

1975

ANNUAL REPORT

CEDAR COUNTY
SOIL CONSERVATION
DISTRICT

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TIPTON, IOWA



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1976

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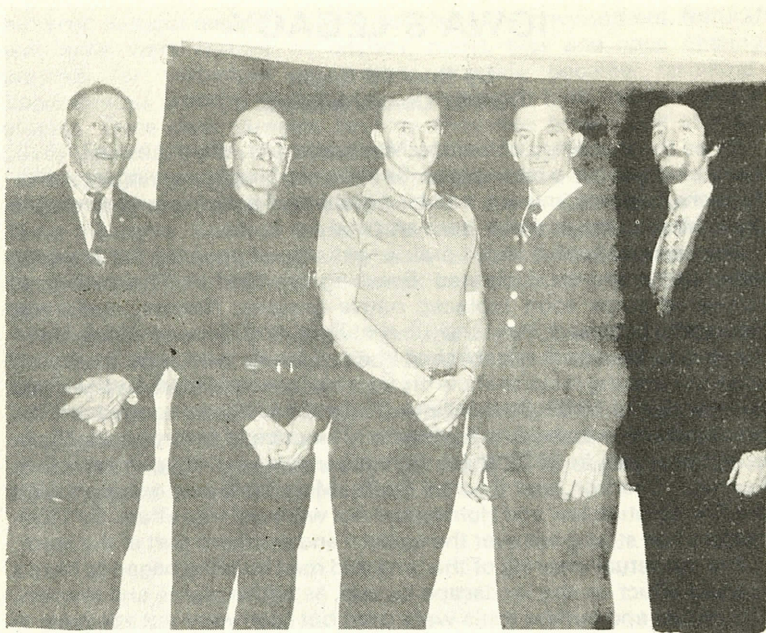


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Cedar County District Commissioners - left to right Willard Eiler, Elmer Wilke, Kenneth Mather, Darrell Brown and Bill Davidson II, chairman.



S.C.S. Office Staff - Howard Bright, district conservationist; Hilda Carey, clerk; Clarence Beyer, conservation technician.

Cover Picture

Soil Judging Contest--Each year a contest is held to further the education of young people in soil science. Here West Branch schoolmates test their knowledge.

IOWA'S LEGACY

By Howard Bright
District Conservationist

Since the discovery of Iowa by Marquette and Joliet, June 17, 1673, many changes have taken place. Settlers soon began moving into Iowa. Farmers, trappers, miners, and land grabbers filtered up and across the great Mississippi to settle here and make a home.

The once beautiful virgin prairie was ripped open by the breaking plow and crops were planted. Breaking the land and production of cultivated crops soon replaced native grasses, flowers, and trees. Squatters occupied the land of the First and Second Black Hawk Purchase. Squatters established their right to own land by driving stakes or placing rocks to show his tract had been claimed. No one could own land until 1838. By that time, the land had been surveyed and the first land sale was held in Burlington. The price of land was \$1.25 per acre, hard cash. In 1839, there were other sales in Dubuque, Iowa City, Fairfield, Chariton, and Council Bluffs. More land was occupied after the Pre-emption law and Homestead Act were put into effect. By 1850, settlers had strung out over the eastern and southern part of the state.

The perpetual clearing of the land and road building began to have a marked effect on the landscape as well as native plants and animals. The Indian and buffalo trails were used but soon were not adequate to meet the growing demands of the pioneers. New trails were marked and furrows were plowed from town to town. A military road was built from Dubuque to Missouri. Rivers were used as highways. Where only the Indian canoe had cut through clear waters, now steamboats laden with people and freight swarmed up and down the muddy Cedar, Iowa, and Des Moines Rivers. By 1893, every county in Iowa was spanned by railroads.

As farming progressed, some problems began to arise. The natural environment had been upset and new pests found their way into Iowa. Locusts, chinch bugs, and potato beetles injured or destroyed crops. The fertile soils were also showing signs of degeneration. Crop yields began to decline. This scare initiated some conservation practices such as rotation of crops.

With the advent of the steam engine, factories began to spring up. Sawmills became numerous. Other factories or industries were that of the blacksmith and carriage shops, breweries, and woolen mills. In 1860, only 6,307 people were employed in factories. During the next 10 years, that number rose to 25,032. In the 1880's, the ravages of the chinch bug gave flour milling in Iowa a severe setback. Several mills were forced to close. Cheese and butter factories outnumbered all other industries within the state by the turn of the century except for the printing and publishing businesses. Packing houses became prevalent and wastes were flushed into nearby streams. Breakfast foods were produced in Cedar Rapids. Button factories were set up in Muscatine and other river towns.

Farming is now Iowa's biggest industry, but this successful boom has

not been without negative repercussions on the environment. Natural wet lands were drained by ditches, roads, tiles and once nesting grounds for waterfowl and other animals became farmland. Unscrupulous plowing of the land, up and down hills, caused severe erosion. Once clear streams became chocolate brown due to their heavy load of silt which washed from surrounding farms.

Along with agricultural progress came pesticides, herbicides and all kinds of agri-chemicals, some of which are harmful to man and other living creatures. Some of these chemicals, when applied to the soil, adhere to the soil complex. During heavy rainfall, the soil is washed into the streams. The streams are now not only polluted with silt but also farm chemicals.

Things have certainly changed from the day of June 17, 1673 when Marquette and Joliet stood on Iowa land for the first time and shook hands with native Indians.

If we want to protect what we have worked for all these years, we must become aware, right now, of what impact our decisions are having on our destinies. Please work with us, the SCS, through your SCD in planning good conservation practices for your land.

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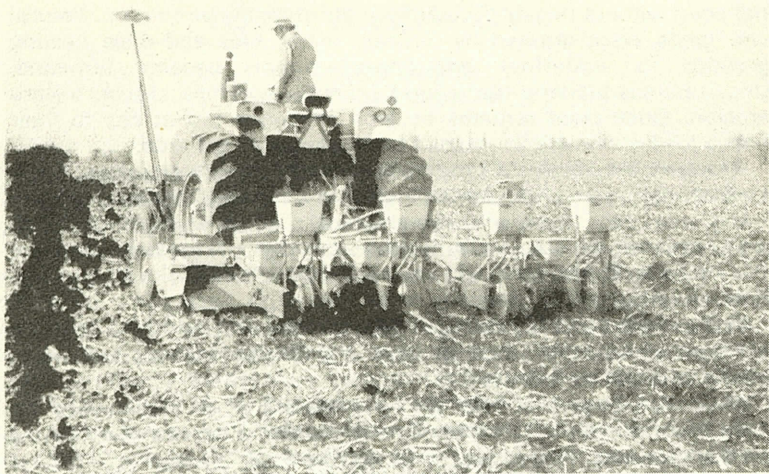
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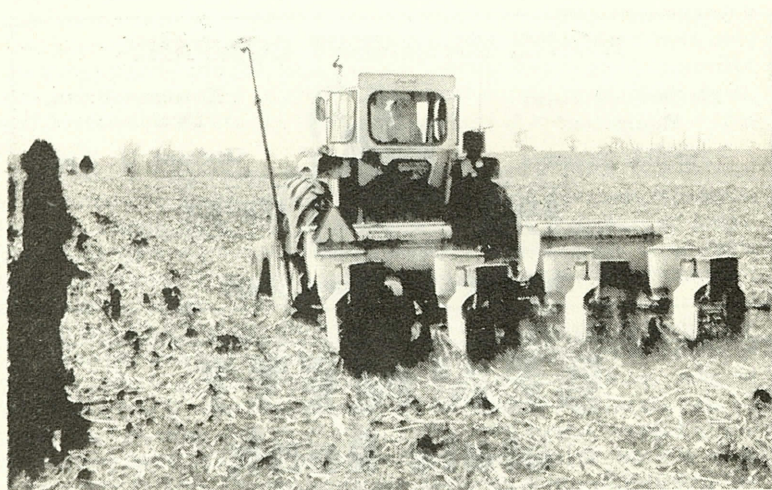
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PHONE 893-2272

BENNETT, IOWA

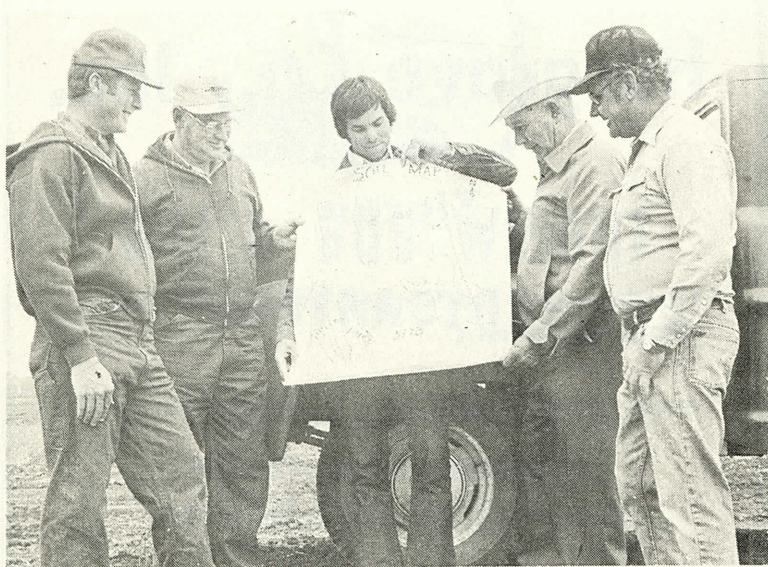


These plots, on the FFA ground in Tipton, give farmers and land-owners a chance to see and compare different tillage operations. Here, we see Keith Brown using a "Sidewinder."



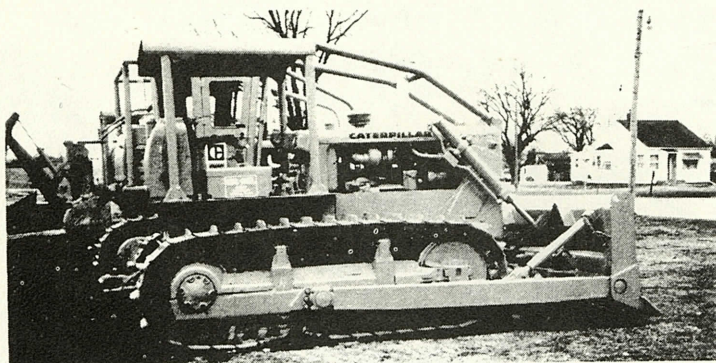


Outdoor teacher workshops are an important part of conservation education. Here Howard Bright, district conservationist, explains soils and their formation.



Tile outlet terrace tour in the Lowden Watershed on the J. H. O'Connor farm.

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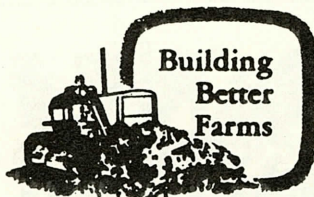
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CONSERVATION

By C. L. Beyer

The increased demand for food and food products is creating unbelievable demands on our natural resources. Iowa has approximately 20 percent of all the prime land in the United States. Iowa, however, is losing its most valuable resource, its soil, at an alarming rate. The State Secretary of Agriculture, Robert Lounsberry, has estimated the 1975 soil loss in Iowa to be in excess of 40 tons per acre. In Cedar county, farming over the last 130 years has reduced the top soil by over 50 percent. This soil can never be replaced.

The floods of 1974 made many farmers aware of the need for conservation practices. In the last 6 months we are receiving more requests for assistance than ever before. Every farm has a different problem due to the different soil types, slopes, topography, length of slope, etc. The SCS tries to solve each problem separately. In many cases, by using contouring and a good rotation, erosion could be held to the allowable limit of 3, 4, or 5 tons per acre per year. Another conservation practice that is relatively simple is to leave at least 5,000 lbs. of residue on the surface. However, very few farmers are willing to do either of these.

Each year more farmers are willing to use tile outlet terraces. Our present terraces are designed for big equipment. They are being built parallel with an even number of rows and are designed to take advantage of the topography whether straight or contoured.

Nineteen Seventy Five was a good year for conservation in Cedar county. The SCS supervised construction for over 50,000 feet of tile outlet terraces and 5 ponds.

If you have an erosion problem on your farm, please feel free to call your local SCS office - 886-6214.

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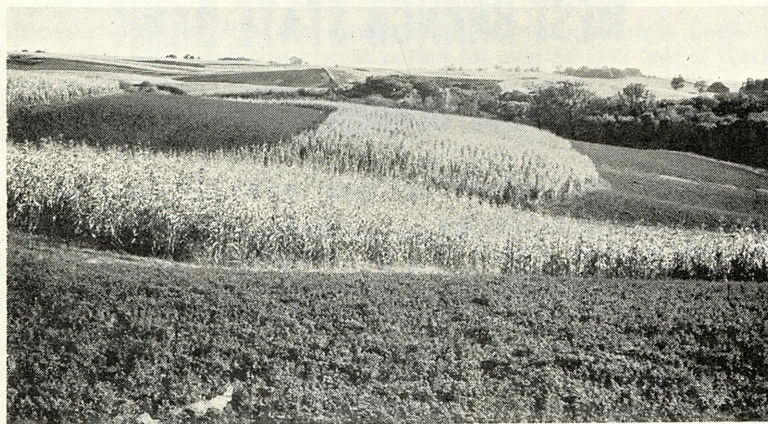
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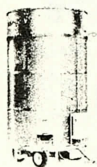
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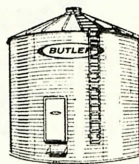
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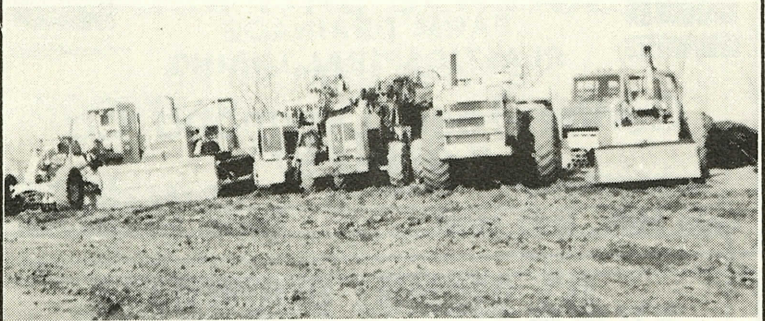


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10. Don Stafford
11. Carl Ploen
12. Earl Martin
13. James Vitense
14. Ernest Hora
15. Delmar Prosser
16. Warren Fredericks
17. Louis Miller
18. Norman Seligman
19. Evadell Brink &
Alice Fristedt

**Resource Conservation
Plans And
Revisions For 1975**

1. Dwayne Drager
2. King Herr & Robert Guy
3. John Wentz
4. Robert Wertzbaugher
5. Jim Cahill
6. Edward Jack
7. Robert Laucamp
8. Mrs. Amber Jack
9. David Ferguson
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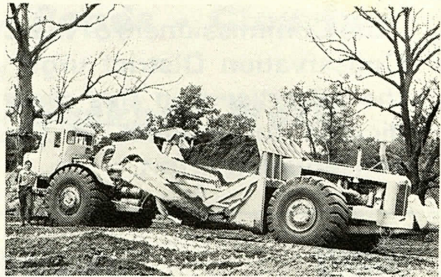
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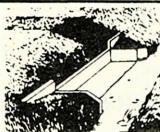
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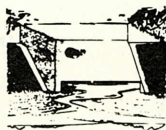
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Cedar County ASCS

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Norman C. Kroemer, Member

County Executive Director:

Donald M. Conrad

Clerks:

Betty E. Morris
Marjean A. Mente

In holding our 1976 Cedar County development meeting for a conservation program, we could not help but reflect on the changes in conservation emphasis and changes in our most used practices in the County.

The practice we used most in 1975, Tile Outlet Terraces, had 1 application in 1968. The practice used most in 1968 with 100 applications had only 3 applications in 1975 and this was drainage tile. Other practices which were used extensively in 1975 were farm ponds and sod waterways.

The program for 1976 has been expanded to include some practices which were not available in 1975.

Practices available for 1976 include:

Establishment and Improvement of Permanent Vegetative Cover, Planting and Improvement of a Stand of Trees, Farm Ponds, Strip-cropping, Terraces and Diversion Terraces, Establishment of a Wildlife Habitat, Constructing Erosion Control Dams, Construction of Sod Waterways, Shelterbelts and Windbreaks, Ag Lime, Livestock Wells, Controlling Shrubs, Underground Drainage Tile, Contour Farming, Establishment of Permanent Vegetative Cover on Problem Areas.

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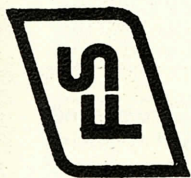
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Farmers Home Administration

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David E. Sander, Assistant County Supervisor
Kathryn S. Koch, County Office Assistant

The Farmers Home Administration is the rural credit branch of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Loans are made for many worthwhile purposes. All loans are made to rural families who are unable to get conventional financing. The loans are set up for repayment according to the families' ability to repay.

A three man County Committee reviews applications for loans to determine loan eligibility. The County Committee members are Robert Laucamp, Tipton; Chester Vincent, West Branch; and John Sauer, Mechanicsville.

Some of the loans FmHA makes are described as follows:

Farm Operating Loans: Loans are made to qualified applicants to purchase livestock, machinery, and operating expenses. Debts can be refinanced if collateral is given. There is a \$50,000 maximum of this loan type. Many young men have been "Scratch Starters" with this loan. This is a 7 year loan which enables a farm family to spread out its overhead and get a good start in farming.

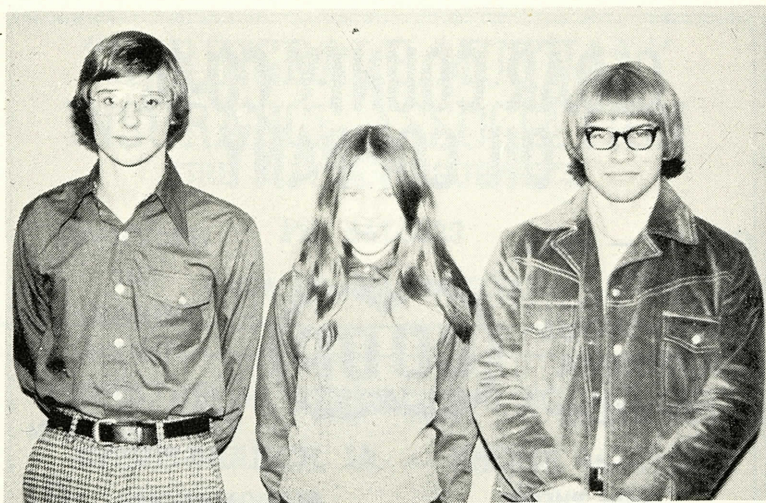
Farm Ownership Loans: Loans are made to tenants to become land owners and operators. The applicant must be in a good financial situation to get his loan. These loans are made in conjunction with loans with other long term lenders. The maximum loan is for 40 years with a total real estate indebtedness of \$225,000.

Emergency Loans: These loans are made to a farmer when a natural disaster strikes such as wind, hail, blight, and drought. These are made to keep the family on the farm and give him operating credit at a reduced interest rate and suitable terms. A substantial loss must have been suffered to get this type of credit.

Soil & Water Loans: These loans are made to finance soil and water conservation practices such as ponds, dams, erosion control structures, wells and other items consistent with good farming practices.

Rural Housing: Loans are made to build new homes or upgrade existing homes. Facility loans are made for grain storage, improved farm water systems, and livestock production facilities.

The Cedar County Office is located in Tipton in the USDA Building. Office hours are each Monday from 8:00 to 5:00.



This year, speaking on "Land Use Planning-Insurance for Mankind," David Niermeyer, left, was the winner with Joe Cahill, right, coming in 2nd, and Michelle Elowsky, middle, was 3rd.

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West Branch, Iowa

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1974-75 FISCAL YEAR**

I-M BUDGET

Commissioner's Expense	\$828.03
Office Supplies.....	7.79
Prizes for Contest	43.08
Meeting Expenses	68.20
Office Expense	332.90
Materials for Demonstrations	20.00
TOTAL.....	\$1,300.00

II-M BUDGET

Salary - Clerk	\$6,606.90
State Retirement	231.24
Health Insurance	213.00
Federal Retirement (Social Security)	386.50
Life Insurance	36.00
Travel.....	119.03
Equipment	21.74
TOTAL.....	\$7,614.41

III-M BUDGET

Allocation	\$24,100.00
Amount disbursed	20,216.72
Amount obligated	2,550.00
Balance	1,333.28

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ACCOMPLISHMENT SUMMARY

The following indicates the accomplishments for the
1975 Fiscal Year and totals to date.

		To Date
Contour Farming	880 Acres	68,432 Acres
Minimum Tillage	1,998 Acres	59,319 Acres
Grassed Waterways	54 Acres	1,112 Acres
Tile Drainage	272,318 Ft.	6,196,359 Ft.
Detailed Soil Surveys		374,400 Acres
Pasture Planting	151 Acres	10,351 Acres
Wildlife Area	44 Acres	1,896 Acres
Land Adequately Treated	780 Acres	68,201 Acres
Windbreaks & Tree Planting	29 Acres	298 Acres
Tile Outlet Terrace	44,880 Ft.	86,286 Ft.
Lagoons & Holding Ponds	3	17

"We feel that either directly or indirectly we are influencing the conservation thinking of every citizen in the county. If we continue to do so, our natural resources will be preserved."

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Wildlife Management Biologist

By Donald Pfeiffer

Cedar County is in need of secure nesting cover for its wildlife. Pheasants are hard pressed for sites to hatch broods. They are forced to use the fence rows and ditches in many parts of the county. These areas are travel lanes for predators and nest success is only about 10%. Compare this with the nest success in an alfalfa-brome field of nearly 80%.

Spring rains in 1973 and 1974 flooded out nesting wildlife. During this same period economic conditions have forced intensified farming with a reduction of small grains and hayland. The combination has resulted in fewer rabbits and pheasants in Cedar County. As reductions in game species occur, there is also a reduction in songbird and mammal populations.

Good nesting cover is needed to reverse this trend. Permanent grass can be the solution to erosion on those sidehills and waste areas. Non-landowners might offer to seed down some odd corners. Two landowners completed alfalfa and switchgrass seedings in 1975. The eight acres will be left for wildlife.

One of the landowners seeding three acres is also planning a tree shelterbelt along a creek. The mixture of pines and shrubs will offer security to many animal species during the winter. Other local residents have taken advantage of the State Forest Nursery variety of trees for reforestation and wildlife benefits.

If you would like free technical assistance on improving wildlife populations on your land, contact me by leaving your request at the SCS office. I will work with you to increase wildlife on your land for your own and future generation enjoyment.

DISTRICT FORESTER

By Ed Gardiner

A recent Forest Service survey shows that Iowa has lost about 40% of its forest cover in the last 20 years. Figures by counties are not available but Cedar county is probably about average. At this rate the forested areas will soon be gone.

The conversion of forest land is undertaken for an individual's economic gain. The proper land use for that particular piece of the earth is not considered. In 20 to 30 years the individual will be gone and so will the top soil and the timber.

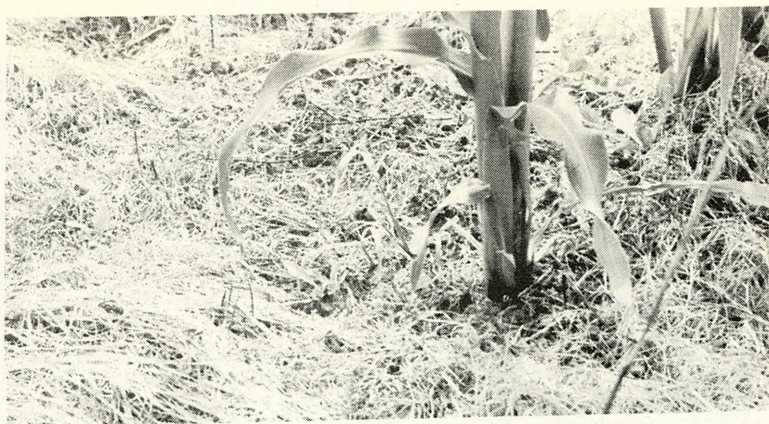
The most common method of converting forest land to some other use is grazing. Livestock eat the young trees, pack the soil, rub the bark, and trample the roots. In a few years only the large trees are left. As these die or are removed by cutting or dozing the very erosive timber soil is exposed.

For those timberland owners that want to keep their land in timber or for those landowners that want to reforest, there is some help. The A.S.C.S. committee for Cedar County has included two forest practices in their annual program. One is tree planting and this would be reforestation involving at least an acre and the other is timberstand improvement which involves thinning, pruning, and possibly some fencing to keep livestock out of the timber.

The Iowa Conservation Commission provides a Forester for the technical assistance in the above mentioned programs. Also, the Conservation Commission maintains the State Forest Nursery at Ames which provides plants for reforestation, wildlife, and erosion control plantings.

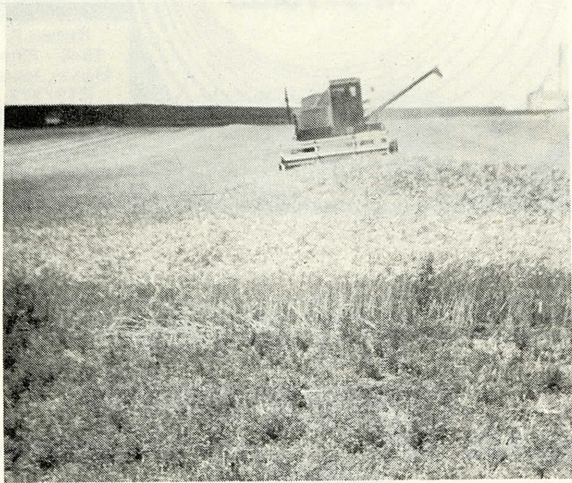
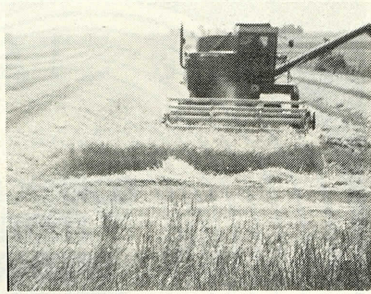
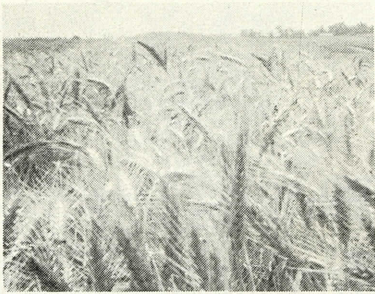


Tree planting.



George Bowie, Iowa township, uses no-till and gets no erosion.





Bob Severin, Dayton township, produces bumper wheat crop on a field protected by tile outlet terraces.



Bob, inspecting a tile intake for one of his terraces, stands in his wheat crop before harvest.



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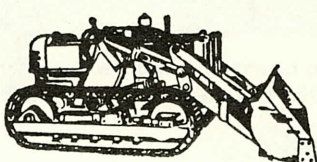
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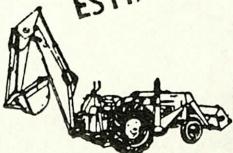
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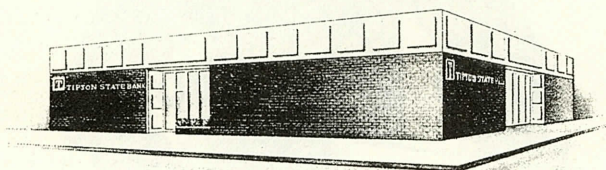


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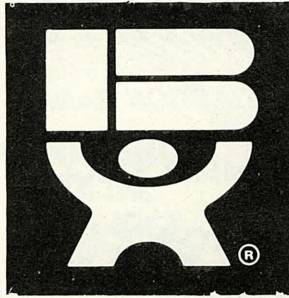
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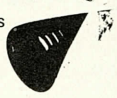
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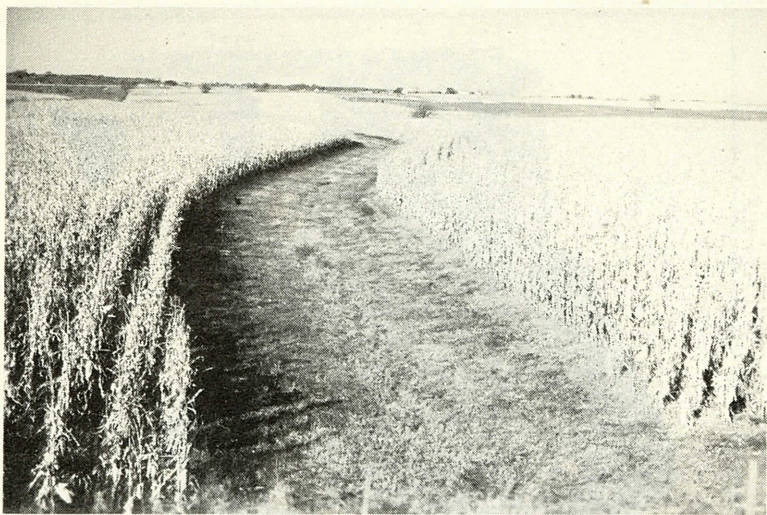
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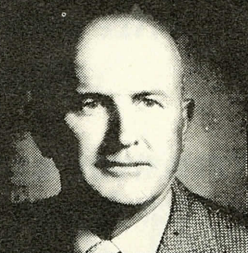
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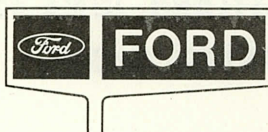
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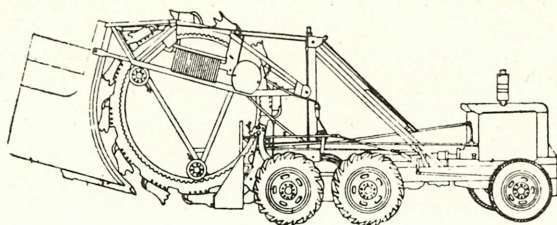
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