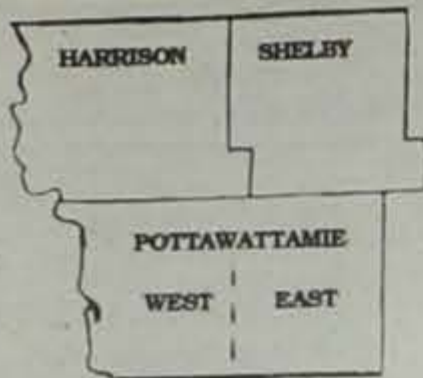




Quad-District Conservation News



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Winter
1998-99

Cooperation and partnership lead to worthwhile results

by Lou Waite

Many years ago, a bridge was constructed over a small creek which flowed under what was then a part of the Lincoln Highway, on the northeast edge of Dunlap. Later, the Lincoln Highway was re-routed, and that former segment of it became a street in Dunlap, which had grown to encompass the area. The street was called Lincoln Way, in deference to its history, and the old bridge carried a lesser volume of traffic.

Years of stress, however, had taken its toll on the bridge. Erosion had also degraded the creek banks, causing the bridge supports to be undermined and the structure unsafe for travel. It was then the Harrison County Road Department decided to remove the bridge and replace it with a wooden "Greenwood" flume. This provided adequate gully stabilization for a number of years.

At that time, the site was still considered to be outside the city limits, so it was a county responsibility. Meanwhile, vandals set fire to it, damaging the wooden chute, and it began to deteriorate. Each year, there was more deterioration, and less maintenance. The lack may have been due to the fact that the city felt the structure was the county's problem, as it had always been. But as the city had grown, its parameters had also expanded. The county felt the street and the structure was now a part of Dunlap proper.

With each side at somewhat of a stalemate, deterioration continued. The flood waters of 1993 and 1996 probably were the final blow, and the structure was felt to be beyond repair. Lincoln Way, at that point, was caving in, and down to one-way traffic.

Giles Lacey, current Mayor of Dunlap, said during a recent

interview:

"We had accepted the fact that the problem was going to have to be the city's. But the city didn't have the funds to do what needed to be done. When I saw the original engineer's cost-estimate, I couldn't see how in the world it could be done. I finally got in touch with Russ Kurth at the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and asked if he could help us design or plan something to solve the problem. That was the best move I ever made. Russ did some research and found that this structure, Site A-3, was in the Mill-Picayune Watershed, and still eligible for funding.

"When the county installed the Greenwood flume," Kurth explained, "it provided the needed gully stabilization for the sites upstream. But now that the structure was failing, Public Law 566 funds could be used to install a new structure which would continue to provide gully erosion control."

Charles Carrigan, City Council member and Mayor Pro-tem, continued, "Russ also proposed different ideas which would bring the cost down, and be just as effective." To which Russ added, "Other watershed structures on the land above the site had helped decrease the water flow so that a smaller, less expensive pipe would suffice. Normally when a watershed structure is built on a road, a cost-share agreement is made between NRCS and the project sponsors. The sponsors normally agree to pay 40% of the construction cost, and NRCS agrees to complete the survey, design and inspection."

After various "brainstorming" sessions involving Mayor Lacey, Carrigan, NRCS and other city council personnel, a plan was devised. Since NRCS engineers did not have time to do the surveying or designing, the city



Russ Kurth, commissioners Anita Metter and Dwight Mills, Charles Carrigan and Engineer Mark McCurdy (kneeling) examine damage at the site in 1977.

was to pay Snyder and Associates Engineering firm of Atlantic for those services. NRCS then, through the Mill-Pic Watershed program, would pay the costs of construction.

Members of the Dunlap City Council at that time were Carrigan, Ruth Sherwood, Lorraine Houston, Kurt Kline and Conrad Knickman. They agreed to the proposition. But first, easements had to be obtained from landowners who would also be involved with the project. Lacey and Carrigan set out to talk to these people, and get their consent.

Carrigan commented, with a grin, "Those on the far side of it weren't too hard to deal with, but some of the rest took a little convincing."

Lacey laughed and added, "Yeah, Charlie can be pretty convincing, all right! But he did

a good job, and they (the landowners) came to see it would be a big benefit to them."

The contract was let, and Larry Clark Construction of Whiting was the low bidder for the project. The plan called for the removal of the old wooden structure and installation of 116-feet of 96" diameter, corrugated metal pipe. A 120" diameter riser 9-foot tall was attached to 96" diameter pipe to provide the designated grade control upstream. Approximately 1500 cubic yards of extra fill dirt was needed to cover the pipe and re-establish the roadway.

"The contractors didn't lose any time, but got right to it and stayed with it until the project was done," Lacey stated emphatically. "They did a good job, too. The contract was let on October 7, they began construction on October 12, and it was completed and the road open again by November 1."

Carrigan shook his head and said, "I think that is a record . . . getting it done that fast! I agree with Giles . . . that first engineer's estimate had me saying 'no way', but this just shows what cooperation, and finding the right people (gesturing toward Russ) can do."

Lacey nodded, and went on to say, "It was a job that had to be done, and through cooperation between a large number of people it was done. That just shows what happens when people work together. I believe it's important to keep communication lines open, and that is what we tried to do. Everyone involved knew what was happening at all times."

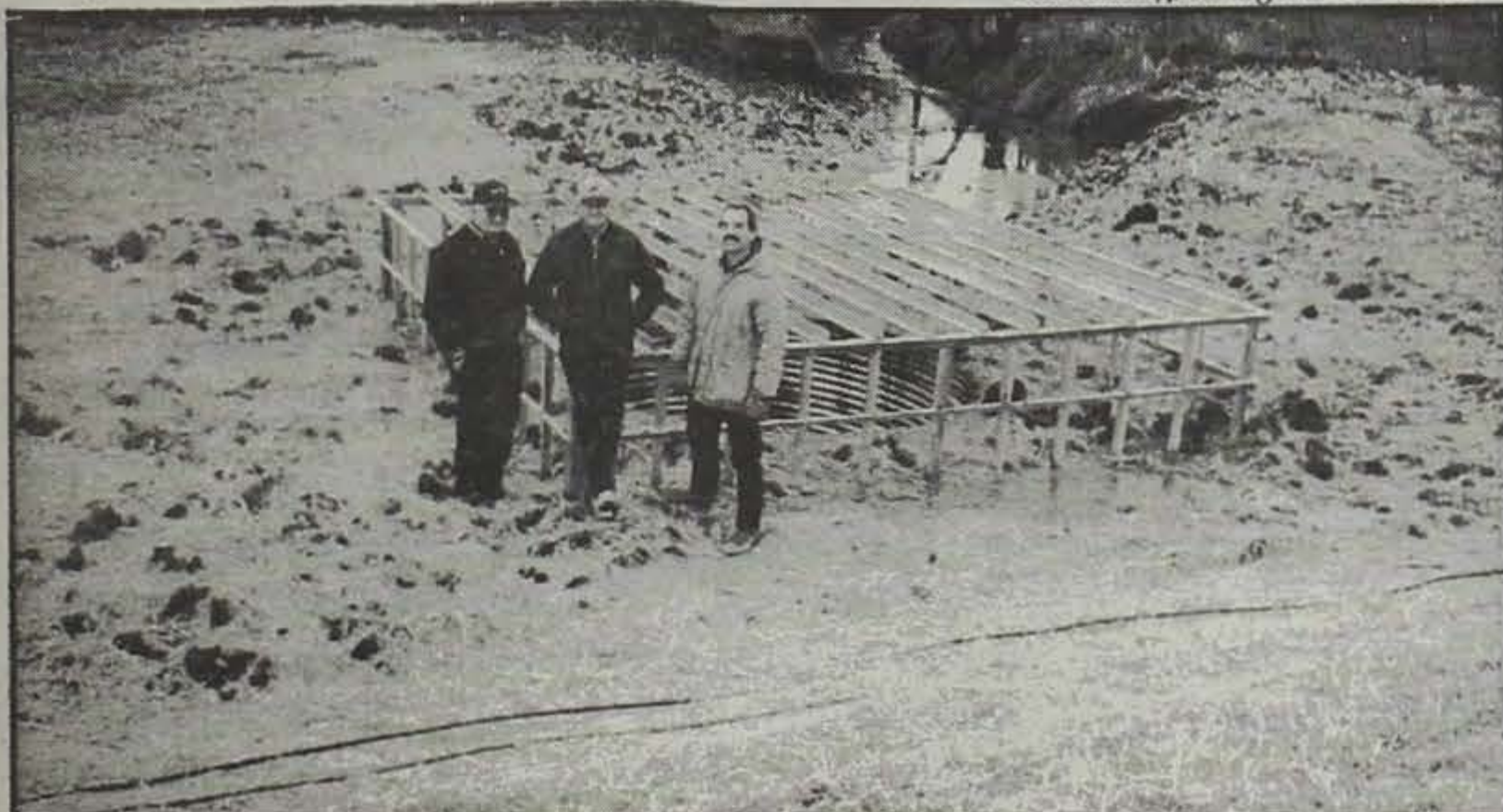
Lacey also commented that such cooperation might be valuable in getting a filter dam

installed at Site B-3 (Pleasant View Park) in Dunlap. He pointed out that upland treatment by private landowners east of it would really be of benefit.

"I remember years ago when I was a kid, the idea was to contour and build terraces, and build control structures in the ditches. But something happened to that -- the funding was cut down for one thing, and people just seemed to lose their enthusiasm, or something. I have worked in conservation with farmers around the area, and have been familiar with it since I was a kid. I still have the old hand level I used back then. I spent 30 years as a federal employee. I guess I know something about how the system works." Then with a lift of an eyebrow and a grin, he added " . . . when it works!"

Russ pointed out that a pooling of resources was also important to the success of the project. "The city's agreeing to provide or contract the engineering assistance for this structure really speeded up the process," he affirmed. "NRCS engineers were busy with projects for Emergency Watershed programs in other parts of the state. The timing was also right, as NRCS's fiscal year ends on September 30. There were funds left over from another project which needed to be committed by the end of the fiscal year. It just happened that the structure at Dunlap was designed and ready to go, and just the right size to use the remainder of the funds available. So with cooperation, combining of resources and a little luck, it all worked out."

More photos on Page 2



Carrigan, Lacey and Kurth are shown at the same location in November, 1998, after the new structure was completed.

Dunlap structure



This photo, taken in 1997, shows the degradation of the streambank, and also the deterioration of the old wooden flume.



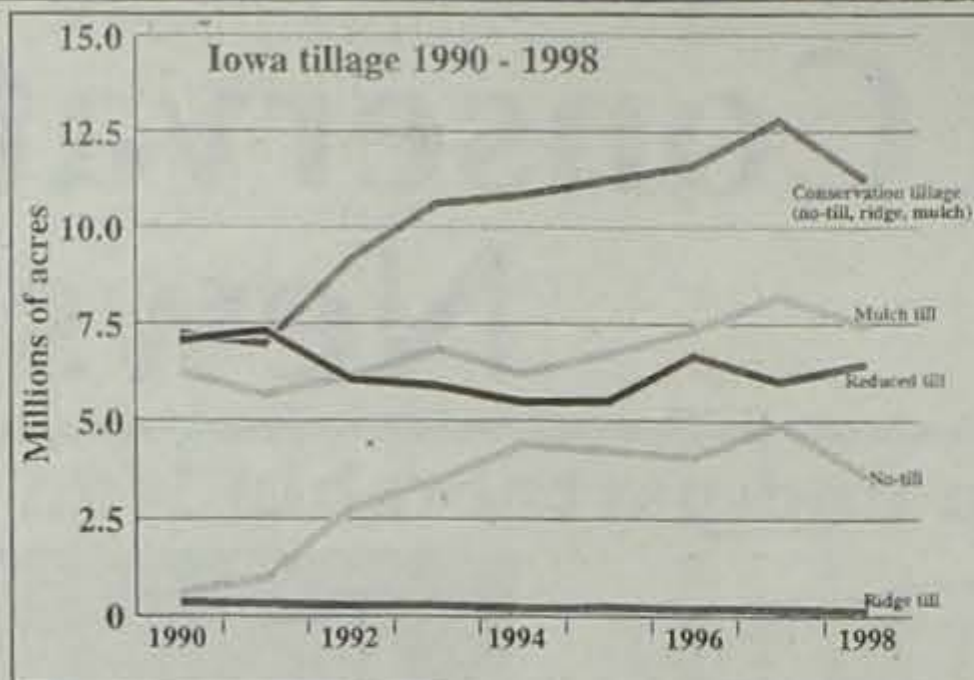
The same site with new installation in place, November, 1998.

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Iowa farmers have made tremendous gains in tillage in the 1990's. The first major drop in conservation tillage, mulch till and no-till came in 1998.



Drop in use of soil-saving tillage methods a concern

Conservation and farm group leaders are concerned about an apparent drop in the use of soil-saving reduced-tillage methods in Iowa. Preliminary results from the 1998 conservation tillage survey shows a 25-percent drop in no-till methods, and a 12-percent decline in total conservation tillage from 1997.

It appears this decline is across the state, according to survey analysts. LeRoy Brown, State Conservationist for NRCS says, "We urge farmers to leave crop residues on the soil surface this fall after harvest. This protects the soil from falling raindrops until the next year's crop can protect it."

Conservation and farm groups have also noticed fewer crop residues this year. The Corn Growers Association is convinced that conservation tillage has worked and saved millions of tons of topsoil in the past. They are concerned when they hear reports and see extra tillage going on, according to Larry Kay. Kay is a Pottawattamie County farmer and representative of Iowa Corn Growers. "We need to be as concerned as ever about soil erosion," he said.

The decline in conservation tillage is being attributed to a long, dry fall last year which provided the time and opportunity to till farm fields after harvest. Other reasons

given for more tillage include a cool, wet spring, compaction problems and less attention to conservation compliance. Conservationists feel they have valid answers opposing each of the reasons for more tillage.

Apparently conservation compliance is still an issue for farmers. Most farmers, however, are supporting the conservation compliance concept and following their conservation plans. But it must be again emphasized that may still lose USDA program benefits if they don't follow their plans. Almost all of those plans, for example, call for conservation tillage.

Conservationists and some long-term no-till farmers also took issue with the idea of needing to till because of extra time in the fall, or cold, wet springs.

"You take away your options for next spring when you till after harvest in the fall," said Jim Gulliford, Director of the Division of Soil Conservation for the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship. He said that five years of on-farm analysis, looking at economic records from 1623 corn fields and 1189 soybean fields showed that corn-bean rotations in Iowa using mulch-till, ridge-till and no-till systems have more profit than systems with little or not crop residues. These figures come from the MAX-Farming for

Maximum Efficiency reports.

Soil-saving is cited as a strong reason to farm with residues. Fields were severely eroded this summer after heavy rains, but those with heavy residue suffered much less damage than those with little or none.

Other information from the conservation tillage survey showed the following: (Comparing 1998 to 1997)

A 25% reduction in no-till corn and soybeans.

Two counties are 50% or more no-till; 31 counties are 25% or more no-till; 28 counties are less than 10% no-till/

Counties with the highest no-till percentage are in southern Iowa. All but two (Harrison and Shelby) of the counties with 25% or more no-till are south of or include I-80.

The largest no-till increases came in the early 1990's as farmers implemented conservation plans required in provisions of the 1985 and 1990 farm bills.

77 counties had a drop in no-till, with 44 counties showing a drop of 25% or more. However, 22 counties had an increase in no-till.

No-till decline was in both corn and soybeans. However, 51% of the corn and soybeans produced in 1998 were in conservation tillage systems.

While acres of no-till and conservation tillage decreased, acreages with 0% to 15% cover increased, nearly all of the increase being in corn fields.

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Planting legumes for wildlife

by Ed Weiner
DNR Wildlife Biologist II

Cooperators are completing seeding of land enrolled in the 16th and 17th CRP signups, and quietly anticipate future CRP signups that will benefit producers and wildlife alike. Wildlife benefits of CRP have been greatly increased by inclusion of legumes in required grassland seeding mixtures.

Legumes have long been known to be a valuable component of wildlife habitat and are utilized by numerous wildlife species. They provide essential cover for a variety of wildlife activities. Legumes, such as partridge pea and lespedeza, are important food sources for upland birds, and like all legumes, they attract good populations of insects, creating a smorgasbord of high protein food for young pheasants and the ground nesting upland birds.

In addition to wildlife benefits, legumes provide great benefits to the soil in which they grow. Legumes transform gaseous nitrogen into nodules in their root systems, adding valuable Nitrogen to the soil in which they grow. In life their root systems protect soil from eroding, and in death, they release nitrogen to nearby plants, or to the succession of plants that will follow.

Most of us are familiar with legumes such as red clover or alfalfa, but less familiar are the numerous native legumes found growing in uncultivated areas. In their hidden locations, they provide the same values to wildlife and the land as they live out their life cycle in obscurity. Below is a list of some commonly found natives and a list of some common cultivated legumes which are found in the region.

Common native legumes found in the area:

Partridge pea
Illinois bundle-flower
Purple and white prairies clover
Leadplant Canada milkvetch
American deer vetch
Trailing wildbean

Wild licorice
Scurf pea
Common introduced legumes found in the area:

Alfalfa
Sweet clover
Red clover
White clover
Alsike clover
Cicer milkvetch
Birdsfoot trefoil
Roundhead lespedeza
Korean lespedeza
Sericea lespedeza

Selection of a legume species depends on the type of wildlife cover that is to be established. Winter cover, roosting cover or loafing and escape cover is best provided by tall legumes such as alfalfa, sweet clover or lespedeza. The tall species provide good overhead cover while protecting them from strong winds and snow. Medium height legumes such as alfalfa or red clover are well suited to activities such as nesting and brood rearing. Clover and alfalfa allows hens to easily lead their broods to forage on insects attracted by the cover. Shorter legumes such as birdsfoot trefoil and white clover are utilized for loafing by smaller birds such as quail, and mammals such as rabbits and rodents. The shorter, less dense cover permits these smaller animals to move freely while foraging. Maximum wildlife benefit is derived when legumes are established in a 3:1 mix with cool season grasses such as brome, orchard grass or timothy.

Most introduced legumes such as alfalfa and clover are grown for forage and hay crops. Generally, timing of the first hay cutting coincides with the peak of hatching for birds such as pheasants. Adult birds and chicks caught unaware can be swallowed up by mowers or conditioners, and incubating hens flushed from nests, leaving unhatched eggs

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vulnerable to mammal or raptor predation.

Research continues to show that delaying hay harvest until after July 15 greatly increases survival of young birds and mammals alike. An option for wildlife is to make sure that fields to be harvested early are cut short late in the fall, so there is little residual cover in the spring. If this option is employed, fields to be harvested after July 15 can be left with 10 to 12 inches of growth in the fall. Early nesting birds will select the tall cover field over the short cover fields, thereby creating a secure area for nesting through July 15. While this is not a perfect solution, it does provide additional benefits for wildlife for farmers who want to make a difference.

Legumes create a valuable wildlife cover type, and provide both food and cover needs for upland nesting birds and small mammals. Selection of the proper legume is critical in creating the type of cover desired. Managing the legume with wildlife in mind greatly increases its value as cover for today's birds, and will contribute to the success of tomorrow's nests.



Kevin Holcombe and daughters Emily, left and Ashley.

Kevin Holcombe honored

Kevin Holcombe, who had served as Soil Conservation Technician at the Logan NRCS/SWCD office since 1979, was recently transferred to the Winterset field office. He began his duties there on January 4. His wife, Robin, is employed at the State Farm Services Agency (FSA) office in Des Moines. They have two daughters, Ashley and Emily. Rush Kurth, District Conservationist commented:

"Kevin certainly left his mark on the landscape, with many miles of terraces he designed and laid out. His technical assistance on a wide variety of other conservation practices will also be noticed for some time to come."

"The field office staff will certainly miss Kevin's help, especially when cooperators request assistance on projects for which he laid the groundwork. We wish Kevin the very best in his new adventure."

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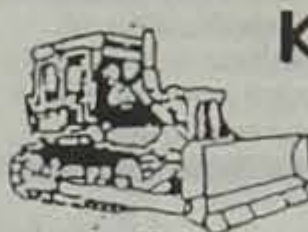
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USDA EQIP cost-share signup announced

The USDA has announced a sign-up period of January 25 through February 5 for landowners who want to apply for cost-share funds from the Environmental Quality Improvement Program (EQIP).

"The sign-up is for the program's statewide concerns," said Russ Kurth, Harrison District Conservationist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service. "There are 52 local EQIP priority areas which will have their own separate sign-up and practices," Kurth noted.

Harrison County has 2 of the local Priority Areas: Willow Creek and Mill-Picayune Creek Watershed Site S-5. East Pottawattamie has one in the Farm Creek Watershed.

The intent of EQIP is to get the maximum conservation protection for the funds expended. EQIP offers cost-share (generally 50%) for installing conservation practices, as well as incentive payments. Applications received during the sign-up will be in the first group to be considered for funding, and based on the fund demand in previous sign-ups there will likely be only one sign-up period in 1999. Funds will be available for the following resource concerns:

- livestock manure management and grazing lands
- soil erosion
- priority lakes, municipal water supply impoundments and lakes, DNR priority cold water streams and agricultural drainage wells.

Producers will be asked to enter into 5 to 10-year contracts that specify the type and amount of conservation work to be done within a specified timetable.

Payments are then made to the producer when the conservation practices specified in the contract are satisfactorily established.



Commissioners David Christensen and Everette Wohlers are administered the oath of office by Commissioner Chair Babetta Lucke.

"I promise to do my best . . . " (Whoops! Wrong oath!)

David Christensen of Pisgah and Everette Wohlers of Missouri Valley were recently sworn in as Harrison County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Commissioners.

Christensen has served as Assistant Commissioner since 1994, and was elected as full Commissioner last November. He operates his own 240 acre farm in the Pisgah area, and is also involved in the family farm operation with his father and two brothers. David also works at a part-time job in Council Bluffs.

Wohlers, an incumbent, was also elected to another term in November. He has served as Commissioner since 1993, having been an assistant commissioner for several years prior to that time.

Any land outside of the Harrison and Pottawattamie EQIP Priority Areas would be eligible for this 'statewide resource concerns' sign-up.

Anyone interested in applying conservation practices may stop at their local USDA Service Center for sign-up information.

Everette farms 415 acres which he owns, and 263 of which he is operator. He and his wife Karen have four sons.

Chairman Babetta Lucke administered the oath of office during the January special session. Other commissioners are Zane McBride of Logan and Anita Methers of rural Logan/Magnolia.

SWCD commissioners are responsible for helping direct soil and water conservation and financial incentive programs in the county, addressing soil loss complaints, approving soil conservation plans, and planning such activities as student field days, poster contests and other events.

They serve staggered four-year terms, unsalaried, on a volunteer basis.

EQIP is part of the Conservation Provision of the 1996 Farm Bill. This program focuses on conservation priority areas, maximizes environmental benefits per dollar used and increases the involvement of communities through locally-led conservation.

No-till corn favors ammonium nitrogen

Ammonium sulfate is an excellent source of nitrogen for no-till because it is not subject to losses from ammonia volatilization.

Results of a two-year no-till corn study conducted by the University of Illinois highlights the superior N efficiency of ammonium sulfate, a fertilizer source that originally gained attention for its sulfur content.

Ammonium sulfate contains 24 units of sulfur in the sulfate form, but new research shows it is also an effective source of nitrogen -- particularly for no-till applications. Ammonium sulfate contains 21 percent nitrogen, all in the ammonium form.

According to Dr. Fred Below, crop physiologist with the University of Illinois, ammonium sulfate is an excellent source of nitrogen because it is not subject to losses from ammonium volatilization, a problem that affects surface applications of urea and urea-containing fertilizers like UAN solution.

Volatilization is a process that releases fertilizer nitrogen into the atmosphere. The risk of N loss from volatilization increases in no-till because of the presence of crop residues on the soil surface. Crop residues contain urease, an enzyme that triggers ammonia volatilization when urea forms of nitrogen are broadcast and left on the surface of the soil. Without rainfall to work the fertilizer past crop residue and into the soil, N losses from volatilization can reach 30 percent or more after three days.

"Ammonium sulfate can be broadcast on the surface of a no-till soil with little risk of N loss," says Below.

Ammonium sulfate also resists N losses from leaching because its positively charged ammonium ions bind to negatively charged soil particles and become relatively immobile. Rainfall after application of ammonium sulfate is less likely to move nitrogen out of the root zone than urea or nitrate-

containing sources.

Over a two-year period, Below and associates examined the performance of ammonium sulfate and six other nitrogen treatments when applied at 11 different no-till locations throughout Illinois. The researchers used production-sized plots and their findings take into account a variety of soil and weather conditions. "Ammonium sulfate consistently produced high yields across all environments," says Below. "Some fertilizer N sources need the addition of amendments to maintain their efficiency in no-till, but ammonium sulfate performs well in no-till systems without the help of amendment."

Loess Hills Info Fair

Open house for small acreage owners in the Loess Hills and an "Information Fair" will be held March 6, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Visitors Center in Pisgah.

Those who already own small acreages, or who plan to build on one in the Loess Hills may find the event interesting.

Representatives of several public agencies will be present for consultation about various interests. Topics may include building in the hills, landowner options, woodland programs, conservation programs, neighbor relations, erosion control, etc. Representative personnel will be from the Harrison County Conservation Board, the Loess Hills State Forest, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Iowa State Extension Agency, Harrison County Planning and Zoning Commission and the Harrison County Landfill and Recycling Department.

Those attending are welcome to request information about these and any other topics unique to the Loess Hills and its soil. Printed materials with further information will be available.



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"A tour of problems & solutions"



County Board of Supervisor members, District Commissioners and other public officials examine a large cutback during the Legislative Tour of East Pottawattamie County.

by Greg Mathis

The sight of the Southwest Iowa Transit bus going over a steep hill in the middle of the stalk field was strange indeed! It was on a mission! Commissioner Russ Brandes reported that six members of the County Board of Supervisors, the field representative of Congressman Greg Ganske, a State Representative, a representative from the Iowa Division of Soil Conservation, and two employees from the Natural Resources Conservation Service boarded the bus at the Armstrong Research Center Farm. It was a warm Tuesday, December 15, and the plan was to visit eight different sites.

Chairman Darrell Stamp called it a "tour of problems and solutions." He said, "One of our biggest erosion problems is streambank and streambed erosion. The streams and creeks are getting deeper and wider, due to the intense drop in elevation in each mile of the creeks. This causes the creeks to dig deeper into the soil and simultaneously the banks start caving away."

One of the first stops was on the Floyd and Anne Williams farm, which has Walnut Creek running through it. The Williams escorted the group around the farm, showing where they have built one small waterway this fall. They also showed us where they plan to put a windbreak around the farmstead, and a

rapidly-growing 30-foot ditch.

Next, the group visited the Don Eyer farm, where a severe cutback coming off Graybill Creek was dividing the farm. Don is considering doing the same thing that his neighbor, Commissioner Marlyn Von Weihe, did on the other side of the creek, to solve the same problem. Marlyn explained, "Most all of these watersheds are too large to control with a costly dam, so we are trying to find new and different ways to stop the degradation of the stream and the cutbacks coming off the stream."

Those attending from the County Board included Arlyn Danker, Delmar Goos, Robert Williams, Betty Moats, Stanley Grote and Tim Wichman. State Representative Jack Drake and Ben Post, Aide to Senator Ganske, also made the trip.

Jim Gillespie from the Iowa Division of Soil Conservation, and Jeff Zimprich, NRCS Area Four Conservationist from Atlantic were present. Also were Clair Acker, State Technician and Greg Mathis, District Conservationist, from the Oakland NRCS office.

Spring rains bring fall terrace breaks

Becky Lockwood, State Secretary for the East Pottawattamie Soil and Water conservation District, didn't know whether to brag, or cry!

"We've had over two-hundred applications for cost-share to repair terraces", she said. "I'm accustomed to sixty or eighty applications for building new terraces each fall, but not this volume!"

The Farm Service Agency received emergency funding (Emergency Conservation Program - ECP) for repair of some conservation practices which had been damaged by heavy rains this spring. However, they could only cost-share amounts of over \$1563 worth of damage. This left a void for those producers who had

filterstrip along the creek.

New terraces were recently built above an old ditch, which will be rebuilt into a waterway next year. Where the old ditch dumps into Walnut Creek, a severe cutback exists, which will require a structure to stabilize the proposed waterway outlet and the surrounding bank.

Looking upstream, a two-foot waterfall can be seen cutting away at the streambed. Most of the conversation on the bus revolved around how to best stabilize the sloughing banks and stop the cutting of the waterfall.

The next stop was at the Lester Leighton farm, where Lester, who is both a farmer and contractor, had recently completed a grade stabilization structure using sheet piling and riprap on the un-named creek. It appeared to be very effective and an efficient way to control a straight section of this creek. The creek had been fast-flowing and causing cutbacks within the streambed.

A stop was also made at the Mark Perdue farm to view a newly constructed conventional dam, which was to control a

Commissioners re-elected

by Michelle Zimmerman

Darrell Stamp of Lincoln township and Russ Brandes of James Township were recently re-elected as East Pottawattamie SWCD Commissioners. They bring to the board many years of conservation experience.

A commissioner is a volunteer promoter in the community, helping direct such activities as field days and educational meetings. They also help distribute conservation materials to the

public by promoting conservation contests and awards programs.

As commissioners, Darrell and Russ will help decide the direction of soil and water conservation programs in the county, and will have the opportunity to influence state and national conservation programs.

Their involvement will

include activities such as soil loss complaints, establishing acceptable soil loss limits, publishing an annual report, approving soil conservation plans and assisting in the management of district funds and personnel.

Among other things, the commissioners will take part in regular monthly meetings, become knowledgeable of the soil and water conservation laws and programs, develop and carry out soil and water resource conservation plans and help direct financial programs.

Five commissioners elected at general election on a non-partisan basis for staggered, four-year terms govern each district. Only one commissioner may reside in any single township.

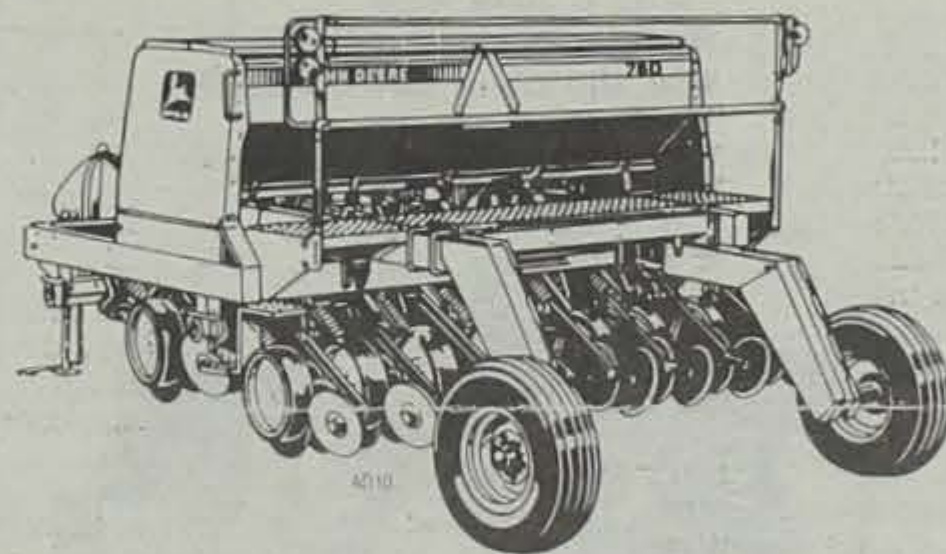
For more information, those interested may call or visit their local district office.

lesser amounts. The district commissioners decided that terrace repair for those producers who do not qualify for ECP would be an appropriate use of the Local Option Sales Tax (LOST) money.

To date, there have been more than 1400 terrace breaks turned in as repaired under this program. Becky reports that

only a little over half of the applicants have reported their number of terrace-break repairs.

Commissioner Chairman Darrell Stamp commented that this program spreads the funding round to benefit a larger number of rural people in the East Pottawattamie area.



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1999 state cost share policies announced

The East Pottawattamie Soil & Water Conservation District Commissioners have finalized the policies for state cost-share funds. The commissioners customized the Iowa Financial Incentive Program rules to best suit the district's needs. The following cost-share policies were drafted by the board for 1999:

1) One first priority application per owner/operator will be allowed per calendar year. (Ownership documented in the office as of January 1, 1999). Applications for 1999 will be accepted beginning at 8:00 a.m. on January 6 at the Oakland NRCS office.

2) Maximum terrace footage allowed will be 7,500 feet cost-shared at 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 at \$300 per intake not to exceed total cost-share job (terrace and tile) of \$7,500. 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. One season may be chosen. 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 state cost-share the prior year (1998) 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.

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 1999. 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 as "first priority".

7) For those landowners building their own terraces, 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, 1999, nor show a 1998 date. If the application is returned by mail, it should not reach us before January 6. All contractors will be spot-checked by NRCS staff.

WATERWAYS

Waterways staked and constructed to NRCS specifications will be cost-shared at 50 percent, not to exceed 40 cents per foot, up to 2,500 feet in length not to exceed \$1,000.00. **Please note:** A 20-year maintenance agreement will be signed prior to receiving cost-share funds, pursuant to Division of Soil Conservation Rules in Section 27 of the Iowa Administrative Code, Chapters 10, 12, 13. Please refer to the back of your cost-share application. Tile within a waterway (available only with county funds) will be 50 cents per foot per tile line in a waterway with a maximum of two tile lines per waterway. The maximum on the waterway would be one mile.

SUMMER INCENTIVE

1) Maximum terrace footage allowed will be 7,500 feet cost-shared at 60% 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 will be available for all types of terraces. Topsoiling will be required.

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

3) Fund 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 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 the rate of 50 percent of the estimated cost or actual cost, whichever

is less, not to exceed \$7,000 per structure. Structures include ponds, grade stabilization (638), earthen and non-earthen structures, cattle panels, rock chute, sheet piling, sediment basins, wetlands, etc. It is highly recommended these jobs not be "self-built."

WINDBREAKS

Cost share is at the rate of 75 percent up to \$700 per windbreak through the Resource Enhancement & Protection Program (REAP). Individual limits are \$12 per tree and \$2.25 per shrub.

NO TILL INCENTIVE ON CRP

The no-till incentive is offered to encourage the practice of no-tilling into CRP. Participants need to sign an agreement of understanding that payment would not come until the spring, to verify that they did no-till. Although this is a "one-time incentive payment per acre", it is hoped that the practice of no-till will continue on these acres. The incentive payment is \$10 per no-tilled acre of expiring CRP ground. No acre limit is set, or cap on the total dollars per person. Applications may be made by the landowner or the producer. Once the planting is completed, participants must sign a producer certification and supply chemical history on selected acres (to be used in future educational programs) and NRCS staff will certify no-till on CRP acres prior to payment.

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 the closure up to \$200 maximum on first-come, first-serve basis. Applications are available at the Oakland NRCS office. Plugging must be completed by a certified well-plugging contractor or with on-site supervision by the County Resource Planner.

REQUIRED INFORMATION

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

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

2) We need your **social security number** (if individual) or **Federal I.D. number** (if partnership, corporation, etc.) when you sign up. A separate form for this will need to be completed at the time of sign up.

3) The landowner signature is required on the cost-share application. If there is more than one owner which 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 (POA) will need to be in our file. A Farm Service Agency POA cannot be accepted.

4) All applications must have a landowner signature. Any person may deliver the application for the "landowner", if the "landowner" has signed an application with a 1999 date.

5) All cost-share projects must be located on land within the East Pottawattamie District boundaries. If land is located in West Pottawattamie, Mills, Montgomery, etc., you must apply for cost-share at 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 staking.

Again, know your social security number or Federal Identification number.

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It takes manpower to put in the dry fire hydrant on the the Dean Rush farm in Southeast Pott county.

Fourth rural hydrant installed

"You can't get there from here" is about the truth when you are in Griswold and need to get to rural areas of Southeast Pottawattamie County. Griswold veterinarian Dr. Lew Boucher said, "I try to cross the river only once a day to make farm calls if I can. It's a long way around to get to this side of the river."

This situation is a particularly big concern to the volunteer fire department which is responsible for emergency calls in rural southeast Pott. county. Griswold Fire Chief Jim Wyman said, "With the bridge on Highway 92 out, we have to haul water several miles to the north to cross the Nishnabotna River. We have little chance of controlling or putting out a fire in that area without a closer source of water." The bridge will be closed during the winter months when house fires and buildings using a heat source are the most prevalent.

District Commissioner Russ Brandes was approached about the situation. The district

decided to help finance a dry fire hydrant if a farm pond could be located. On Saturday, December 5, a crew from the Griswold volunteer fire department met on the gravel road next to a pond on the Dale and Jesse Rush farm, to install the new fire hydrant. Bruce Damgaard, who has supervised the other three dry hydrant installations, provided advice and guidance. Greg Mathis, NRCS District Conservationist from Oakland, brought the necessary hardware to complete the hydrant.

After using two farm tractors to pull the backhoe out of the mud, and bringing inner tubes and bass boats to deal with the "ornery" 80-foot-long PVC pipe, the installation was finally completed just as the temperature was dropping and a light mist beginning to fall.

Thanks to Drew Kirkoff for providing a backhoe, and to Fire Chief Jim Wyman and the Griswold crew for providing manpower and equipment. Also thanks to Bruce Damgaard and Greg Mathis.

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 Commissioners?

This year's theme for the annual poster contest is "In the Children's Hands". The theme emphasizes the need for future generations to consider the legacy left to them, and what they will do with it.

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

The poster contest is open to all students in Iowa from Kindergarten through 12th grade. 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. They should be on regular poster paper with the size being no smaller than 14 by 22 inches, and no longer than 24 by 36 inches. They may be of any medium such as paint, magic marker, pencil, cut and paste, collage, decoupage, crayon, etc.

Judging of each poster will be based on the conservation message (30 percent), visual effectiveness (25%), and universal appeal (25%).

For more information or an entry form or to leave your poster, contact the local Soil and Water Conservation District. The posters are due by Monday, March 15, 1999.

We know that a fool and his money are soon parted, but it would be interesting to learn how they got together in the first place.

Think about windbreaks now!



Now is the time to be thinking about ordering trees for your wildlife or farmstead windbreak. This past month, cold, blustery winds have rolled through acreages and farmsteads, causing pipes to freeze and feedbunks to fill up with snow, and driveways be drifted shut.

A good way to prevent this is to plant trees and shrubs around the area you wish to protect. By properly planning your windbreak and

shelterbelts, you can have an effective, living snow fence and prevent drifts from accumulating in these areas. By reducing wind velocity, annual fuel costs can be reduced by as much as 30%. On the leeward side of the windbreak the temperature is usually a few degrees higher than in the open.

Other environmental benefits of shelter belts and windbreaks include noise reduction, evaporation reduction and dust filtration.

Contact the East Pottawattamie Soil and Water Conservation District at 482-6408 to help in developing a windbreak plan and discuss tree varieties, location, care and cost-share options.

Grants available

by Michelle Zimmerman

Are you a teacher or parent with a great idea for a teaching project to help educate children and young adults about conservation or environmental issues? If so, financial aid is available.

The East Pottawattamie SWCD Commissioners have established an environmental education grant with emphasis on soil and water conservation, and environmental education.

The grant is funded through donations received from the public. It is available to all three school district, county 4-H clubs, the Armstrong Research Farm, or any other organization with education in mind.

The grant committee will meet three times each year to score, rank and distribute the funds.

To request a grant application, those interested may call 712-482-6408

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Husky Feeders
Brock Bins

* Seeds

Dekalb Corn & Beans
Golden Harvest Corn & Beans
Peterson Beddick Grasses

"Before Communism failed, they were led to believe

(This is the last of a series of articles concerning the visits of Kelly Summy of Midwest Ag. Service, Inc. and Gary Thien of Thien Farm Management, Inc. to the Slovak and Czech Republics in 1994 and 1995.)

Excerpts from the Farm Management Team Report in 1994. Continued.

Saturday, September 10: Darrell (Linkemann) and I took a bus down to Bardejov and toured the city. The downtown area was beautiful with many stores operated by private businesses. Food and other goods are quite inexpensive as compared to the cost in United States. Electronics are more expensive than in the States, however. A typical worker in the country earns 6,000 sk, or \$200 per month. Forty to sixty percent of their wages are spent on food. We never saw a shortage of food, and the food was very good. (One would wonder if food is still as plentiful and cheap, since the economy in those countries has worsened, according to current news reports.)

Sunday, September 11: Darrell and I spent the day preparing for our presentations or seminars for the upcoming week. We arranged slides and overheads were translated into Slovak by our interpreter. I (Kelly Summy) was to speak on management; what a manager does, the management process and how to develop and implement a management plan. I would also discuss budgeting and capital investment. I would use an overhead on the economics of of purchasing a new or used combine. Darrell would also review decision making; how farmers make decisions and the decision-making process. After our presentation, we would show slides and discuss

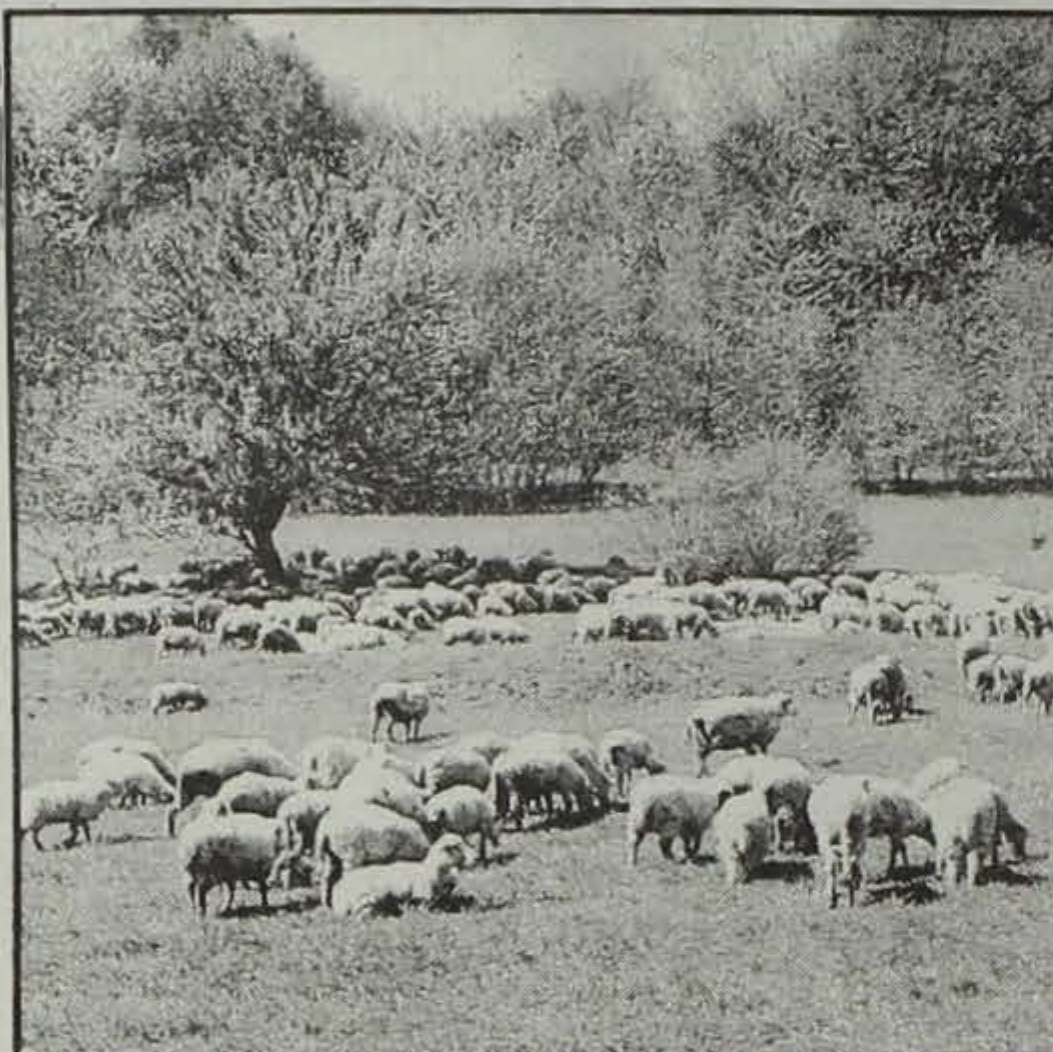
life on American farms. At the completion of the seminar, we would hold a question and answer period.

Monday, September 12: Our first seminar was at the Bardejov Ag Ministry. It was arranged by the Ag Chamber, which is headed by Mr. Biros and the Ag Minister. We had 15 private farmers in attendance, with quite a variety of individuals represented. After our initial introduction, they introduced themselves and told us a little about their background and the size of their operation.

Most of the private farmers were operating 10 to 40 ha (hectares) of land, and owned 1 to 10 milk cows. Those in attendance ranged from 20 to 70 years of age. The two oldest farmers present were the most vocal. They stated their despair and aggravation with the Communist regime, and wondered if they had been left alone, where would they be today? They were discouraged that the government wasn't taking an active role in assisting farmers and that things were not changing under the new leaders.

Much of the discussion had to do with the government and lack of involvement or assistance and the their perception that U.S. agriculture is highly subsidized. We told them we would discuss the U.S. subsidies in our presentation and would compare them to what they are receiving. We told them to expect less government assistance, to think in a new way, as the government would most likely continue to play a smaller role in agriculture in the country.

It was evident that the private farmers viewed the large collectives as their major competitors. They stated "land has no value in the country, and there is no competition to rent land." We told them to anticipate a change in the future, as land would establish



Sheep peacefully graze in a field in the Zborov Collective

a market price and rental value, based on economics and profitability. This would then establish a competitive situation for both the sale/purchase and rental of land. We discussed production costs, land values and profitability in the U.S. The farmers were surprised to find similarities in (U.S.) market price and production expenses to those found in Slovakia.

I presented the management and capital expenditures program. I showed the break-even cost to justify the purchase of a new and a used combine. This was a comparison of buying new versus used equipment. I encouraged them to keep in mind that new is not always better.

I was pleased with the seminar. We had good involvement from the participants, and they were taking notes throughout. The workshop began at 9 a.m. and closed at 1:30 p.m. We thanked those who attended, and wished them well in the future.

We also encouraged them to work together, and share labor and equipment.

Tuesday, September 13: We held a seminar in Presov County in Presov, Slovakia. We had 25 collective managers in attendance, and they had good questions and interaction. We had some individuals from the State Land Fund who were very interested in our leasing program in the U.S.

After a brief introduction, we again asked them to introduce themselves and give some background information about their collective. We changed the format of our presentation so as to address their major concerns.

Those in attendance discussed the major problems faced at their collectives. They were similar to others from other collectives we had visited. Lack of capital, high interest rates, huge debt service, high fuel costs, high unemployment, low wages, excess labor, old equipment and poor markets for their products.

We were pleased with the workshop and grateful for their active participation and lively questions. The time went too quickly. It's difficult to cover all the material in a 3 or 4 hour session, and leave time for a question-answer period.

At the completion of the seminar, we were invited by Victor Nemec, Chairman of the Drutstvo Agricola Collective, to take a tour of their site. We accepted, and drove 10 km south of Presov into a very productive region. This collective was formed from the separation of a larger collective after the revolution. It was approximately 700 ha in size.

We made a short tour of the livestock facilities and drove by some of the farmland. They had excellent appearing alfalfa, which was the best we had seen to date. Unfortunately, we saw them mixing good quality alfalfa with wheat straw to feed their dairy herd. The facilities were in poor condition, and the livestock very dirty. They were experiencing some of the same problems as the other collectives. Mr. Nemec is an older man and very opinionated about the mistakes of the past and the present problems they are facing. I was more impressed with his "right-hand-man" who had a veterinary degree, was well educated and more optimistic about the future. It is apparent that the success of this operation will lie in the hands of the younger generation and their work ethic.

It is my opinion that many of the dairy operations in this region will cease to exist within the next five years. There is an over-supply of milk, and no need for the large number of dairy operations found in the region. Most of the dairy operations are operating at a loss. They stated they were making a profit on their grain operation and hog production. The collectives are reluctant to leave buildings sit idle or consider making changes which will be profitable in the long term. Most have made drastic cuts in their labor force, some by as much as 50% since the revolution. I believe further cuts will be needed, forced upon them by the economy. Improved and more efficient equipment would reduce the size of their mechanization units, requiring less maintenance, parts and

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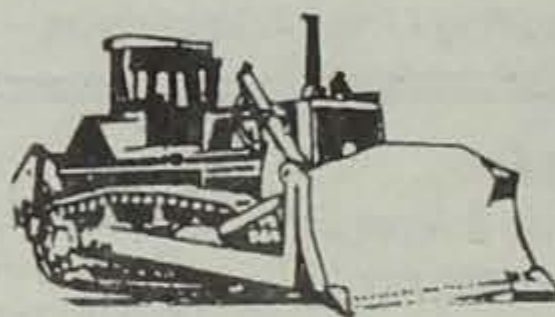
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they were leading the world in technology"

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(Condensed notes from seminars presented on September 14 and 15)

The only lease utilized in Bardejov is the cash lease. The tenant pays the real estate taxes and not the landlord. The net profits, if any, are paid to the shareholders of the collective at the end of the year. Most have been operating at a loss, so no profits are paid to the owner at year-end.

They were amazed to find that subsidies in the U.S. are the same or less than they are currently receiving. Farm subsidies created a lively discussion and question-answer session. We suggested they should be prepared to do more with less government subsidies in the future, as we have experienced in the United States.

We discussed the 1980 farm crisis in America and the similarities to the problems they are currently facing in Slovakia. They were unaware we had faced any difficulties or hard times and thought the U.S. farmer was very profitable.

We returned to the Hotel Mineral and met late in the evening with collective managers who had driven for 11 hours to be there. We had lunch with the group and got an update on their operation and how things were progressing with them -- or not. All of the collectives in both Slovakia and the Czech Republic had been impacted by drought conditions.

We drove south to meet with Ing. Pavel Bodor, Chairman of the P.D. Osdany in Rimavska Sobota County, Slovakia. This collective is 1,150 hectares and located in southern Slovakia, north of the Hungarian border. It is a productive agricultural region, with gently rolling land which appears to be more fertile than that in Bardejov County.

Crops grown included wheat, barley, rye, corn, alfalfa and clover. They have 400 head of beef and dairy cattle and 60 sows.

In 1989 they had 104 employees; today they have 52. No further labor cuts are planned as the workers are all relatives or part owners in the collective. Approximately 850 ha are owned by private farmers; the rest by Jews who were killed in WWII, with no surviving heirs to receive the return of the land. Ownership



The ruins of an ancient castle are outlined against the sky in the Zborov district. The lands surrounding the castle have been farmed for centuries, dating back to feudal days.

then is unsettled. They were the only collective we visited in Slovakia that had paid profits to shareholders.

Milk production was very low per cow, and they had lost 2.5 million sk that year to date. But they have placed no emphasis on upgrading the genetics or feed rations for the dairy herd, but concentrated more on grain production, which has been profitable.

The collective recently purchased a John Deere 2640 combine for 5 million sk, or \$180,000. This took much negotiating by the Board of Directors, according to Bodor. We asked to see the combine, but he stated it was on display at the University. Bodor said he was very impressed with the combine, which he said would do 5 times the work of their German-made combines with far less field loss. The neighboring collectives were highly critical of the purchase, however, and called the combine the "wonder machine".

The main purpose of our meeting was to become acquainted with Ing. Bodor and see if he would be interested in forming a working partnership and host a future team visit of

U.S. representatives. We were encouraged by his enthusiasm and interest in becoming involved in the program. (Bodor was invited to visit the U.S. in October, and agreed to host a U.S. Farm Management team in his country in November.)

Friday, September 16: We spent the morning relaxing after a very busy week. In the afternoon we met with Martin Bruhosky, representative of U.S. aid and reviewed our trip. Afterward we met with a press assistant and answered questions regarding our visit to Slovakia. The article and our photo was to be published in Slovak newspapers.

Saturday, September 17: We rose early and left in the rain to ride in the Hover Craft from Bratislava to Vienna. It was an hour ride along the Danube River to Vienna. We took a taxi from downtown Vienna to the Novotel Hotel. That afternoon we had time for a tour of the beautiful city.

Sunday, September 18: We flew from Vienna to Frankfurt, Germany, then to Chicago and on to Omaha. We had a safe flight, but it was a long day with a seven-hour time change. It was good to be home and with family again.

Kelly Summy, final comments: "One difficulty I had was conversion of our weights and measures to the metric system when making a presentation. It was a challenge, because I had to give the conversions very quickly, and so had to try to memorize them, which was difficult... intense. I would stand there with them (the audience at the seminars) considering me the expert, and be worrying about the message getting across, and whether or not was I converting correctly. Sometimes I communicated by drawing something, or using my hands to try to convey what was meant. I could usually tell when they were understanding, but once in a while I would see a raised eyebrow and a questioning look. Of course, I didn't know how accurately my words were being translated, either.

"I will always remember the friendliness of the people, and that they were wonderful hosts. I think they will succeed, but it will take time and dedication to change. Political stability is always a concern for them, but they seemed willing to implement the changes we suggested. I would love to go back and see what has happened since I was there.



Gary Thien, final comments: "I keep in touch with a special friend I made while in the Czech Republic and also friends from Slovakia. We exchange letters, FAX's and Christmas cards. It was interesting and personally

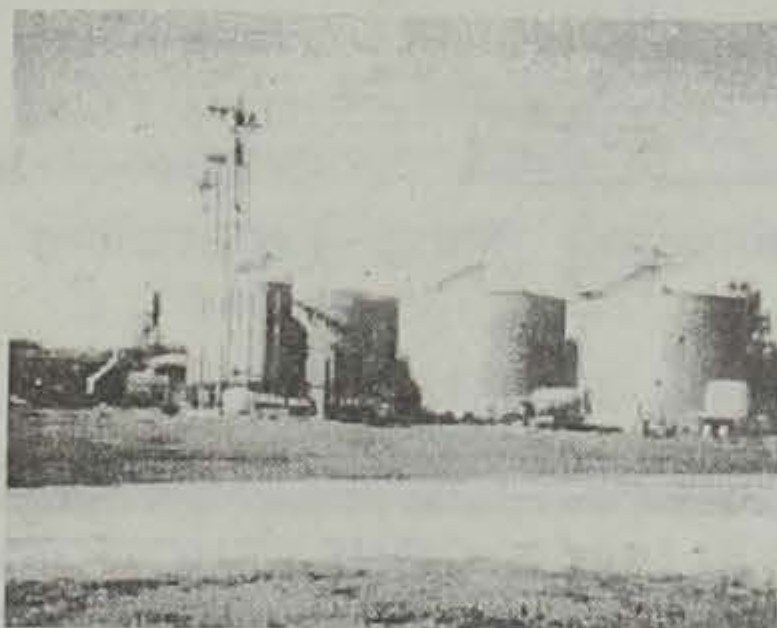


satisfying to work with people, give them ideas which would benefit them, and see them implement those ideas and find they worked. A friend there keeps me updated on what has happened. I hear that the people have put many of our ideas into practice, and things are going better for them. I am glad to hear that, but I know much more needs to be done. They are limited by the economy, lack of efficient equipment, poor genetics and shabby facilities.

"The old way obviously stifled creativity and prevented people from looking at and analyzing different options. Before Communism failed, they were led to believe they were leading the world in technology and agriculture. But when the wall came down, they realized they had been misled about their position in the world. Now they are in a situation where they must revamp, restructure and reorganize. I hope the American teams have helped them to make some progress along those lines.

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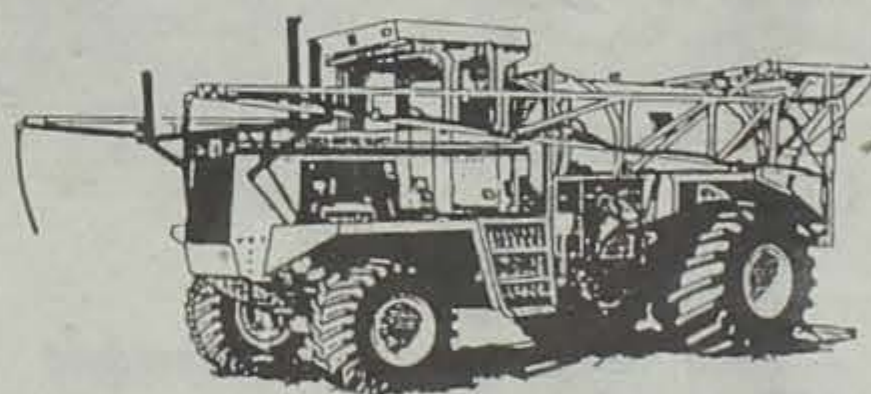
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Switchgrass seeding recommendations

Seeding Methods: Three major requirements are common to all seeding methods.

1) A firm seed bed. Use of a packing device is highly recommended. In tilled soil, a footprint should not be visible when the soil is walked upon. 2) Seed depth should be 1/4 to 1/2 inch. 3) Weed control during the first eight weeks is essential.

Drills are recommended for planting switchgrass. Conventional drills or no-till drills should have:

1) Small seed boxes suitable for accurately metering switchgrass. 2) Seed placement depth adjusted to plant seed no deeper than 1/4 to 1/2 inch. 3) An effective press wheel. If no press wheel is used, follow the drill with a suitable soil-firming device such as a cultipacker or roller.

Tilled Seedbed: 1) Tillage can be used to control weeds before seeding. 2) A packing device should be used until the soil is firm enough so that walking on the soil does not produce a footprint. 3) One or two passes of the packing device after seeding will help to ensure good seed-to-soil contact. 4) Use of a pre-emergence and/or a post emergence herbicide may be helpful in controlling weeds. Contact a local ag chemical dealer for specific product recommendations. 5) Weed control may also be achieved by clipping one to three times during the first growing season. Clip to a stubble height of 4 to 5 inches when weeds are 6 to 10 inches tall.

No-till establishment into previous crop residue:

1) Control existing vegetation with glyphosate (Roundup TM). 2) Use 1 to 1 1/2 quarts per acre in a 2-percent ammonium sulfate solution and a surfactant. Apply this mixture prior to or just after seeding and before the seed germinates. Control weeds with a pre or post-emergence herbicide or by clipping.

Seeding into an existing pasture, hay meadow or CRP sod:

Fall preparation and spring seeding. 1) Mow the vegetation to a height of 2 to 4 inches in mid-August of the year previous to the seeding. When autumn regrowth has reached a height of 4 to 6 inches, apply glyphosate in the same manner as for previous crop residue. 2) The following spring, evaluate for vegetative control skips and repeat the glyphosate treatment, if necessary. 3) Control weeds with a pre or post-emergence herbicide or by clipping.

Another alternative may be applying glyphosate in late summer. 1) Burn the area in April after the cool season species have started to grow. 2) Reduce the thatch layer and allow the soil to warm more quickly. 3) Glyphosate should then be applied to the green vegetation prior to seeding. Spring applications of herbicide may not be as effective as late summer applications. 4) Control weeds with a herbicide or by clipping.

Frost seeding: 1) Must be done during freezing and thawing activity. 2) Seed must be able to make contact with the soil. A general rule is to have at least 30-percent of the soil exposed. This may require mowing or other preparation the fall before the frost seeding. 3) Weed control is critical during the first growing season and may be accomplished either with the use of herbicides or mechanically. 4) Frost seeding will stratify seed that is less than one year old, reducing the amount of dormant seed.

Fall application of nitrogen carries high risks

by Alfred M. Blackmer
Professor of Agronomy
Iowa State University.

It has long been recognized that amount of fertilizer N lost before it can be used by crop tends to increase with increasing time between application and plant uptake. The important question therefore, is whether the benefits of fall applications outweigh the costs associated with losses of the extra N. The popularity of fall-applied N during the past few years indicates a commonly-held viewpoint that the extra losses of N are relatively unimportant to producers and the fertilizer industry.

Studies during the past decade suggest that the costs associated with fall applications of N are probably greater than believed by those who recommend this practice. Some of these studies used soil nitrate testing, remote sensing, end-of-season cornstalk testing, on-the-go yield monitoring, global positioning and geographic information systems to characterize responses of corn to fertilizer applied in strips within fields. These studies have revealed a surprising number of situations in which most of the fall-applied N was lost before it was needed by the crop. Perhaps even more revealing, these losses often would not have been detected by using more traditional methods. The results suggest that losses of fall-applied N may have been underestimated in the past and that yield-limiting deficiencies of N should be considered a major cost of fall-applied N. Soil examples collected in late April of 1998 provided additional evidence for substantial losses of fall-applied N in many fields in West Central Iowa. Results indicated that the N was largely converted to nitrate before the crop was planted. In many

Every little bit helps!

The staff and commissioners at the Oakland Field Office would like to thank Tom Scheffler, son of James and Judy Scheffler, for volunteering some of his time. He was a great help to us during the busy layout season! Tom was home over the Thanksgiving holiday. He said the exposure to conservation application helps him to understand (or question) principles and theories taught in his agronomy and other classes at school. Thanks again, Tom!

Thank You!

The East Pottawattamie SWCD would like to thank South Side Press for donating several reams of paper for our poster contest. Over 150 students will participate in the 1999 contest.

This year's theme is "In Children's Hands". Anyone wishing more information regarding the poster contest, please call

712-482-6408.

Once again, thank you, South Side Press for your generous donation!

fields, less than half of the N applied could be accounted for as nitrate, exchangeable ammonium, or readily mineralizable N in the surface 2-foot layer of soil. The fertilizer N present as nitrate was extremely vulnerable to loss by leaching or denitrification during the large amounts of rainfall that occurred during June.

A hypoxic zone, or "dead zone", has been identified in the Gulf of Mexico during the past few years. Although the cause of this problem is not known with certainty, N that moved down the Mississippi River from the upper midwest is suspected to be a major factor. More intensive monitoring of nitrogen loads in Iowa rivers should be expected.

Given what has been learned in the past few years, Iowa farmers and fertilizer dealers are well advised to start moving away from the fall applications of N. Moving toward in-season fertilization would tend to increase profits for producers while minimizing losses of N to the environment.



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Are you breaking the law taking out that terrace?

Before you remove a terrace, check with your local Soil and Water Conservation District to see if cost-share assistance was received. If you or a previous owner did receive cost-share, you must request permission from the commissioners to remove any portion of a terrace.

Have you ever read the back of that cost-share application? When you sign the application, you are agreeing to sign a 20-year (after 1/1/81) Maintenance Agreement (ten-year agreement prior to 1/1/81). When you sign the Maintenance Agreement, you and any successors are bound to:

- *Maintain the practice.
- *Request permission from the District Commissioners prior to removal, alteration or modification of the practice.
- *Notify any prospective

purchaser of the obligation created by the Agreement, and Section 161A.7(16) of the Iowa Code before legal or equitable title to any portion of the property is transferred.

Failure to follow the conditions of the Maintenance Agreement will require the cost-share recipient or successor landowners to maintain, repair, reconstruct or repay the cost-share received on the affected portion.

The practice shall be inspected any time the District has reason to believe it is not being satisfactorily maintained. Satisfactorily maintained means being maintained in such a state of repair so that the practice is successfully performing the function for which it was originally installed.

Continuous CRP signup

The purpose of the continuous CRP sign-up is to provide flexibility to farmers to implement certain conservation practices on their cropland. Acreage will be automatically accepted into the program providing the acreage and producer meet eligibility requirements.

Eligible land includes cropland that has been planted or considered planted to an agricultural commodity in any two of the three crop years 1994 through 1998. The acres must also be determined eligible and suitable by NRCS for any of the following practices:

- *Contour grass strips
- *Filter strips
- *Riparian buffers
- *Shelter belts
- *Field windbreaks
- *Grassed waterways

*Shallow water areas for wildlife.

The following practices can have a contract for 15 years:

- *Field windbreaks
- *Shelter belts
- *Filter strips
- *Riparian buffers

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

Maximum payment rates are based on site-specific soil productivity and local prevailing cash equivalent rental rates. The effective date of the contract is the first day of the month following the month of approval. Producers may defer the effective date for up to six months. The contract will be for no less than 10 years and



Does money grow on trees?

Wouldn't it be nice if money grew on trees? The next best thing is to receive money for planting trees!

The West Pottawattamie Soil and Water Conservation District has cost-share available for farmstead and field windbreaks. The total cost-share for a windbreak can not exceed \$700 per windbreak. Payment is based on 75% of actual cost, not to exceed \$12 per tree and \$2.25 per shrub.

In addition to receiving cost-share, windbreaks save money by reducing heating and cooling expenses, and increase the aesthetics of the farmstead.

Now is the time to start planning for a windbreak. Due to the increased demand for trees in recent years, availability of species has been limited. Plan ahead to have a windbreak that you'll enjoy for years to come.

In order to receive cost-share, certain guidelines need to be followed. To be eligible, you must be a landowner of at least 10 acres in Pottawattamie County and produce an agricultural commodity. If you are an eligible landowner, the windbreak needs to consist of at least three rows, in order to

not exceed 15 years.

Additional information on the CRP continuous sign-up is available from your local USDA Service Center.

receive cost-share from the District. It is recommended that one row consist of shrubs. For the greatest protection, locate the windbreak on the north and west sides of the farmstead.

If you have a site that is suitable for a windbreak or if you would like additional information, call the West Pott SWCD at 712-328-2488 and ask for Julia.



Terrace break cost-share program

1. Application deadline is April 1, 1999. Work must be completed and bills submitted by June 1, 1999.

2. Cost-share is 75% of **whichever is less**, the bill or estimate, with a maximum cost-share payment of \$1,000. The estimate is calculated at \$75 per hole/slough. (Average cost is \$50 to \$60, based on bills received).

3. One payment will be made per landowner.

4. Cost-share will be given only to landowners who do not qualify for ECP money form FSA. (FSA sign-up is October 26 through December 24, 1998).

5. Landowners need to complete the information sheet and application. Landowner or operator can mark the aerial photo.

6. **Cost-share will be paid only on breaks/sloughs marked on aerial photo and inspected before repairs are made.**

7. Contractors need to document on the bill the number of holes/sloughs repaired. A copy of the aerial photo should be attached to the bill, with the location of the repairs marked.



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Basics of Management Intensive Grazing

by Stephen K. Barnhart
Dept. of Agronomy
Iowa State University

What is management-intensive grazing?

Management intensive grazing is a method for regulating how often and how much to graze in order to control the quality, yield, consumption and persistence of forage from pasture. Managed grazing attempts to optimize animal performance or limit intake to a desired level and reduce wasted forage. Depending on the grazing methods used, the amount of fresh pasture provided, the amount of forage eaten, and its quality, is regulated by the size of the pasture area being grazed, the duration of that grazing and the amount of available forage allowed for grazing. Also critical is the period that each pasture is rested between grazing. In this way, it is possible to match pasture growth with animal requirements. Surplus growth can be conserved as hay or silage, while growth shortages can be made up by careful feeding of supplements.

Why go to all this effort?

The purpose of managed grazing is to improve efficiency

of forage production and use, eliminate negative environmental impact, and improve net farm return through higher animal production and/or reduced production costs.

Ten tips for designing and managing a management intensive grazing system.

1 - Use forage plants that are adapted to and are productive and persistent in your soils, climate and management system. The majority of the pasture area will likely be long-term, perennial forages. Use legumes such as clovers and alfalfa in mixture with grasses to the extent that soils will permit legume growth. Annual or temporary forage areas can be considered to add needed management flexibility.

2 - Economic analyses who livestock enterprises that can graze more days show improved profitability. When planning the overall forage/livestock enterprise, minimize land dedicated only to hay-making. Hay or silage can often be obtained by cutting surplus growth from grazing paddocks. This can help in weed and parasite management and improve the flexibility of pasture. Equally important is to use fall grazing

and crop residue grazing to reduce winter hay feeding.

3 - Subdivide the grazing unit and cross fence to control the grazing pattern. Create 10 to 20 smaller pastures or paddocks. The optimum number of paddocks on a farm will vary with topography, soils, plant types and animal production goals. If it is not wanted to jump immediately to 10-20, start with 6 or 8 and consider further subdivisions later.

Use fences to separate pastures that differ in growth rate, palatability and exposure (north versus south slope). Subdivide the fields to separate:

- a) hill land from bottom land
- b) sunny slopes from shady slopes
- c) shallow soils from deep, productive soils
- d) areas planted with different plant species.

Boundary fences must be substantial enough to retain animals. Consider using electric powered internal cross fencing to ration forage to the animals; in many cases one or two temporary electric wires will be sufficient. Use new technology materials such as low impedance energizers/chargers, wire and insulators to improve the dependability and efficiency of electric fencing. Providing water in each paddock or dispersed through the grazing system can improve animal movement and lane maintenance.

4 - Manage to grow green leaves. Young green leaves are 70 to 80 percent digestible, whereas brown leaves and mature seedstems are only 40 to 50% digestible. Have animals with high nutritional requirements -- such as dairy cows, cows with calves, and heifers and stocker cattle -- graze leafy, vegetative paddocks. Use animals which have low nutrient requirements -- dry, pregnant brood cows, ewes or mares -- to graze more mature and stemmy forage.

5 - Graze each area rapidly. Put enough animals on a paddock to graze to the desired stubble height in one to three days. A high stock density, equivalent to 20 to 70 animal units per acre is usually needed to reduce wasted forage and obtain uniform grazing. Many pasture weeds will be grazed at an immature stage with this management, thus reducing the need for weed



control measures.

The timing of animal moves from one paddock to another depends on plant height. For example, with brome grass or grass/clover pastures, move the animals into the pasture at about 6 to 8 inches of growth and out of the pasture at 2 to 3 inches. This residual leaf area will speed the regrowth of the paddock.

6 - Anticipate changes in pasture growth. If several pastures are growing very rapidly and accumulate more than 8 to 10 inches of growth, take one or two paddocks out of the grazing rotation and harvest this surplus as hay or silage at the correct stage of maturity. Conversely, if pastures are regrowing very slowly, offer supplemental feed or hay to allow a longer recovery period for the remaining paddocks in the system.

7 - Provide a sacrifice area. A sacrifice area is often a drylot, woodlot or pasture scheduled for renovation. A sacrifice area may be permanent. Provide water in the sacrifice area and use this area to reduce lane damage and severe overgrazing of the paddock areas when pastures are extremely wet or when pasture growth is insufficient and supplemental feeding is required. This may not be a productive paddock. Plant growth will be greatly reduced or eliminated altogether, in the effort to maintain the condition and productivity of the remaining paddocks.

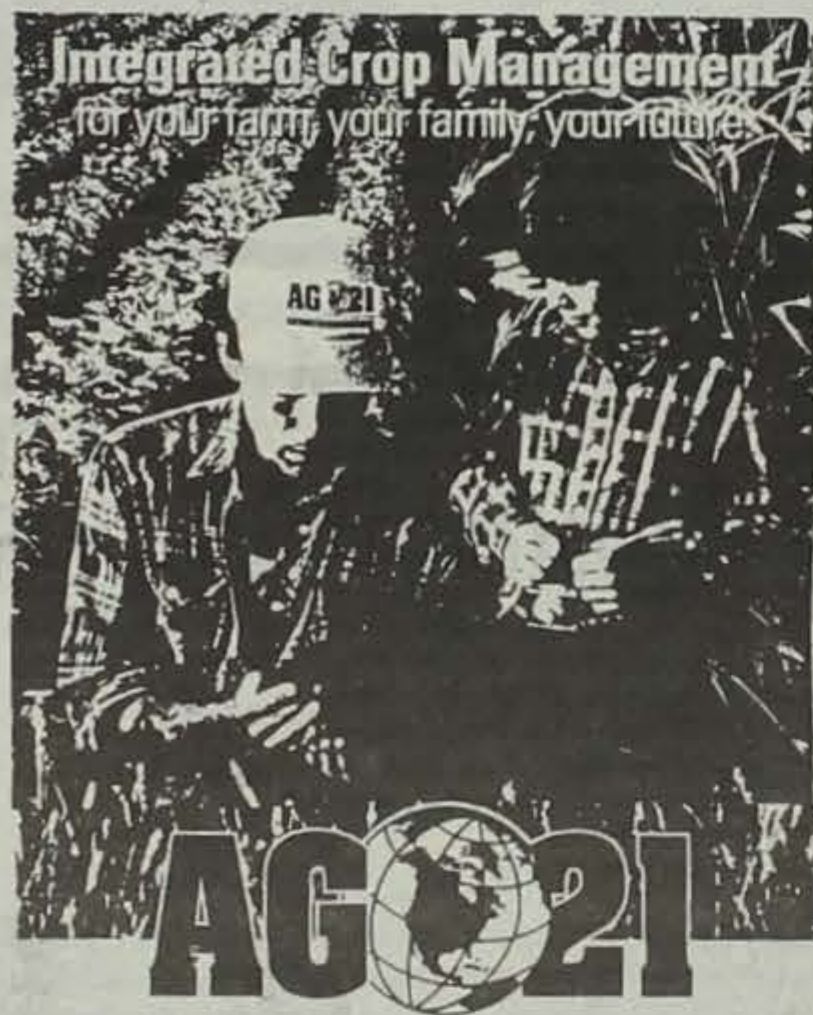
8 - Use lime and plant nutrients wisely. The yields of pasture plants are directly related to the nutrients supplied by the soil's organic matter, or by inputs of fertilizer, manure and lime. Using managed rotational grazing provides a more uniform grazing pattern and recycling of nutrients from urine and

manure. From 75 to 85% of the nutrients consumed on pastures are excreted on the pasture. Over several years, this management will reduce the fertilizer requirement.

9 - Be flexible. Be prepared to make adjustments in the grazing or feeding program because pasture growth rate and animal requirements are continually changing. Let the rate of grass growth and the amount of forage present determine when a paddock or area is to be regrazed. The rule of thumb for controlled rotational grazing is when grass is growing fast, use a short rotational grazing cycle (12 to 20 days) and harvest the surplus growth as hay or silage; as the growth slows, use a long cycle (30 to 60 days or more) and feed supplemental forage if needed.

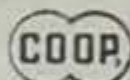
10 - Get started. Begin by using only a part of the herd or a small part of the farm. You can expand after you have gained experience with the management system. Keep the stocking rate on the farm about the same. Subdivide pastures and plan your management schedule to allow the forage in each paddock to be grazed in one to three days. Keep records of the amount of surplus forage harvested, the number of days each pasture is grazed, the sequence and length of the rotational grazing cycle, and seasonal animal performance.

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Robert Grote a man of many interests



This rare Bird of Paradise plant has a vivid red-orange bloom, and is only one of the rare flowering plants in Bob's greenhouse.

by Lou Waite

Robert Grote (call him "Bob") has been one of the motivating forces in the Upper Mosquito Watershed since its inception. An avid conservationist, Bob also has many other interests, and perhaps might be labeled an "eclectic collector".

Born on a farm near Neola, Bob moved to Portsmouth with his family in 1935. He graduated from St. Mary's Catholic School in Portsmouth, then farmed until entering the United States Army in 1945. He was stationed with the occupation forces in Berlin after the war, and while there was a victim of a serious accident.

"We had two new men helping clean the motor pool," Bob recalled, "using gasoline to remove the grease, etc. from

the floor. They flushed the gasoline away with water, which flowed to an outside drain, taking the gas with it. Unbeknownst to them, a man outside was cleaning the drain with a blowtorch. A flash fire resulted, and of the nine men in the pool, only two survived. I was one of them. I spent a year in a burn center in Berlin, where skin grafts and other procedures were carried out. My legs were burned the worst, and took a long time to heal. But when they flew me home, I arrived only a day before the hospital ship on which I would otherwise have been."

Bob farmed for nine years after his release from the service, along with his father and brothers. Then in 1955 he successfully passed a civil service test, and was appointed Postmaster at Portsmouth. He served in that

capacity for 29 years, retiring in 1984.

"Retired" doesn't really describe Bob, however, for he keeps active with various pursuits. In 1967, he became a "rock hound", a hobby he has developed in a number of ways.

"It began when a couple friends and I would go looking for fossils on Sunday afternoons," Bob reminisced. "I began noticing the pretty or unusual rocks along the way, and became more interested in collecting them. One year I got a camper for my pickup, and my friends (Don Leinen, Msgr. Michael Schwarte) and I headed west on vacation. We were looking for fossils still, but I also wanted to find some 'good rocks'. We drove through the Black Hills and on to Newcastle, Wyoming. Actually, it was a highway patrolman there who told us where to find fossils, and another officer gave us information on finding rocks. I was hooked, and that was the beginning of my rock collection."

So in addition to being an amateur palaeontologist, Bob has become a lapidarist, using many of the stones he collects to create beautiful jewelry and other ornaments. He has all the equipment needed to polish the stones, which he has obtained from all over the world.

The three friends would spend two weeks of every year traveling. "We hit every continent except Antarctica," Bob said with a chuckle, "and brought back artifacts each time. We visited Bishop Arkfeld in New Guinea, and other priests in other countries, all friends of Msgr. Schwarte. They helped us obtain such things as 'story boards', which have pictographs carved by the natives of New Guinea, who had no written language. Once we had them shipped back in a wooden box 8 feet long and 4 foot wide. These were sold at auction, and the money received sent back to the foreign missions."

Bob has several of the story boards hanging in his house. And the shipping box itself was utilized, he said, indicating a beautiful clock on his living room wall. "That's made from the Quela wood from which the box was built," he said. "Quela is in the mahogany family."

From palaeontologist to lapidarist to botanist, perhaps? In a greenhouse attached to his dwelling, Bob has some rare flowering plants, such as a "Bird of Paradise", which he informed is "Regina Sterlitsia" in Latin. (Linguist, too?) A large collection of cacti boasts no two-of-a-kind, and other unusual plants are carefully tended.

He also has miniature citrus trees, including orange, lemon, lime, tangerine and grapefruit, all of which bear fruit. The lemon tree, which was in bloom, produces one to four lemons per year, Bob said, noting that they are "sweeter" than the standard variety.

On the 1 1/2 acres surrounding Bob's house in Portsmouth are planted a select variety of nut-bearing trees. Included are Heartnut, a



Grote shown with some of the New Guinea artifacts which adorn his living room.

native of Japan; Hickory, a cross between a hickory nut and a pecan; Hickory, Filbert, Hazelnut and Walnut. "The walnuts are pear-shaped," Bob said, "which makes it much easier to pick out the nut meats. I spend a lot of time doing that in the winter months. I would like to plant more black walnut trees in the future. Squirrels are my biggest problem, and I have to put tin around each tree trunk to try to keep them from climbing. Those little rascals seem to get past it somehow. Maybe they are flying squirrels!"

Photography has long been a hobby, and in more recent years a video camera has been

utilized as well. Bob has thousand of photos, taken when in the service, during his extensive travels, and locally. The Upper Mosquito Watershed activities have been recorded throughout the years, showing how the creek has ravaged the landscape, and the attempts made to control it (not enough, Bob says). Many events have been captured on film, as well as people, places and things. Bob's photo albums are of great historical value.

Bob is second eldest of his siblings, with five brothers and one sister (the youngest). One brother is deceased. The

Continued on Page 16

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The "Brickyard Orchard" so named for a reason



Bill and Ethel say they enjoy meeting the people who patronize their business, many of whom are customers of long standing.

by Lou Waite

Evidence of why the Brickyard Orchard at Harlan was so-named is found if one looks carefully around the grounds. Tilling the land around the fruit trees has unearthed bits of old brick, mellowed with age, which have been tossed into piles here and there. Others in better condition have been stacked neatly, perhaps to be utilized elsewhere.

Present owners of the orchard are William and Ethel Campbell, who gave an interesting account of the history of the place.

"The bricks were made from the yellow clay found here," Ethel said, "and many of the buildings on the square uptown were originally built with bricks from

the brickyard. But it went out of business in 1917. My father, Louis Jensen, bought it in the spring of 1947 and planted the trees thereafter. Before that, he had operated a canning factory in Harlan, located where Jim's Market is found today. The factory processed and canned vegetables, and during the drought years of the 1930's, canned meat for the government."

Bill, a native of Avoca, met Ethel when he and a friend came looking for popcorn. They talked to Ethel and a friend of hers, who obtained the popcorn for them, and afterward the two couples continued to see each other. "In 1938, we had a double wedding," Bill said with a chuckle.

Bill worked at the canning factory for Ethel's father until

entering the army during World War II. He participated in the Battle of the Bulge, one of the major conflicts of the war. After his return in 1946, he continued work at the factory, and after the Jensens bought the old brickyard, he became involved with that enterprise.

"The trees were all planted on terraces, which were constructed with an old terrace plow," Bill noted. "The plow is still here, as a matter of fact. There were 17 terraces on one side of the drainage ditch (which runs through the site), and 23 on the other. The trees were planted on the terraces to help control erosion. Fifteen-hundred trees were planted on 30 acres, originally. They were mostly apple, but there were 200 cherry trees and some peaches and apricots."

Some of those old trees survive, the Campbells said, but many new trees have been interplanted or used as replacements.

"The June storm (of 1998) destroyed about 200 of the old trees," Ethel said, "and damaged some of the new trees as well. It also ruined our strawberries."

"Yes, and it caused about \$1800 damage to this building, which was about half-finished at the time," Bill added. He was referring to the attractive new building which now exists, and said that it still isn't fully completed, but will be by "next season."

The Campbells have owned the orchard for 32 years. They have made many improvements and changes in production methods. William does all the pruning and spraying of the trees.

"The spraying is so important," he stressed, "and I do it myself so I will know it's been done right."

Ethel, meanwhile, serves as office manager, clerk and "chief assistant". Some outside help is hired during the busy season. "One year we had two college graduates from England pick apples for us on the weekends," Ethel recalled. "They were electronic engineers, over here for further education. They were really nice boys, and sent us some pictures after they returned home." Most of the other help has been local, however.

"The nice thing about hiring young people to pick is that most of them come back to see us and see Harlan in later years," Bill said. Ethel added, "One young man who picked cherries for us became a Rhodes scholar in England." Bill nodded, then continued, "Another is now head of the Michigan Wildlife Department, and another is in Florida at an aircraft plant."

"We're very proud of every one of them," Ethel said emphatically.

The orchard produces 18 varieties of apples, many of which are commonly known varieties. But included is a Jonathan-Red Delicious cross, and a unique variety called a Criterion. "The Criterion can't be produced," Bill informed, "but has to be grafted. I graft onto old crabapple root stock a cross between red delicious, yellow delicious and winter banana. It has become a popular favorite



Bill Campbell with an old terrace plow once used to build the terraces on the orchard site.

among our customers." (This writer will attest to the excellent flavor, having been presented a Criterion to sample). Another variety (a sack of which was also a gift) is the Chieftan, named for the old Chieftan Hotel, which once housed the "rich and famous" in Omaha.

The Campbells are members of the Methodist Church in Harlan, both having served as Sunday School teachers, and he as a lay leader. He belongs to the Oddfellows Lodge, and she is a Rebekah. They are members of the Iowa Fruit Growers Association, for which Bill served four years as president. They live in Harlan, but in addition to the orchard have 35 acres of cropland which is rented to a tenant.

They have one son, William, Jr., of Colorado Springs, Colorado; five grandchildren and 9 great-grandchildren. "The young ones love to visit and 'help' grandma and grandpa," Bill said, to which Ethel added, "That's because you let them do

as they please!" With a grin and a lift of an eyebrow, he retorted, "And I suppose you don't?"

"Ah, well, I guess that's why we are still here," Ethel said, with a smile. "we meet so many nice people. New friends and old, we enjoy them all."

"Better enjoy it while we can, because we aren't getting any younger", Bill quipped, to which his wife replied, with a twinkle in her eye, "Speak for yourself!"

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Once a dream, nature trail has become a reality



Mel Hursey, left, although incapacitated with a badly injured leg, was able to share a moment of humor with Stan Nielsen during the interview.

by Lou Waite

Stanley Nielsen is the former pastor of the United Lutheran Church in Shelby, Iowa. He had to leave his ministry because of a debilitating illness.

Melvin Hursey is the Manager of the elevator in Shelby, but also serves as Mayor of that small town. At the time of the interview, he was incapacitated by a broken leg, suffered in a mishap at the elevator.

The two men shared something in common, due to chance. But they have been sharing much more due to choice. Thanks to their efforts, and the efforts of others in the community, the Rock Island Old Stone Arch Nature Trail is in existence, with great hopes of expansion in the future.

Melvin gives credit for the idea, and for the impetus toward obtaining it to Stanley. It was Stan who worked on a grant with SWIPCO, became the project director, and appealed to the Shelby City Council for support. The city agreed to become the sponsor, or the actual applicant for the grant, which in time was approved. Through the REAP (DNR) Cities in Open Spaces for Recreational Purposes program, Shelby received \$50,000 to carry out the project.

"The idea came with a community builder plan," Stan explained, "and was put together by a group of city residents in September, 1993. They assessed available resources and constructed a five-year capital improvement plan.

There was an old Rock Island

match, so about \$13,000 needed to be provided by the city in matching funds. The city personnel has been very helpful and understanding."

Mel interjected, "Well actually, Stan has done the leg work, and we supported him," to which Stan replied, "Well, we can't do these things without backup. Mel and the Council have been strong supporters." Mel reiterated that Stan "had done all the work", then added with a grin, "so we just kept gathering our eggs together, and pretty soon had them all in one basket!"

Stan noted that during the process, he appreciated the fact that the council members realized the importance of attending all the necessary meetings involved. "All five council members attended many of the meetings," he said, "and there were always at least two or three present. It was a learning process for all of us, and will continue to be so in the future, I am certain."

Both men said they appreciated the work of Snyder and Associates Engineering of Atlantic, whose staff members drew up the blueprints for the project, and assisted with the planning.

"All the eggs" to which Mel referred eventually included \$81,000 more from MAPA through an ISTE grant; \$5,000 from the Iowa West Racing Commission; \$4,500 from State Sesquicentennial funds, \$1,000 from Trees Forever and \$15,000 from Trees Please.

And the day came when the contract was let, via the State Department of Transportation, and Western Engineering of Harlan was the low bidder.

"But," Stan said, "after all, we didn't have enough money. We thought we needed \$400,000, and found we needed \$600,000. That was a dark day! But Mel and I and Bill Lemon from Western Engineering got together, and it



This historic old arch, for which the nature trail was named, has been nominated for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

was decided to work with the money we had, using it to complete Phase 1, then continue with Phases 2 and 3 at a later date."

Phase 1 consisted of grading, clearing and surfacing with 5" of asphalt the two miles to the Pingle timber, which adjoined land purchased by the city. That was completed, and the bike trail was officially opened on October 23, 1998, with a ribbon-cutting ceremony and open house.

Mel and Stan reminisced, agreeing it had been a "red-letter day" indeed. Local politicians and other VIP's were attendance. There were people who had helped with the project and others from around the area, as well as engineers and "even lawyers".

"One lawyer rode his bike along the trail - tried it out," Mel said with a chuckle. "I wonder if that made his fee any less?" "Probably more", Stan quipped.

Golf carts were furnished for those who wished to use them, and flatbed trailers with benches

were provided so groups could ride along the trail. "I think riding along and seeing how unique it was maybe changed some attitudes," Mel said.

The trail became an immediate attraction for bikers, the men said. Many out-of-county/state license plates were observed parked at the beginning of the trail. The fact that there are only one or two intersections with cross-traffic to worry about make it ideal for families with smaller children to navigate. The trail runs along Silver Creek, with its gurgling waters providing a restful accompaniment for the ride. Several species of wildlife may be observed during the trip, and the ever-changing vistas of nature.

Bits and pieces of the old Great Western Railway, which preceded Rock Island, still exist. These culverts and trestles have a historical significance. At one place, the bike trail crosses an old stone arch, which spans the

Continues on Page 16

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Bob's rock collection includes specimens from all over the world. He uses many of them to make jewelry or other decorative items.

Robert Grote . . .

Continued from Page 13

others all live in Shelby County except the sister, who resides in Florida. Bob enjoys his nieces and nephews, and all young people in general. He loves to show his collections, and share his knowledge about them. It is obvious to all, that that knowledge is extensive indeed!

He is active in church affairs, a former council member and involved with the Parish Board. He is a member of the Northern Nut-growers Association, serves as secretary of the Upper Mosquito Watershed Board, and belongs to the Portsmouth American Legion, Chapter 547.

Nature trail . . .

Continued from Page 15

creek. Stan has learned some of the history of the structure and others like it:

"The Rock Island went through a rock quarry at Earlham, Iowa, wanting to make the Rock Island line a 'mighty fine line', as in the song. But they knew the structures over the streams had to be very stable for steam engines to cross, so they used limestone trestles, such as the ones seen on the trail. Two days before the golden spike was driven in Provo, Utah, the Rock Island engine 'Silver Horse' arrived in Council Bluffs, the first on this line." Application has been made for the old stone arch which the train crossed so many years ago to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Phase 2 of the project will be continuing the bike trail south to the Cornstalk Park along Interstate 80. A wetland lying along this route may be donated to the City of Shelby by the current owner. This will be maintained by the County Conservation Board, and will give passers-by the opportunity to observe this interesting facet of nature.

Phase 3 will be installing spans over Silver Creek to reach the timber. One span of 1940 vintage, once located at Defiance, is "stockpiled", awaiting installation. Another of circa 1894, the oldest in Shelby County and having survived several floods, is hopefully available. Mel said with a grin, "All we have to do is convince a barge-operator to move it down the creek for us! Then we hope somehow we can extend the trail northeast to Harlan, which would be a big advantage."

With people as Stan and Mel dedicated to the cause, plus all those who have supported them, how can it fail to happen? Everyone involved is to be commended, and rightly so.



Nielsen and wife Cheryl traversed the nature trail in unique fashion on opening day.

Stan and his wife, Cheryl, have a son, Dory, of Shelby, and a daughter Ivy of Omaha, plus three grandchildren.

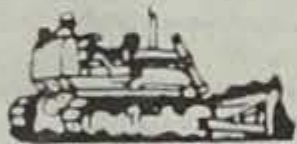
Mel's wife Marsha is

employed at the Oriental Trading Company in Underwood. They have two sons, Wade and his wife Alison of Flandreau, S. D., and David of Deerfield, IL.



Persons many years ago carved their initials into the limestone railroad arch.

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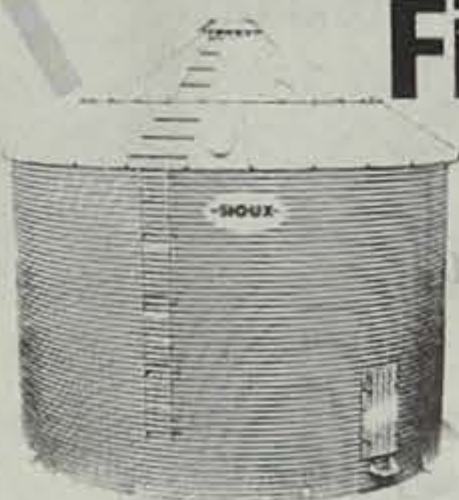
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