the problems," Jack said. "With the business, we don't have time for

that. If Farm Service finds any problem, they report it to us, and we take care of it. The problem is handled when it should be, not when it is too late."

A yield monitor was also used last fall for the first time. Jack said there was a big variation in results with different soils. "You notice that where you drop over a knoll, the yield drops," he said, "or where there is actual weed pressure. We also noticed that the land which laid to the southwest yielded 10 to 15 bushels better than the land to the north, because of the heat units. But we are just 'getting our feet wet' with this." Jack said he might try utilizing a Global Positioning System in the future, but at the present cannot justify the expenditure for the GPS unit and required computer.

He pointed out that the best advice he could give to someone interested in doing no-till for the first time is to "stay with it and be patient!" It takes time for the system to become effective, and one problem may be with weed control. "I have had to do 'rescue treatments' on certain fields, and this can be costly," Jack admitted. "But the end results are positive. You know, not everything goes as you want, sometimes. The weather, rain and timing can affect what you do. But with no-till, if things don't go right, you must spend the money for the spray. I can't stress that too strongly. If the weeds get too tall, the only

choice is to disc it up and start over. Otherwise, you won't have the best yield in the fall."

Jack felt that no-till has helped improve the bottom line in his farm operation, and his net income has also increased. "I enjoy being outside and doing the work myself, and I enjoy seeing things grow and find satisfaction in the end result. But I have to remember farming is a business, and I need to make a profit to survive."

As have many farmers, perhaps to accomplish that purpose, Jack has diversified. He is owner of Mosquito Valley Ag Supply, which he opened four years ago. From that facility, he sells Pioneer Seeds and crop insurance, with a full-time secretary/bookkeeper and part-time help during the busy farm seasons.

He and his wife, Kristine, have been married 22 years, all of them spent on the same farm in Washington Township. She is employed at Farm Service Cooperative in Harlan. They have two children: Lynn, 21, a student at Northwest Missouri State University at Maryville, MO, and Sheri, 19, who attends Creighton University in Omaha.

When he has time, Jack likes to hunt and fish. He is a member of the local chapters of the Corn Growers and Soybean Growers Associations and belongs to the Farm Bureau. The family attends Trinity Lutheran Church in Persia, where Jack has served as a trustee.

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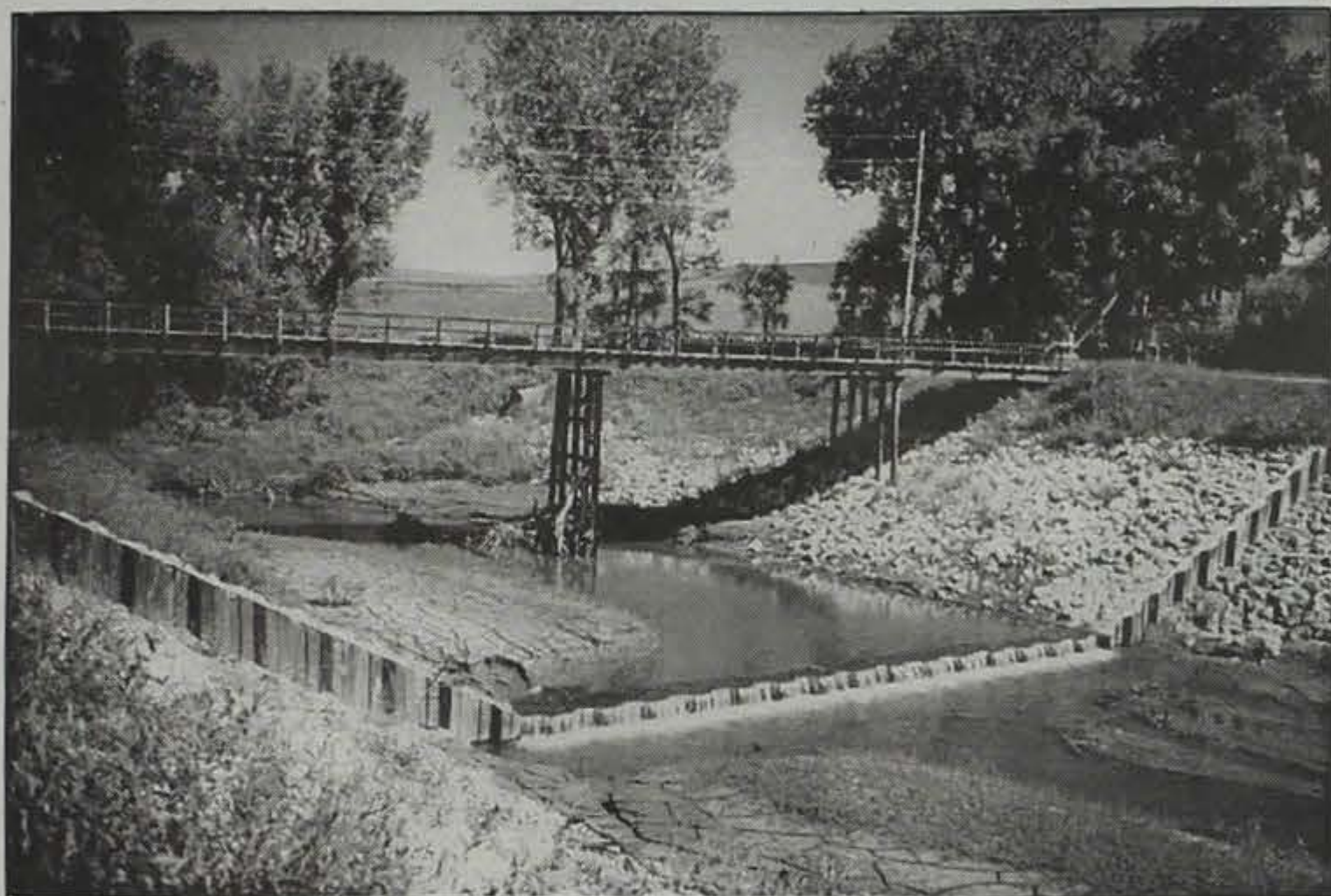
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Pigeon Creek structure is serving the purpose for which designed



The full-flow weir grade stabilization structure as it appeared in September, 1996.

by Gayland Hall, SC
and Lou Walte, AIS

The full-flow-weir grade stabilization structure in the accompanying photos is located on Pigeon Creek in Section 10 of Union Township, four miles west of Persia. It is one of three structures installed in 1994 and 1995 under the USDA Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP).

Harrison County Supervisors and the Road Department were sponsors of the project. County Engineer Tom Stoner did the contracting work and managed construction progress. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) completed the designs and carried out the inspections.

Stoner commented that prior to the construction, the bridge in the photo had had to be extended twice. "The last time, there was simply no room to go straight across," he recalled with a smile, "so we had to bend it. Since then, we have called it the 'crooked bridge'."

Stoner said following the floods of June and July, he was "nervous" about several of the bridges over Pigeon Creek. "We had two 100-year floods, and a 50-year flood within 60 days," he recalled, "and these on the heels of the 100-year flood in 1993. I knew we had some serious problems with roads and bridges all over the county, but particularly with this bridge on the Pigeon. I was afraid we were going to lose it."

Stoner flew over the flood region in June, and saw that all the dams and terraces were filled with water. "In July, I went back up and there was no water anywhere," he continued, "everything had broken. The

water just came so fast that there was not enough storage. It caused a huge amount of damage."

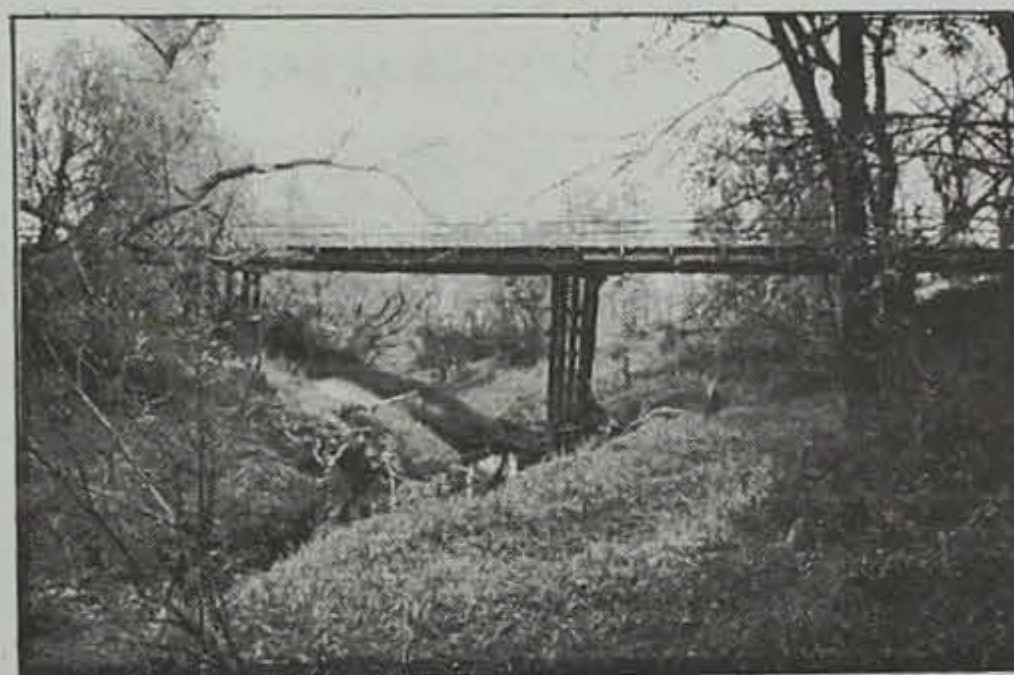
The tremendous volume of water rushing through the creeks caused an equal amount of degradation to the stream banks and consequently to the bridges. "We knew that to replace just one bridge would cost about \$400,000.00," Stoner stated, "so with a number of bridges endangered and not enough funds, we knew we had to find an alternative."

The alternative was, of course, stabilization structures such as that pictured, or of similar design. The three on Pigeon Creek have "worked wonderfully," Stoner said,

and he was "thrilled" by that fact.

The structures not only save the bridges adjacent to them, but also protect other bridges further upstream by taking away around 4-feet of "fall" from the creek. They also retard the velocity of the water, especially after a heavy rain.

"The upper structures were flawless," Stoner informed, "although the lower one has had some overfilling behind the sheet piling due to a curve in the creek at that point. This is easily repaired, however. We'll wait for low water and add a couple cubic feet of grout. Actually, all the structures performed very well and should continue to do so."



The "crooked bridge site" prior to construction

EWP funds were granted for 80 percent of the cost of each structure, with the road department providing the other 20 percent, some of this on an "in-kind" basis.

The total cost of the three structures was \$632,000.00, as compared to replacement costs of three bridges at approximately \$1,200,000.00. "The figures speak for themselves," the county engineer pointed out.

"A structure or two has been saved, but we need to convince the federal government that they need to mitigate... do it (the repair) now instead of waiting until we get another 100-year flood," Stoner emphasized.

He also commented how much he appreciated the assistance from NRCS and the "tremendous

cooperation" of the landowners involved. "We have never had a problem with them, and we always promise never to destroy more than we can help," he maintained. "They see the value of this. When the Pigeon Creek projects are all completed, the amount of tillable land will be increased and they will be able to farm to the edge of the creek. These structures benefit many areas."

"Including", Tom said, "the fact that we should never have to extend that crooked bridge again!"



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Let us introduce Anita Methers, new SWCD commissioner

by Lou Waite
NRCS/AIS

Anita Methers of Logan will join the Harrison Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Commissioners on January 1, 1997. She was elected to that position in November 1996.

Anita and Curtis, her husband of 19 years, farm 1,000 acres of owned and rented land in Harrison County. Included is the farm where they live, once belonging to Curt's parents, Leroy and Leota Methers, now retired.

While the Methers prefer no-till as a residue management system, some of the land they rent is disced once before planting. They report that their yields with no-till have increased, especially the soybeans which Curt says "are better each year". They plant the beans early and usually they are up before the weed problem starts. The Methers use a

combination of post-emerge treatments as needed to control weed growth.

They use their own equipment, a boom sprayer with saddle tanks, and scout their fields often to identify problem areas so immediate remedies may be applied.

The Methers noted that last year they had a lot of terrace damage following a six-inch rain in the Moorhead area. "Looking at the no-till fields from the road, it also appeared that there were a lot of rills or gullies," they said. "But on closer inspection, we saw that only the residue had washed away, leaving the soil in place. That is pretty convincing evidence that no-till really is effective."

Anita even no-tilled her garden last year, with good success. She noted with a chuckle that people from all around the area brought their grass clippings for her to use. "I



Anita Methers, right, and husband Curtis

had "residue" six inches deep," she said, "and very little weed problem. That saves a lot of labor and I have never had more healthy plants."

On their own land they have the terraces required in their FSA plan installed. Curt said, however, he might "put in a few more" just to please himself. Using no-till as an option for terraces has removed that requirement on some of the land they rent.

They do not raise livestock, but do purchase feeder calves each year and finish them for market. "I'm not so sure that isn't a mistake, sometimes," Anita admitted with a smile.

No mistake, but somewhat unusual, is a windbreak they planted 17 years ago. It consists totally of blue spruce trees, which are slow-growing as a rule. But Anita said the trees are "really tall" and provide excellent protection from the wind.

Curt is a certified "Master Forester", having taken a course provided by

Iowa State Extension.

"Actually, I took the course after we planted the windbreak," he admitted ruefully, "but we learned a lot from the entire experience." Curt's maternal grandfather, Milton Metcalf, was an orchardist and tree lover, and this may have inspired the same interests in his grandson.

Curt and Anita have three children: Lynn, 17, a high school junior, Jennifer (known as J.J.) 15, a sophomore, and Michelle, 8, in the second grade.

The family is very active in 4-H and Curt and Anita are project leaders. They attend the Logan Christian Church where Curt serves as elder and is chairman of the board. He also teaches Sunday School.

Anita is in charge of a children's video library at the church. Christian videos which "just appear" (as contributions) are loaned to the children for viewing at home. "They love this," Anita said, "and sometimes a visiting child takes a video home, and when they return it, ask if they may come back again. That is rewarding."

A music lover, Anita plays piano for church services often, as well as at other functions. She is also a member of the Harrison County Extension Council. At the time of the interview, she was putting together a booklet containing recipes from 7 generations of the family. This feat will be accomplished with the help of relatives interested in genealogy and the collection given as Christmas gifts to other family members.

Lynn is a wrestler, as was his father before him. "I used to be able to teach him a thing or two," Curt said wryly, "but lately he is the one teaching me!"

J.J. is a cheerleader and also musically talented. Last year she was one of a group of 40 youths making up the NewWay Singers who toured 6 states presenting concerts in various locations.

Michelle plays piano, and according to her mother, is an "outdoor person" who loves nature and animals. She assists with her siblings 4-H projects and will become an "official" member next year.

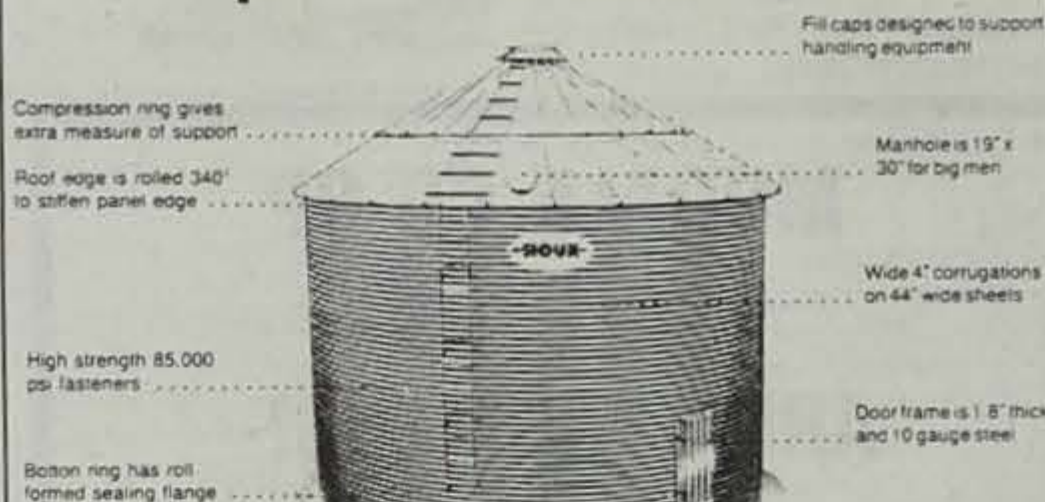
Russ Kurth, District Conservationist commented that Anita is personally involved in the couple's farming operation. This, along with her past experience as a 4-H leader and present Extension Council experience will enable her to become a valuable commissioner for Harrison County.

"It's good to have her," Kurth said, "for not only is she actively involved in community affairs, but also in actively applying conservation practices on their farm."

As for Anita, she said she is looking forward to another "learning experience."

The district is in turn looking forward with pleasure to her participation.

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Sesquicentennial Forest planted by West Harrison students

by Sarah Perley

West Harrison Community School at Mondamin is completing work on a school forest/landscaping project and arboretum. A grant from the Iowa Sesquicentennial Commission and Trees Forever school forest project initially provided funds for the project.

With the help of Trees Forever, this unique grant opportunity gave 53 schools across Iowa an opportunity to celebrate Iowa's 150th anniversary year by planting a legacy for the future.

West Harrison staff members contributed time to work on the grant proposal, written by Madylon Perley, instructor. Tim Sproul, Director of the Harrison County Conservation Board, created the landscaping plan and design for the arboretum.

The landscape design includes deciduous trees native to Iowa, and evergreen trees. In addition, it also included thirteen trees selected from stock genetically the same as trees from places with historical significance. These included Mt. Vernon Red Maple and Valley Forge River Birch in the arboretum, with planting of prairie grass and native Iowa wildflowers. Blue gama and buffalo grass are also planted around the outside of the arboretum walkway.

On a cold, wet Sunday afternoon in April, West Harrison students, faculty and community members planted the school forest. A second planting at a later date



West Harrison students busily involved with tree-planting activities.

completed the arboretum, including the prairie grass and wildflower seeds.

The native prairie grasses donated by Pheasants Forever are the same varieties that settlers saw coming through Iowa when it was not yet a state. It is said the grass was so tall that a person could be in it on horseback and the horse would be hidden from view.

The Harrison County Sesquicentennial Commission recently agreed to provide West Harrison with an additional grant to finish the landscape project and add the finishing touches to the arboretum. The funds will also provide materials needed for birdhouses and a bird feeder, to be completed by the

West Harrison industrial art classes. These will complement the arboretum design.

Terra cotta markers which identify each of the historic forest trees in the arboretum will be set to identify the trees selected by each West Harrison class, Kindergarten through senior.

In addition to being a beautiful addition to the school grounds, the arboretum will be used as an outdoor classroom. For years to come, students can return and see the trees they helped plant, and the trees chosen by each class.

The peaceful shade will be there for students at recess and for community members to enjoy, as well.

Give a gift of meaningful music

For those who find it hard to find a meaningful gift to give to family or friends for that special occasion, a handful of conservation and farm organizations feel they have the right answer, at the right price.

It is a unique collection of music, available on cassette tape (or CD's) and called "Keepers of the Flame."

County music artist Jon Chandler of Denver was commissioned to do an 11-song album earlier this year in Nashville. It is a tribute to conservation farmers and ranchers and also their wives, telling how they feel about their land and their lifestyle.

A song which especially touches the heart is a grandfather telling his granddaughter of his love for the women in his life, and also his love for the land.

One song gives credit to farm wives for their many-faceted contributions to farm living and family life. Another is about going home again to the family farm, and still another pays tribute to those who take care of the land and keep the home fires burning -- the "keepers of the flame."

Jon Chandler's mellow baritone, with just a hint of

"down home" cadence, is pleasing to the ear, and the message he brings is pleasing to the heart of those who love this land and want to preserve it.

Chandler has been seen and heard at a number of farm and conservation groups meetings, and is scheduled for more appearances during the winter.

According to Konda Slagle, Harrison SWCD secretary, "The cassette is an ideal gift to give to a farmer whom you appreciate for what he has done, or for a farmer to give to his wife to show he appreciates her! Besides, Jon's music is 'easy listening' for any reason."

The tapes are available for \$9.00 at the Harrison office (or any NRCS office in the area). Shipping and handling charges, if the tapes are to be mailed, are additional.

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Unlike the warning, you can go home again if the heart is still there

Personal Profile by Lou Walte

Larry Bean is 55, looks 45, and admits that he wouldn't mind finding a female companion to share his life.

His frequent smile flashes brightly in his deeply tanned face, and his dark hair, worn a little long for the current fashion, shows some threads of silver. He is still lean and trim, very literate, very courteous and well-spoken. Those indulging in conversation soon find that he is knowledgeable about world affairs but also sharply analytical in assessing local conditions and concerns.

His speech is cultured and grammatically correct, but he can segue into local idiom when passing along a bit of humor overheard in the coffee shop. Sometimes he interjects phrases such as "modus operandi" or quotes some ancient philosopher ("Our children are becoming the barbarians at the gates of Rome.") But raised eyebrows and puzzled expressions remind him of his lapse, and he reverts back to the vernacular.

Larry is a farmer, but he is far from being the accepted stereotype. He is more representative of today's men of the soil, however, than most of the world realizes. Larry has been more, done more and seen more than most farmers of this area. He has traveled in the fast lane of corporate management, dealt with contracts and negotiations involving mega-bucks, lived the good life, walked the walk and talked the talk. But he gave it all up to come back to his beginnings.

Larry lives near Little Sioux, Iowa, just a country mile from the farm where he was born and grew to manhood. He admits that once he reached that equivocal age where all feel they can go out and conquer the world, he couldn't wait to leave the rolling hills and fertile valleys behind. He couldn't wait to see what was over the



Larry Bean, who once served the corporate world, is now happy to tend the land whose dust he once shook from his restless feet.

horizon . . . on the other side of that hill.

Perhaps part of his longing to expand his horizons was instilled by one of his teachers. Vada Glasser may not have realized how much influence she had over one of her young pupils in the Little Sioux school district. Larry remembers her with great fondness, and swears she was one of the "best teachers ever!"

Perhaps once he left home, his horizons were widened by his tenure with the Army Reserve, or

when he pored over his accounting lessons during every spare minute. Surely studying corporate law at a later time may have been an eye-opener for a young midwesterner, brought up to believe in the integrity and honesty of his fellow man.

Through the ensuing years with various conglomerates in several locations, as he was rewarded for his achievements and advanced up the "corporate ladder", he must have considered his life to be ideal. One might wonder if he sometimes tired of coping with the constant responsibility and stress?

"I wasn't really unhappy," Larry said, "but there was always this internal message speaking to me; one which I tried to ignore. I was the eldest of three children, and had been away from my family too many years. When I was eventually transferred to the midwest and could visit more often, it made me realize the truth of that old adage . . . you can take the boy away from the country, but the country never leaves you. When I would return to my job, those old grass roots kept calling to me. Then too, I kept thinking how good it would be to be my own boss."

When Larry's mother became ill with cancer, he decided to take a year's sabbatical so he could spend the time with her. But when he learned that his company wanted to transfer him to a distant corporate headquarters and take his place in the "glass bubble", he realized that it was time to make a decision about the direction his life was taking.

"I wanted to go home," Larry

said, in recollection. "I wanted some dirt! I wanted to experience that kind of life again. It wasn't a planned strategic management decision, such as those I was accustomed to making, but I knew in my heart it was the right one."

"Home" to Larry is a well-kept older farmhouse, situated on 680 acres in the fertile Little Sioux River Valley. Actually, the former river channel winds past his front lawn. Larry normally farms across the dry bed, but due to this year's, plentiful rainfall, it is holding water.

The license plate on the shiny pickup parked in the lane reads "FRIJOLE", a testimonial to his dry sense of humor. When people look at the plate in puzzlement, he grins and says, "Think of my name (Bean)".

Most of the farmland is NHEL (non-highly-erodible-land), so he does not have as many problems with erosion as do those who farm the surrounding hillsides. He plants corn and beans, also oats, clover and alfalfa, intermittently. He plans to merge wheat into the crop rotation this fall. The farm was in continuous ridge-till from 1988 until 1995, but that fall the ridges were tilled and in the spring of 1996 all the fields were conventionally planted.

Larry said he feels ridge-till is an excellent practice on the Story-Clay fields he tends. But he said without drainage improvement, the system fails during wet growing seasons.

He describes his landlady, Kathryn Johnson of Louisville, Kentucky, as being very willing to consider new or innovative ideas about the farming operation or farmstead. An example is the L-shaped windbreak planted five years ago, which will in time give protection from the bitter winds of winter. Kathryn paid the balance of cost not covered by REAP funding, while Larry provided the labor and now takes care of maintenance. This is typical of their relationship; one which is obviously of mutual satisfaction. "She is the greatest!" Larry declared.

His father and stepmother live "just down the road", and Larry's eyes twinkle when he speaks fondly of his relationship with

them. He beams when telling some of the exploits of his nieces and nephews, for whom he obviously has a deep affection.

Larry was married, but is no longer. "It's not a bitter memory," he said with a shrug. He volunteered no further information, but a latent unhappiness may have been reflected in his eyes.

He enjoys traveling, fly-fishing, running and participating in community affairs, among other interests. But mainly he likes to write, and is in the process of completing his first novel. He is also compiling his memoirs and enjoys writing poetry. He writes letters to friends and family, "the old fashioned way", which he described as "me-mail, instead of e-mail."

So Larry Bean has come home again. He who once wore a suit and tie every day, now appears comfortable in worn Levis and work boots. The hands which perhaps were once soft and white, with carefully groomed nails, are now roughened by hard labor and exposure to the weather.

Once his conversation may have had to do with stock markets, world trade, foreign policy, the yen vs the US dollar, personnel development and recommendations to or reconciliations with a board of directors.

Today, he is more concerned about the price of corn, technical and fundamental studies of the future's market and whether or not the hay is ready to be mowed.

More than all this, Larry appears at ease with himself, his environment and his lifestyle. He has proven that you can go home again. He has learned that "home" can be anywhere, everywhere and nowhere.

He has found a truth which many never learn: that home is "where the heart is".

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Bernie Bolton, Belknap Twp.
Marlyn Von Weihe,
Carson Twp.
Terry Gleaves, Center Twp.

Assistant Commissioners

Clifford Stille,
Macedonia Twp.
Bryce Gehrmann,
Carson Twp.
Norma Bolton, Belknap Twp.
Karen Hotze, Grove Twp.
Jeff Krueger, Layton Twp.

County Personnel

Michelle Zimmerman,
Resource Planner

NRCS Personnel

Stan Buman, District
Conservationist
Greg Mathis, Soil
Conservationist
Leslie Cleaveland,
Soil Cons. Aide
Kevin Gee, Soil Cons. Aide
Vic McCall, Soil Cons. Aide
Tom Scheffler, Volunteer
Bruce Damgaard,
Volunteer.

State Personnel

Becky Lockwood, Secretary,
SWCD Treas.
Clair Acker, Soil Cons.
Technician

Posters wanted

Do you like nature or conservation? Are you in Kindergarten through 12th grade? Why not share your creativity with the Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Commissioners?

This year's poster theme is Backyard Stewardship. The theme emphasizes what each of us can do in our own backyard, school yard or neighborhood to practice and promote positive stewardship.

Grinnell Mutual Reinsurance Company and the Auxiliary of the Iowa Association of Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners co-sponsor the poster contest.

The contest is open to all students in Iowa from K through 12. The divisions are as follows:

- Division 1 - Grades K - 1
- Division 2 - Grades 2 - 3
- Division 3 - Grades 4 - 6
- Division 4 - Grades 7 - 9
- Division 5 - Grades 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 36 inches. Any medium may be used, including paint, magic marker, pencil, charcoal, cut and paste, crayon, collage, or whatever inspires the entrant.

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

For more information or an entry form, or to leave your poster, contact your local SWCD.

Posters are due Friday, March 4, 1997.



Terry Gleaves, left, of Oakland, one of the eight regional finalists for the honor, received his award from Frank Holdmeyer, Editor of the Wallaces Farmer, right, and IASWCD Vice President Mark Ingwersen, center

Gleaves named finalist for 1996 Outstanding SWCD Commissioner

Terry Gleaves was recently honored as Outstanding Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioner for Region 5. Congratulations, Terry!

Gleaves has been a commissioner for four years. He is also a representative of the following committees: alternate delegate for REAP Congress; first alternate delegate for IASWCD; district committee chairperson for REAP and ONMP, helping to coordinate animal waste structures through REAP funds; and is on the district scholarship committee.

Other services to the district and conservation programs have been assisting with advertising for the Quad-County Conservation Quarterly

Newsletter; with district tree sales and filling of tree orders and distribution of soil stewardship material to local churches.

Terry is also a member of the Pottawattamie Cattleman's Association, a member of the East Pott. Farm Bureau and the Oakland Methodist Church.

He and his wife Amy have two children, Evan and Alex. Amy is employed as a part-time dental assistant in Council Bluffs.

The Gleaves' farm operation in Center Township includes raising 250 acres of corn, 250 acres of soybeans, with 100 acres in pasture and hayland. No-tilling is carried out, and the farm is terraced.

Once again, congratulations, Terry, and keep spreading the word on conservation!

Zimmerman represents Iowa at national Envirothon meet

Michelle Zimmerman represented Iowa at the national Envirothon meeting, held at Johnstown, Pennsylvania. That city will be the site of the 1997 National Envirothon, to be held on the University of Pittsburgh campus.

New executive officers and board members were elected and the by-laws revised. A Web page is to be developed to promote the national Envirothon, as well as individual state representation.

A few corporate sponsors have committed to assisting with the program. Monsanto has graciously consented to sponsor the National Envirothon for the next five years. The Canon corporation has also expressed interest in becoming a corporate sponsor.

Sites have been selected for the national event until the year 2000. They are: Pennsylvania 1997; Michigan 1998; California 1999 and Nova Scotia 2000.

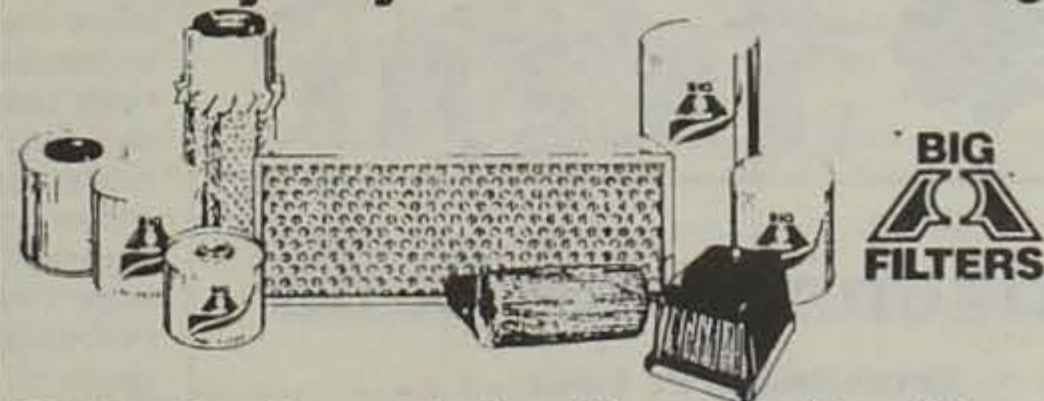
Iowa's state competition will be held at Springbrook State Park near Guthrie Center on April 28, 1997.

Prior to the state competition, four regionals will be held throughout the state. The southwest regional will be in February.

The Iowa Envirothon committee is currently seeking sponsorship for the events. Individuals are also needed to assist with the activities.

Anyone interested in more information is asked to contact Michelle Zimmerman, 482-6408; Julia Gubbels, 328-2489 or Jill Knapp, 515-278-5362.

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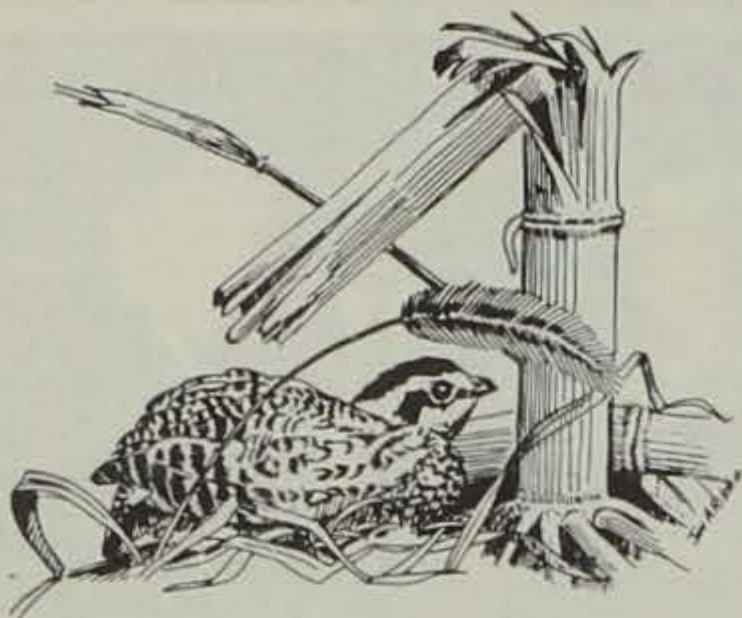
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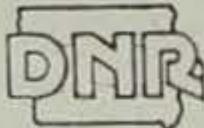
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Ph. 712-482-6413





Wildlife dependent on agriculture in some ways

by Carl Priebe
Wildlife Biologist



Many of Iowa's larger, more easily recognized wildlife species are, in one way or another, dependent upon agriculture. Most utilize waste grain as an important, sometimes critical, food source. Examples are pheasants and quail. Others utilize waste grain as easy food, although they could probably get by on natural foods. Examples are deer and turkeys.

At the same time, the production of grain may reduce other potential life requirements for those same species. For example, Iowa has a good population of pheasants, in part because of the productive soils and the production of row crops which results in few or no grassy areas.

Iowa's agriculture has in part been dictated over the years by the farm programs of the times.

Correspondingly, wildlife populations have suffered or benefited from those same programs. As we

reach the end of, or at least a smaller scale, set-aside program (ACR and CRP), some wildlife populations will be changing because that species' life requirements are improved or on the other hand, possibly destroyed.

For example, pheasants require grassy areas for nesting, the rearing of broods and roostings. The elimination of ACR and a reduction of CRP will convert thousands of acres from grasslands to row crop. Where that habitat change occurs, pheasant numbers will fall substantially. In fields with brushy field borders or interior brushy draws, the conversion of CRP to row crop will probably enhance quail numbers. The brushy habitat in CRP fields provided everything quail needed, except adequate food. Grassy field borders between row crops and brushy cover provide excellent habitat.

Deer numbers respond very positively to the CRP

You have applied for state cost-share at the East Pottawattamie SWCD by

1) the landowner coming in and signing application (IP-1) and Substitute W-9 forms.

2) supplying vital information such as location, contractor, type and amount of terracing requested (or other practice). This information is presented to the District Commissioners on a first-come, first-serve basis for approval. Construction cannot begin prior to approving. Once approved, written notification will be sent to the applicant.

What can you expect?

Step 1 - Upon notification of approval, discuss with your contractor what you can expect from him (ie, price, estimated completion time, etc.). These items are between you and your contractor. The District will not get involved in pricing, etc. Topsoiling is required on all terraces.

Let the Oakland NRCS office know which

contractor you have chosen. (712-482-6408).

Step 2 - When your ground is ready (ie, the crop is out, ground free of frost, the setaside or alfalfa mowed, etc.) and your contractor is approximately one week away, contact the Oakland NRCS office to have your terraces staked. Technicians try to stay just ahead of contractors.

A - Please do not till the area to be terraced prior to layout. Also keep in mind that all existing terraces above any new terrace we stake out must also meet specs in order to get cost-share.

B - Please be available when technicians come to layout terraces so you will know how the terraces will lay. You may be required to help with the layout if we are short of staff.

C - Approval of layout as staked is your responsibility. Please inform technicians if you wish layout notes to be given to you or directly to the contractor. All contractors

program. The grassy fields provide fawning, bedding and grazing areas. Conversion of the CRP fields to row crop may not affect deer numbers either way, but the deer may be forced to use grain fields more frequently.

Turkeys will benefit from new grain fields adjacent to timbered areas, especially during winters following poor mast production in the woods. Some nesting will be lost however, as turkeys learned to use the CRP fields and regularly nested along the edges.

Farm programs can directly affect a farmer's livelihood. They also

affect wildlife. As the new program is finalized, evaluate how it will affect wildlife as well as your own personal situation.

Look at the life requirements for those wildlife species you enjoy and would like to have on your farm. There should be ways at no cost or low cost to maintain critical habitat and/or food for those species. Some financial assistance for habitat development or improvements may be available to you.

For information, contact your local Wildlife Biologist or District Conservationist.

1997 cost-share procedures clarified for landowners in East Pottawattamie SWCD

must have cutsheets or tile design sheet with attached map before work starts.

What if additional footage is needed?

If more footage is required, you will need to come to the office and sign an amendment (IP2). Commissioners may approve the amendment if funds are available, at the next board meeting. Commissioners meet the third Tuesday of each month.

After my terraces are complete, what do I need to do?

Step 3 - Contractors must do their own checkout, sign cutsheets and bring to the office to be verified. Please check bills and tile maps for accuracy. When you have received the bill from the contractor, it is necessary that you bring the bill to the office and sign a claim form IFAS #A-1. If you have constructed the terraces yourself, you will also need to sign Form IP-5. We are not responsible for hiring or paying your contractor; this is your responsibility.

A - Once the technician has approved the job and all forms are completed and signed, the voucher will be presented at the next commissioner's meeting for approval.

B - Upon Board approval, the voucher will be forwarded to Des Moines for payment.

How long does it take for me to receive payment?

The terrace cost-share check will be made out to the applicant (not to the contractor). It will take the Des Moines office approximately 4-6 weeks to issue a check and return it to the East Pottawattamie SWCD office. The office will notify you by postcard as soon as the check is received.

Step 4 - Yes! One more trip! Upon receipt of the postcard, it is necessary that you (landowner) stop in the office and sign a 20-year Maintenance Agreement. Once this is signed, you will sign for receipt of your cost-share check. Seeding sheets will be sent at a later date. In January, Des Moines will issue you a 1099 for the state cost-share funds you received. This completes the terrace cost-share process.

If you live out of state, paperwork can be done ahead of time through the mail. Should you have questions, please call the office at 712-482-6408.

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East Pottawattamie 1997 state cost-share policies announced

The East Pottawattamie Soil & Water Conservation District Commissioners have finalized the policies for State cost-share funds. The Commissioner's customized the Iowa Financial Incentive Program rules to best suit our district's needs. The following cost-share policies were drafted by the Board for 1997.

TERRACES/WATERWAYS

1) One "first priority" application per owner/operator will be allowed per calendar year. (Ownership documented in our office as of January 1, 1997) Applications for 1997 will be accepted beginning 8:00 a.m., January 6, 1997, at the Oakland NRCS office.

2) Maximum terrace footage allowed will be 7,500 feet cost-shared @ 50%, not to exceed 55 cents per foot. The maximum amount of cost-share available per terrace job is \$4,125, regardless of terrace type. Topsoiling will be required.

3) Tiling will be cost-shared 300' per intake, plus components, @ 50%, not to exceed a total cost-share job (terrace & tile) of \$7,000. Tiling will only be cost-shared in conjunction with the construction of new terraces.

4) Sign-up will be divided into three lists: Spring, Summer and Fall. You may choose one season. Applications will be chronologically picked up as that season's funds become available. No assurances of any fall allocation. If applicant is not ready when his turn comes around, that applicant's name will be dropped from the list.

5) Those persons receiving cost-share the prior year (96) will be a second priority. These applications will be placed chronologically by date of sign-up after those not receiving cost-share the prior year (96.)

6) If the District still has funds after the list of first and second priority is allocated, approvals will then be granted chronologically to third priority. This priority could include applications from persons receiving cost-share earlier in 1997. These applications will be approved only after first and second priority jobs are covered. You can have one application for terraces and one application for a structure, both "first priority".

7) For those landowners building their own terraces this year, the NRCS strongly recommends they have access to a hand level or transit and tripod for checkout.

Applications taken out of the office to be signed cannot be accepted prior to January 6, 1997, or show a 1996 date. If the application is returned by mail, it should not reach us before January 6.

WATERWAYS

Waterways staked and constructed to NRCS specs will

be cost-shared @ 50 percent not to exceed 40 cents per foot of length. No cost-share on tile.

SUMMER INCENTIVE

1) Maximum terrace footage allowed will be 7,500 feet cost-shared @ 60 percent, not to exceed 66 cents per foot. For terraces (not needing tiling) a maximum amount of cost-share available per terrace job is \$4,950 and will be available for all types of terraces. Topsoiling will be required.

2) Tiling will be cost-shared 300' per intake, plus components, @ 50% not to exceed a total cost-share job (terrace and tile) of \$7,825. Tiling will only be cost-shared in conjunction with construction of new terraces.

3) 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 the terraces during the summer. Extensions will not be granted due to the operator having corn or beans to harvest. We will help you stake out areas for small grain where the terraces are to be constructed to the best of our ability.

STRUCTURES

One "first priority" application per owner/operator will be allowed per calendar year. Structures will be cost-shared at a rate of 50 percent not to exceed \$7,000 per structure. Intake and tile rates will be the same as with terraces. Structures include ponds, grade stabilization (638), earthen and non-earthen structures, cattle panels, rock chute, sheet piling, sediment basins, wetlands, etc.

State cost-share funds will be used on all eligible practices first. When state funds are depleted or a practice is not eligible for state cost-share, the funds raised by the Local Option Sales Tax will be used.

WINDBREAKS

Windbreaks are cost-shared at the rate of 75 percent up to \$700 per windbreak through REAP (Resource Enhancement and Protection Program). Individual limits of \$12 per tree and \$2.25 per shrub.

WELLS

The Pottawattamie County Board of Supervisors offers a program whereby state funding can

be utilized for the purpose of properly plugging abandoned wells. Cost-share on wells is available at 50 percent of the cost of closure up to a \$200 maximum on first-come, first-serve basis. Applications are available at the Oakland NRCS office.

REQUIRED INFORMATION

When you are in to apply for any cost share, please bring all necessary information with you.

1) We need to know "ownership" and "tract number" where construction is planned. Do not sign up in the "operator's name".

2) Your social security number (if individual) or federal ID number (if partnership, corporation, etc.) will be required the day you sign up. A separate form for this will need to be filled out at the time of the sign-up.

3) The landowner signature is required on the cost-share application. If there is more than one owner that will result in two (or more) checks charged to separate social security numbers, both signatures are required. A signature may have to be obtained ahead of time or a Power of Attorney will need to be in our file. A Farm Service Agency Power of Attorney cannot be accepted.

4) All applications must have landowner signature. Any person may deliver the application for the landowner, if the landowner has signed an application with a 1997 date.

5) All cost-share projects must be located on land within the East Pottawattamie District boundaries. If the land is located in West Pottawattamie, Mills, Montgomery, etc., you must apply for cost-share with those district offices. This is a state policy, and we cannot make exceptions.

To receive cost-share, the "landowner" must sign a 20-year maintenance agreement.

Know your approximate footage, especially if it will amount to less than our maximum amount. (Changes in application footage will result in more paperwork for you and the office). If you have an idea of a contractor you may use, let us know. This helps the technician schedule the staking.

Again, know your social security number or federal identification number.



Left to right, Darrell Stamp, Russ Brandes, Terry Gleaves, Bernie Bolton and Marlyn Von Weihe.

District receives state honors

The East Pottawattamie SWCD took home many honors at the 50th annual conference of the Iowa Association of Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners (IASWCD). The event was held in Des Moines September 4 and 5, 1996.

Recognized were persons who give of their time and talents to promote the state organization's programs in rural Iowa.

Local district commissioners Darrell Stamp, Terry Gleaves,

Marlyn Von Weihe, Russ Brandes and Bernie Bolton received the Iowa Conservation District Education of the Year Award.

The district also was given the 1995 Goodyear NACD Conservation Honor Award for the southern district.

In addition, Terry Gleaves was one of the eight regional finalists for the 1996 Outstanding Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioner award.

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Heynes' conservation conscious for four generations

by Michelle Zimmerman
& Lou Walte

Bruce Heyne's great-grandfather migrated from Germany and in 1874 settled on the farm 6 miles south of Walnut, where Bruce lives today. The 640-acre homestead is included in the 1,000 acres this fourth-generation farmer operates, and he is proud of its Century Farm distinction.

Heyne has served as East Pottawattamie Soil and Water Conservation District commissioner and associate commissioner. He is active in carrying out a family tradition of participation in and efforts to preserve this country's natural resources.

Most of the terracing required on his farm is completed, with the help of cost-share from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS.) Waterways and field borders are also installed. Most of his cropland is no-tilled, a residue management system he began using early-on, and which he feels is "highly effective" in controlling erosion.

In 1986, Bruce began the growing of native grasses and wildflowers, and sale of the seed. This business became so successful that in 1994, he rented his farmland to someone else and concentrated on the Heyne Custom Seed business. "It's been growing each year," he said, "and 1996 has been the best ever!"

Much of Bruce's focus the past 13 years has been his participation in the Degrading Streams project, now affiliated with Hungry Canyons Alliance.

At the onset, he was among a group of



Stan Buman and Bruce Heyne stand on a bridge over Walnut Creek. This bridge was one of many severely damaged by high water in 1993 and 1996.

taxpayers concerned about the danger of damage to and costs of repairing roads, bridges, urban and agricultural property, etc., caused by "uncontrolled rampages" of Walnut Creek and other tributaries in the area.

Serving as an SWCD commissioner at the time and living closest to Walnut Creek, Bruce spent many hours talking to other landowners and persuading them to join in the effort.

"We contacted every agency we knew or heard about, trying to get some funding for the project," Bruce recalled. "We checked out possibilities of getting special watershed funds and cost-share. We talked with the

Department of Transportation (DOT), lobbied the legislature through our local representatives -- got in touch with anyone we felt could be made aware of what was needed out here. A lot of credit goes to Russ Brandes, Bernie Bolton, Marty Adkins and Mike Kucera, who were invaluable in helping with the entire process."

Nine years ago, a Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) grant was received. This provided funding to build terraces on the uplands, and install three structures in the watershed.

In 1992, the Hungry Canyons Alliance was

formed to provide leadership for a regional stream channel stabilization effort. Coordinated by Golden Hills Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) the project area includes 22 counties of the deep Loess soils region of Western Iowa.

During the past years, funding through USDA NRCS has made possible the construction of stream channel control structures in Walnut Creek in Pottawattamie County, Moser Creek in Shelby County and the Middle Soldier River in Crawford County.

"I have been really pleased with the Hungry Canyons program," Bruce affirmed, "and neighboring counties have benefited as well."

These structures have helped prevent loss of farmland and riparian habitat, as well as damage to bridges and other works of improvement.

"Actually," Heyne said, "the results were not really analyzed until the rains of 1993, when the largest volume of water I had ever seen came down Walnut Creek. While the damage was great all around the area, it could have been much worse. Until that time, not enough had been done to prevent or alleviate flooding, and the damage from the heavy rains of 1996 show us there is much more to do."

Heyne said he felt one of the most effective means of preventing such problems is to maintain and update

watershed infrastructure and continue with new erosion control measures in the watersheds.

"Watershed planning is a great idea," he said, "and one which needs to receive more attention and funding."

Heyne said that past years have taught him the cost effectiveness of conservation. "It benefits the community as a whole," he stressed, "not just us farmers. Anyone comparing farmland where proper conservation measures have not been installed with land protected by watersheds can see for themselves. The comparison is very convincing, even to the layman."

"It seems selfish and unfair, when you think about it," Bruce theorized. "Damage from untreated acres does damage to others who are trying hard to control erosion on their own land. We need to be in this together to make it work!"

The immediate Heyne family involved in making it work includes wife Sue, who is employed with a publishing company in Atlantic, and daughter Cassandra, 15.

According to Stan Buman, District Conservationist, the cooperation of landowners such as Heyne has made his job easier.

"The benefits of conservation compliance have been felt in many areas, and the results will be more evident as time goes on. By keeping it 'on the hill with no-till', you see less water runoff, therefore less flooding. These benefits to everyone will increase as conservation measures are completed on all the farmland, and awareness of the need for water quality protection rises," Buman stated.

Both Heyne and Buman agreed that to be successful, it must be a total effort. They are committed to reaching that goal.

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Research Station focus changed during 30-year study



Research station supervisor Larry A. Kramer

Note - This is the first in a series of articles concerning the Deep Loess Research Station near Treynor and the individuals concerned with the activities there.

Research watersheds to investigate factors related to gully growth in the Missouri Valley Deep Loess were initiated when a field office was established in Council Bluffs in 1962. This was through the auspices of the USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) North Central Hydrology Research Watershed office in Columbia, Missouri.

The study fields are located in Sections 14 and 35, Keg Creek Township, Pottawattamie County, on land purchased and leased by the Committee for Agricultural Development (CAD), a corporation

associated with Iowa State University. There are two tracts of land comprising the research station, containing some C, D, and E slopes. Each has two study field watersheds.

To investigate the ongoing high-priority gully problem of the time, ARS was invited to cooperate with the Iowa State Experiment Station and what was then the Soil Conservation Service. The study began on four field-sized study watersheds in 1964. CAD leased the watershed areas to ARS for research activities and the watershed fields to local farmers for crop production under a management plan to meet research objectives.

Larry A. Kramer, Agricultural Engineer is, the current supervisor of the research station.

"Since that time, there has been an overall shift from conservation

research to environmental quality research," Kramer said. "We are using the same fields as in the original study, but directing the research toward the latter, instead of the former. And the scope of our research has expanded greatly from the original purpose."

While the current studies overlap in some areas, they relate to the issues of soil quality, water quality and, to a degree, air quality. Kramer related that air quality is not a specific research area at the station, but a related factor.

"Our focus is on soil and water as they relate to agricultural management," Kramer said, "and we are implementing some land management changes in relation to that. In the past 30 years, we had only continuous corn in the fields, but various conservation practices were used. This year, we began the study of a strip cropping system on one watershed. The system is a six-year rotation of corn, soybeans, corn, alfalfa, alfalfa, alfalfa with no-till planted corn and drilled soybeans. On an adjacent watershed, we have the prevailing practice of a corn-soybean rotation."

"We are still trying to determine the state of the soil quality after having continuous corn for 30 years. What is the best management practice for sustaining soil quality? We know that variable cropping impacts not only the nutrient mix, but also the insect populations and other diseases which build up from monocultures. Rotations can get away from that. But how does it compare to prevailing practices? We will study a cropping system which will hopefully improve the soil quality, then compare it to what is being used in neighboring fields."

For the rotational system, strips

105 feet wide are being designed, with some strip alignment corrections necessary to keep on the contour. There will be permanent strips, planted with warm season grasses, concentrated in the flow areas of the waterways. Strips of corn and soybeans will alternate with alfalfa, but Kramer said it will be three years before the rotation/alternation is established as designed.

In the beginning, primary research objectives dealt with factors causing gully and channel erosion, methods to prevent gully advance and effects of level terraces on gully erosion. But to achieve these objectives, several secondary objectives had to be considered. These were determining the rainfall characteristics, the sediment loss from the watershed fields, the water yield from the same, and peak storm runoff rates.

But in the late 1980's, additional effort was begun to study distribution of ag chemicals in the soil and ground water as well. Administration of the station was therefore transferred to the new ARS National Soil Tilth Laboratory at Ames. It was then the site began to be used to determine the best ag management system for water quality in the midwest. A unique characteristic of the studies over the past thirty years has been the consistent land management and the response of the study watersheds over a long term under the influences of natural climate variability and realistic farming

practices.

Kramer pointed out that besides the chemical and physical features of the soil, there is still the economic side to consider. They therefore are trying to record input so as to make economic comparisons as well.

The results will be outlined in technical reports, presented at science meetings, printed in technical journals and various other disciplines. "We are making a concerted effort to package the results into more 'practical' reports," Kramer informed, "and it will eventually filter down from the top technical areas to those where the information will be utilized for practical purposes." He also noted that efforts are being made to provide more information through the Internet.

Born in southern Indiana, Kramer received his BS and MS degrees in agricultural engineering from Purdue University, with emphasis on soil and water engineering. He was employed with ARS in the North Central Watershed Research Unit, Columbia Missouri, in the hydrology and erosion section. He came to his present position in 1988, so is very familiar with the Iowa project. He and his wife, Sharon, live two miles south of Treynor. She is a substance abuse and family counselor in Omaha. They have two children, Brian of Minnesota, and Anne of Des

Continued on page 19



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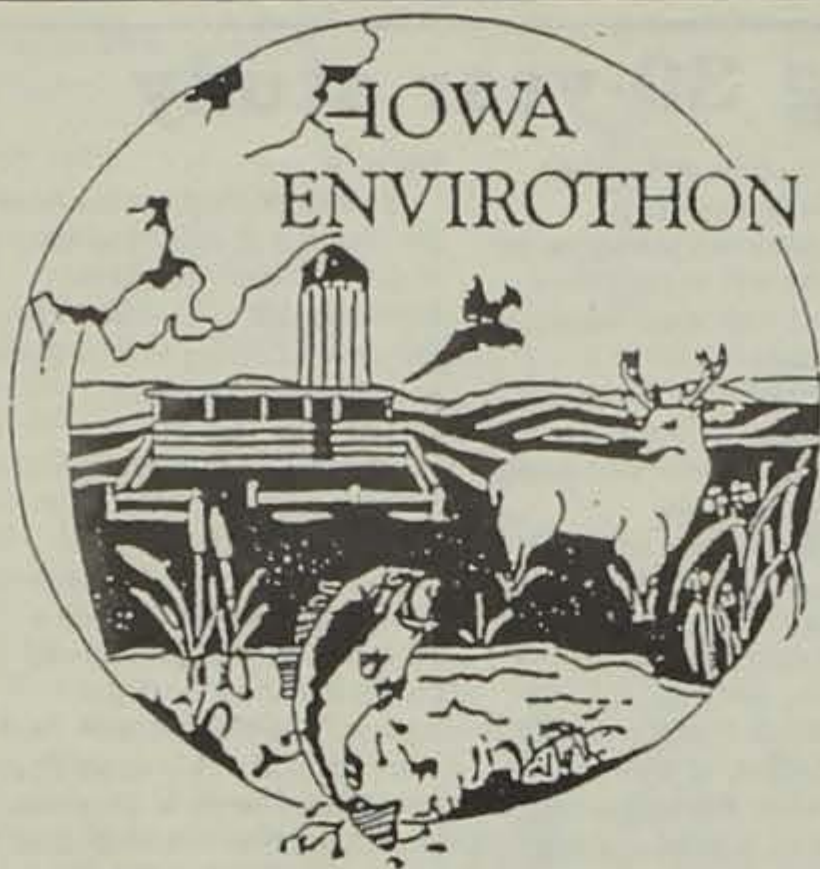
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Iowa Envirothon

by Julia Gubbels

This year begins the second season for the Iowa Envirothon! What is the Envirothon? It is the problem-solving, natural resource education program for high school students.

The Iowa Envirothon is sponsored by the Iowa Association of Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners and their partners.

In the field, teams of five students are challenged to sharpen their critical thinking skills, and work as a team to answer written questions and conduct hands-on investigations of environmental issues in five categories. They include: aquatics, forestry, wildlife, soils and current environmental issues.

Regional competitions are being held throughout the

state in February. The regional competition for our counties is at the National Guard Armory in Corning, on Thursday, February 6.

The competition will be held indoors and the questions will be a mix of basic knowledge, identification, and use of simple equipment and procedures. There is no current event oral presentation. The top teams from each of the regional competitions will advance on to the state competition.

State competition will be April 28 at Springbrook State Park, located near Guthrie Center. It will take place outdoors, rain or shine! Questions will be asked, allowing students to demonstrate their skill in such areas as soil judging, knowledge of wildlife species, determining

Quality of soil one reason for strong agricultural economy in Iowa

by Henry Tordoff, Area Soil Conservationist

According to Charles Branham, soil scientist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Council Bluffs, the quality of the soils is one of the reasons for Iowa's strong agricultural economy.

Many of the soils are very productive and suitable for raising row crops, such as corn and soybeans. But other soils are not. Other soils can be used for raising grass or trees. These soils are too erosive, lack depth, have poor soil structure or texture and are not good for row crop production. Soil management, including what is the best use of each soil is, therefore very important.

Soil management includes determining, and if necessary, correcting the acidity or alkalinity of the soil. This is called the soil pH, which measures the concentration of hydrogen ions in the soil. Each crop requires a different pH and therefore the soil manager must select the most suitable crop for a soil area or field. Otherwise, he must correct the pH to fit the

requirement of the crop.

Adding lime to a soil will raise the pH, and adding nitrogen normally lowers the soil pH. The decision a soil manager makes is usually determined by many factors, including economics.

A good soil manager normally will take a sample of each soil he or she is dealing with, and have it tested to determine fertility needs. When the availability of nutrients, such as nitrogen, phosphorous and potash are measured, a decision is made as to how to correct any deficiencies.

Each crop has different

nutrient requirements, and availability of these elements in the soil must match the crops demand, if highly profitable yields are to be obtained.

The NRCS has made soils maps of the land in Iowa, and farmers are given a map of their land as part of the conservation plan. The plan includes the conservation practices most feasible for them to use on their farm. Soils maps are also used by land developers and engineers as a tool for determining the suitability of specific soils for various uses.

County Assessors also use soils maps in determining land values in Iowa.

It's in your hands

Since the Dust Bowl days, America's agricultural producers have met our nation's natural resource challenges -- convincingly! They have enhanced their cropland for wildlife habitat and began using a number of practices to improve water quality. They have adopted tillage methods on millions of acres of cropland which left residues from the previous year's crop on the soil surface to protect the land from soil erosion. In the last ten years alone, they have built the most impressive record for natural resource care on agricultural land of any period in history.

The 1996 Farm Bill puts natural resource care most squarely on the shoulders of agricultural producers than previous farm bills. Your local USDA service center, conservation district and Extension Service will be there to help.

as in the past. But the primary responsibility to make and carry out decisions to care for the land and water rests with farmers and ranchers.

We believe that voluntary conservation, with incentives, is the best approach to widespread use of conservation measures by farmers in this country. The 1996 Farm Bill offers the opportunity to prove that. We have shown over the years that we are responsible stewards of the land and water. We need to keep demonstrating that those of us closest to the land, those of us who farm it, have the greatest stake in caring for it.

When the Farm Bill expires, we would like to look back with satisfaction that we sustained the gains made in natural resource care over the years, and, better yet, improved upon that record.

It's in our hands.



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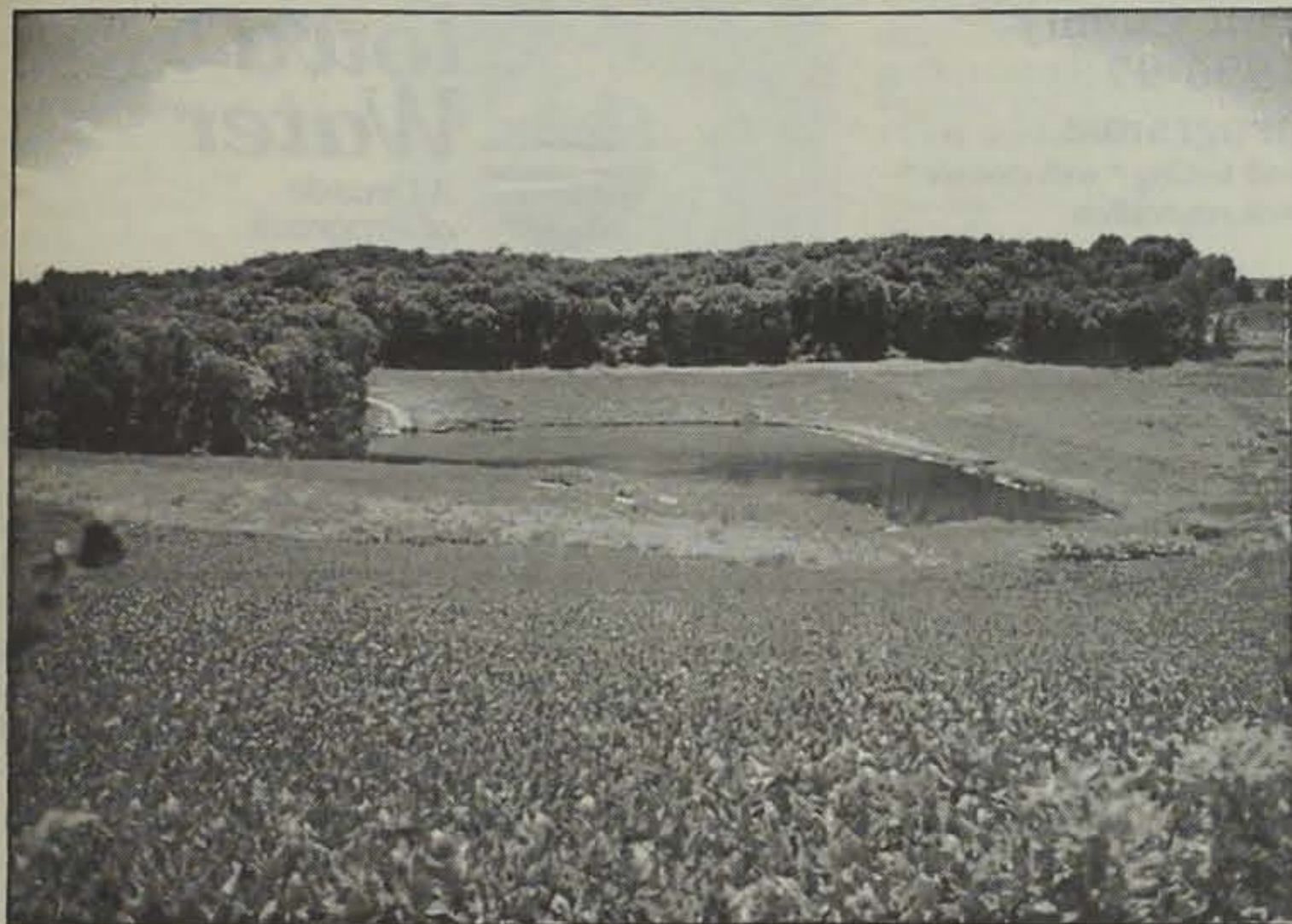
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Watersheds benefit everyone, whether directly or indirectly

by Tom Bottoms
Soll Cons. Tech.
West Pott. NRCS

We, the people, need to protect our natural resources through the promotion of PL566, the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act.

Large amounts of taxpayer funds are being spent to clean up damages caused by heavy rainfall and/or the resultant flooding.

Some of the damaged areas are being repaired, while others have to be totally replaced.

My question for you to ask your legislators might be this:

"Rather than spend huge amounts of money repairing or replacing what has been damaged, why not increase the funding for PL566 so that means can be taken to protect property and prevent the damages from taking place?"

Reports of the flooding in the midwest in 1993 have shown that PL566 structures were proven to be very beneficial to everyone. Without them, the damage would have been much more

serious, causing more federal relief funds be used for repair.

Even though some of the structures are initially expensive to build, once they are in place a big savings will be realized, over a period of time. This should be pointed out to those in control of the funding for these programs.

Installing a PL566 structure would result in stabilizing existing gullies, saving the public urban and

rural expenses for repairs and replacement of roads, bridges, culverts, dikes, drainage ditches and damage to the land.

At the present time, gullies are affecting everyone to some degree, whether directly or

indirectly. The structures which have been installed improve water quality; flood, sediment and erosion control; wildlife habitat; wetlands; recreation; fishing and rural water supplies.

PL566 structures help control the very deep gullies, which range from 3 feet to over 100 feet in depth in the loess hills. Technical and financial assistance is provided on watershed structures. Projects are limited in size and the upland treatment needs to be 75% in place before structures can be installed.

The erosion rate is very high in some areas, which causes a decline in income, crop yields, productivity, soil fertility and lower urban and rural land values. This in turn results in

Attention, CRP landowners

Many CRP contracts will be expiring in the upcoming years. Now is the time to carefully consider the options available for this ground.

Ten years of gained soil and environmental benefits can be undone in just a year

or two of poor management.

If you are a landowner with CRP contracts which will be expiring in the next two or so years, contact your local FSA and/or NRCS offices for more information.

raising input costs of fertilizers, chemicals and machinery, which are passed on to the consumer.

Everyone has benefited greatly over the past 20 to 30 years from the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act, whether or not they realize it.

Many do, and have spent time, effort and money supporting this important program. Each watershed has at one time or another had a committee of dedicated farmers and landowners who worked hard influencing others, including the legislators in Washington D.C. Without those early watershed groups supporting and promoting

the cause, the establishment of the PL566 program might not have become a reality.

In West Pottawattamie County, PL566 watershed structures are protecting 20 to 30 percent of the land.

We need to start controlling the other 70 to 80 percent which is not protected!

As you can see, this program needs everyone's support so that in the future funds will be increased and natural resources protected and not destroyed.

We the people, people like you and me, need to act now and work together to complete this task.

Won't you join the team?



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Demonstration of well closure held

Abandoned wells can lead to personal injury or equipment damage. Also, these wells can threaten the quality of our drinking water.

For decades, farms, towns and businesses in Iowa have relied heavily on wells to supply their water. Due to larger farms, bigger communities and businesses dependent upon public water, thousands of wells have been abandoned throughout the state.

The easiest to notice are old windmills or pumphouses, but many are hidden beneath grass, brush or buildings. These hidden holes can lead to the consequences mentioned above.

There is more to plugging a well than simply dumping something inside the casing. Materials used to plug a well must be strong and free from contaminants. Bentonite clay is the most commonly used sealing material, and may be purchased as powder, chips or pellets. The Bentonite will swell to ten times its original bulk to form an impermeable plug.

The majority of wells, however, are so large and deep that it is very expensive to plug them completely with Bentonite. Certain portions of a well can be

plugged with "fill" materials, such as sand, gravel or crushed stone. The layers of fill and sealing material are alternated.

A field day was held November 26, 1996, to demonstrate proper abandoned well closure. Two wells were closed (plugged) in Silver Creek 26, at the Harvey Moss residence. Two methods were used.

Wells with a small diameter can be plugged with all sealing material, whereas wells with a diameter of more than 18 inches need to have alternate layers of fill and sealing material, as described.

When closing an abandoned well, a designated county agent or certified well-closer must be on the site. This is required to certify to DNR that the well was closed properly.

Shawn Shouse, ISU Extension Agricultural Engineer was present at the November 26 well closing. He discussed the different materials used, and the proper procedures to be carried out.

Michelle Zimmerman and Julia Gubbels, Pottawattamie County Resource Planners, spoke about the county's programs for well testing, well closure, and well renovation.

Pottawattamie County has cost-share available to plug abandoned

Pott County 1996-97

programs:
well testing * well closure * well renovation

The Pottawattamie County Board of Supervisors is once again offering a program where state funding can be utilized for the purpose of testing water from wells, properly plugging wells, and renovating existing wells to prevent contamination. Funding for these programs is available for the period of July 1, 1996 to June 30, 1997.

The well testing program checks for coliform bacteria and nitrates. Any well owner or user with a private water well located in Pott county, being used for human consumption is eligible. There is no cost to the applicants for this program.

The well closure program is available to any well owner with an abandoned well in Pottawattamie County. The funds available are 50 percent of the cost of the closure, up to a maximum of \$200. The remaining cost will

wells through DNR. The program pays up to \$200 of plugging costs for eligible participants.



Iowa Water
A Decade
of Progress

1997 - a wet year?

by Julia Gubbels

Will this year be a wet or dry year?

Predictions are always made by

be paid by the property owner. These funds are on a first-come, first-serve basis until all moneys are expended. *Please note: closures are to be done by property owners or registered well drillers.* If a company is hired to do a closure and they are not a registered well driller, the county will not be able to cost share on that closure.

A new program available this year is well renovation. Any well owner who has a well which requires sealing in order to prevent contamination of an aquifer is eligible. The funds are available for the actual cost up to a maximum of \$600 per well. These funds are on a first-come, first-serve basis until program funds are depleted.

Those having questions about these programs may contact the designated agents for Pottawattamie County. They are Julia Gubbels at the West Pott. SWCD, 712-328-2489, and Michelle Zimmerman at East Pott. SWCD, 712-482-6408.

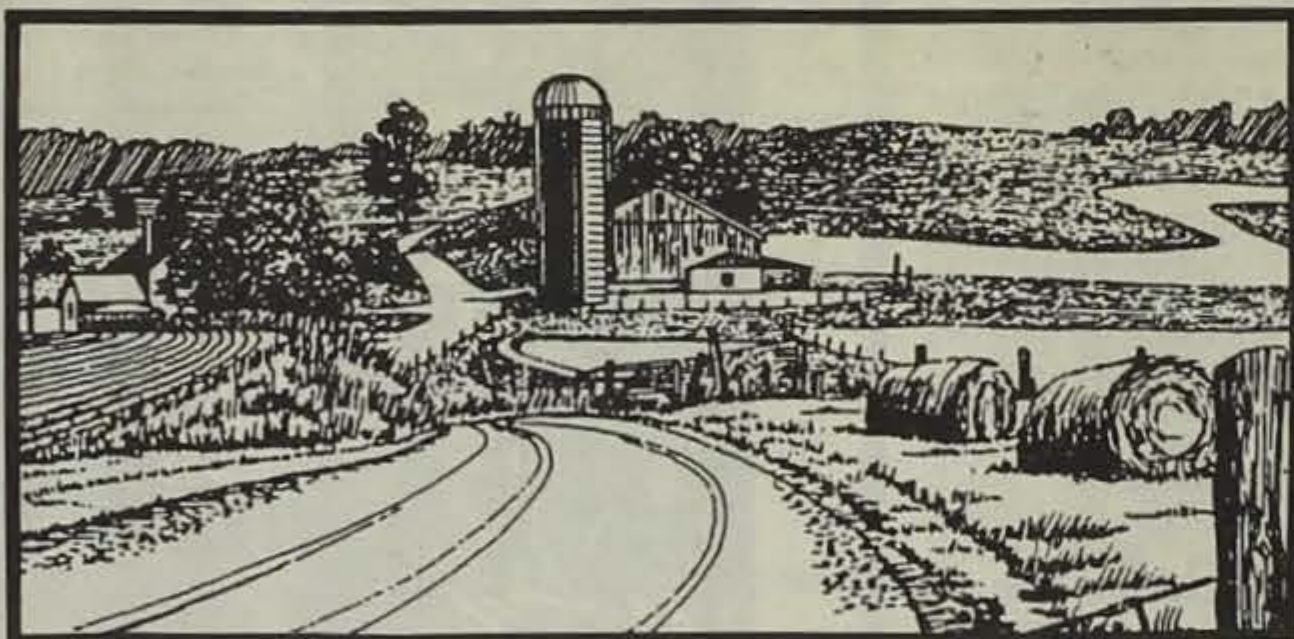
individuals. I predict 1997 will be a wet year! What is the basis for my prediction? I will tell you.

Fresh from a year-long commemoration of the state's 150th birthday, Iowans can keep celebrating through 1997 to recognize the "Year of Water." This year marks the 10-year anniversary of Iowa's Groundwater Protection Act.

Iowa's Groundwater Protection Act established a framework to prevent pollution from a range of sources, including agricultural activities, solid waste landfills, underground storage tanks and commercial and household hazardous waste.

The impact of this law has been multiplied by a host of voluntary initiatives throughout the state on the part of government and nonprofit organizations, as well as individuals.

The celebration is extended from groundwater to all water resources because ground, surface and atmospheric water are interconnected. Not only will the Year of Water work to raise awareness of the state's unique water resources, it also will help identify future opportunities to protect and enhance water quality.



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Moines.

Larry is a member of the American Society of Agricultural Engineers, the Soil and Water Conservation Society, the International Erosion Control Association, and the Treynor Optimist Club. He and his wife attend the Zion Congregational Church in Treynor and he is a former member of the church trustees.

Larry says his hobby is gardening and yard work. He raises a "large variety" of garden produce, and once the family freezer and storage shelves are filled, he shares this with others.

But his main "hobby" is obviously the research station. He is assisted there by Ag Science Research Technician Mike Sukup, and part-time summer employees.

Harvest Day for urban students

How many Council Bluffs students know how corn is harvested?

The seventh grade teaching staff at Lewis Central Middle School has taken the initiative to educate a predominantly urban group of students about the importance of the agricultural community to their daily lives.

Lloyd Munson, middle school science teacher, and Vern Hundtofte, a retired science teacher, created Harvest Day three years ago for eighth graders.

Some of the main goals of Harvest Day are to educate the students about agriculture today and some of its problems, and explain how it is one of the main economic bases in our community.

"We hope the students come away with a greater understanding of agriculture," said Munson.

Activities centered on the harvest of corn and soybeans crops which were planted by the students in the spring of 1996. Included were hand-picking and shelling the corn, and making foods using the corn products.

A local Co-op believes that these urban youths should have a higher farm knowledge, so they help promote Harvest Day. The Co-op provides seed as well as other assistance for the establishment of the crops. They also provide sessions concerning farm management, have a display of farm equipment, and give a tour of their elevator.

Harvest Day is an annual event, and the teachers continue to improve it by incorporating new sessions and enhancing those which already exist.



Woops! Dale Schroder, above, was misidentified in the last newsletter as Virgil Sorensen. Our apologies to both gentlemen. Editor

Farm safety for kids

Each year, many adults and children are killed on farms. The farm is a great place to grow up live, and visit, but it can also be a very dangerous place. Farm safety is encouraged for all!

Underwood first and fourth graders, and Tri-Center fourth graders learned the importance of farm safety from Julia Gubbels, County Resource Planner for West Pott. SWCD.

The students learned about danger areas on the farm, how to prepare for emergencies, and prevention of accidents.

Demonstrations were done to show the dangers and the short time in which accidents can occur when around tractors, grain wagons and bins.

In addition, the fourth grade students watched a videotape which included dangers of power take-offs (PTO's) tractors, All Terrain Vehicles (ATV's), and a teenager's account of his tractor accident.

"Hopefully, kids are more aware of the possible dangers on their farms, and will be more careful," said Julia. "Teamwork is essential for farm safety! Safe farms! A place for future generations to live, work and play."

Cost-share regulations

The West Pottawattamie office will be accepting applications for spring, summer and fall cost-share, beginning January 2, 1997. The sign-up period extends from January through October 31, 1997.

Applications for spring construction will be approved in February, summer construction in July, and fall construction in August. Applications are approved on a point system. When points are equal and funds are limited, cost-share approvals are decided by a lottery system. Land owners who are approved will be notified by letter.

After construction is completed and terraces have been certified by the technicians, final payment is approved by the commissioners. The payments are based on 50% of the technician's estimated cost or 50% of the contractor's bill, whichever is less. The total cost-share amount cannot exceed \$2,500.

County cost-share funds are also available for terraces and some small structures. County funds are limited to \$2,500 cost-share. Additional funds will be allowed if the ground is available, the contractor is readily available, and there are sufficient funds. A map of the proposed area must be attached to the application.

The No-Interest loan program is available and is administered like a loan, but without interest. The loan is set up for 10 years. The minimum amount of cost-share is \$2,500 and the maximum is \$10,000. Payments are made once each year for ten years at 10% of the amount borrowed.

In addition to the terrace

cost-share, there are REAP funds for windbreaks. This program allows up to 75% cost-share, not to exceed \$700 per windbreak. Landowners may apply for this program at any time throughout the year. Approvals are based on the point system.

For further information regarding any of the programs, those interested may call 712-328-2489.

Flemmer is award winner

The Iowa chapter of Soil and Water Conservation Society selected Roger Flemmer as their 1996 Conservation Reporting Excellence award winner. The award is given to those who present a series of programs or articles on resource conservation.

Flemmer is the Farm Director at KFAB radio in Omaha. He has been at this position for the past fifteen years. A major component of his job includes writing and reporting agricultural events. Flemmer and 11 conservation field offices in Nebraska and Iowa also cooperate in broadcasting a taped radio program.

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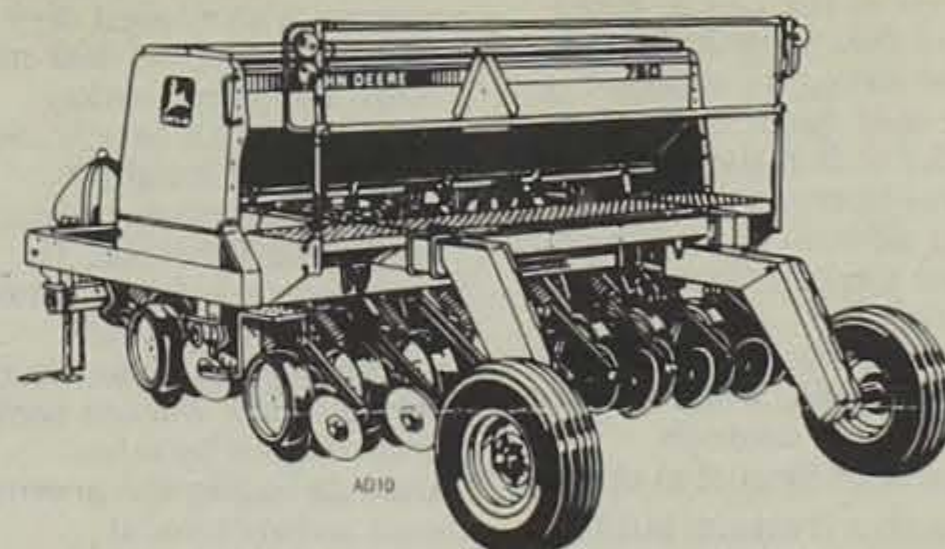
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Flemmer and KFAB radio, numerous people are made aware of issues which involve their future. The air-time KFAB radio has given, and the hard work by Flemmer has allowed conservation and environmental educational topics to be broadcast. The messages are then carried to others, to help make a difference in how these topics are viewed by those not involved in agriculture.

The West Pottawattamie field office staff would like to say to Roger, "Thank you for your hard work and dedication to conservation. We appreciate you!"



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Acorns will provide bountiful animal food supply

by Chris Williams
Pottawattamie
County Naturalist

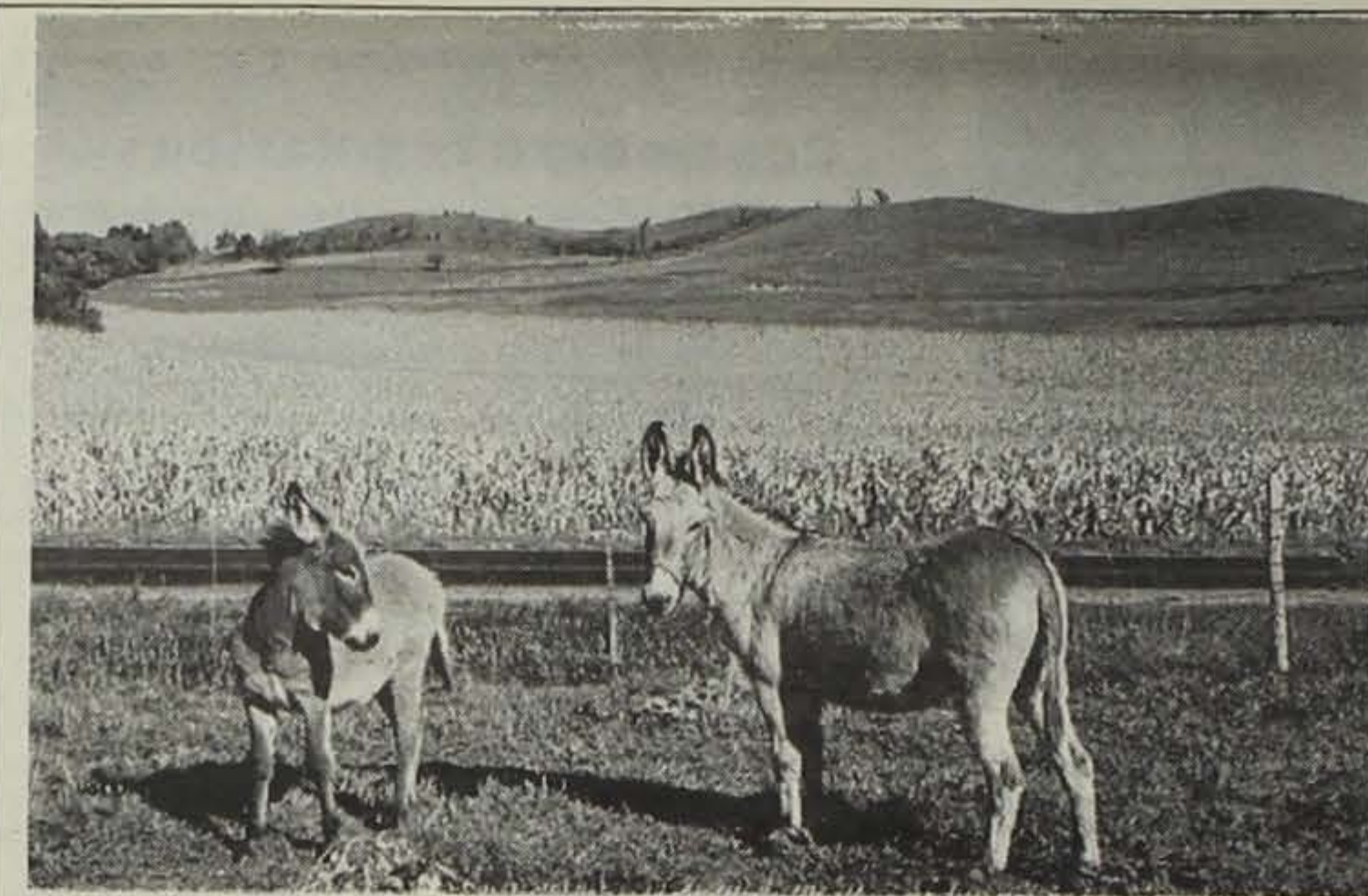
Taking a hike down any county park trail, one is sure to notice the abundance of acorns under any oak tree. The cracking and crunching of these acorns makes it virtually impossible to hike silently, without being noticed by wildlife. Around some oak trees the acorns are so thick you have to be careful walking and try not to twist your ankle.

While on several fall nature hikes with students from local schools, we took this opportunity to explore this bountiful food source by jumping enthusiastically up and down to smash acorns on the trail. I asked the students to then open the cracked acorn and see what was inside.

Much to their wonder and amazement, there were holes burrowing through the inside of the acorn. Hints were that something had been eating its way through the seed. Some students were lucky to find the maker of these burrows still inside and alive, in spite of having been jumped vigorously upon.

What was viewed inside was a small, white larva or grub. Most students expressed disgust at the sight of such a creature, but I emphasized the valuable role this small white grub would play for all wildlife this winter.

Numerous animal species



These burros were snapped by the SWCD "roving" cameraman, as they grazed this fall in the Loess Hills near Pisgah. While they are reported to belong to Larry Pape, he was unavailable for comment. The burro was a popular pack animal in the early days in Harrison County, but few of them are seen today.

West Pottawattamie
SWCD/NRCS

Environmental Education Council

The West Pottawattamie Soil and Water Conservation District takes pride in establishing and promoting conservation education programs for area schools. The district established the Environmental Education Council over ten years ago. The purpose of this group is

will have food this winter, due to the plentiful supply of acorns. White-tailed deer, rabbits, squirrels, deer mice, voles, raccoons, turkey, quail would all benefit. So would many songbird species, like Bluejays and the Tufted Titmouse. The acorn seeds will be utilized during the bitter, cold months of winter and early spring. Some will use seeds broken open by other animals eating the acorns, such as rabbits and songbirds. Others, like the turkey, will eat the acorns whole.

When feasting on these nutritious seeds, the

to promote environmental education and to conduct various activities. Meetings are held every month during the school year.

The members include the Pottawattamie County Naturalist, retired teachers, the County Conservation Board, teachers from Lewis

animals and birds will also unknowingly eat the small, white insect grub living inside. This may seem disgusting to many, but this provides vital protein and other nutrients which the acorn seed otherwise lacks.

Insects provide a valuable source of food for many forms of wildlife, even in the winter. Just watch any woodpecker busily work the bark of a tree in search of hibernating insects.

This insect smorgasbord will become frozen this winter, just waiting to be eaten by wildlife trying to survive the frigid cold. It will be their "frozen food".

Central Middle School, Tri-Center and Underwood elementary schools and a staff member of the conservation district. Facilitator is the County Resource Planner at the SWCD.

Many activities are held annually. Some of these include conservation education field days, the conservation poster contest and a banquet for the poster contest winners. The EEC is an integral part of organizing and participating in these activities. In addition to these events, the members are active in incorporating conservation and environmental issues into their everyday lives.

"These individuals have a sincere interest in conservation education for young people, as well as in increasing their knowledge about specified topics," said Resource Planner Julia

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Gubbels. "The West Pottawattamie SWCD would like to thank all the current members, as well as those who have served in the past. Their hard work and dedication has been appreciated."

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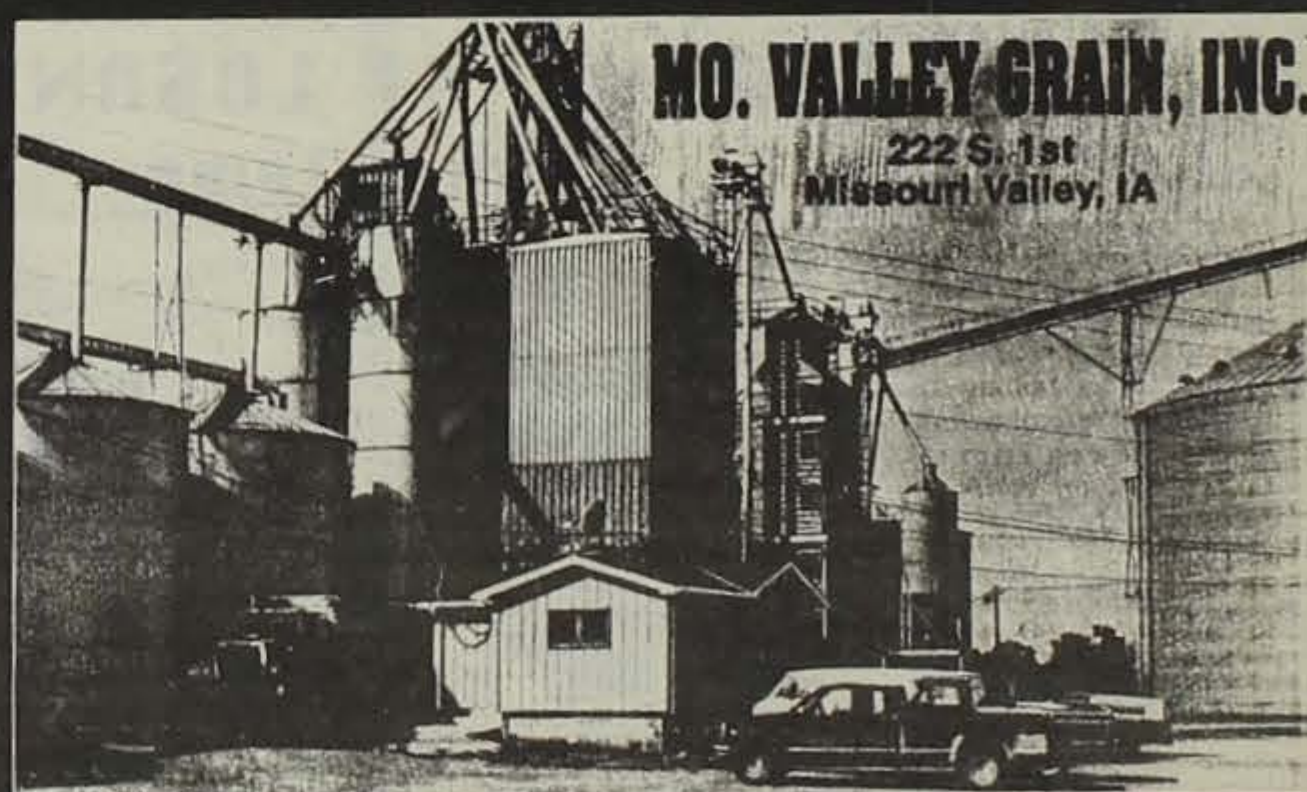
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