

ANNUAL REPORT

Cherokee County Soil Conservation District



L. to R.: Louis Bengtson, James Fee, C. C. Martin

Cherokee County Soil Conservation District Marks 25 Years' Service

This year, the Cherokee County Soil Conservation District Commissioners submitted their silver anniversary report on the accomplishments for 1969.

The District was officially organized on April 18, 1944, with Louis Bengtson, C. C. Martin and James Fee elected as the first governing body.

Harvey Lindberg was assigned to Cherokee County in October, 1944 as the first farm planner and Glen Craft as the first technician in January, 1945. Glen Craft retired in March, 1968 and Harvey Lindberg retired in December, 1968.

Ford Ralston of Washta signed the first farmer agreement with the Soil Conservation District in February, 1945.

Cherokee County farmers have installed an impressive amount of soil and water conservation practices in the past 25 years. To date, there are 865 farm owners who have signed cooperative agreements with the Soil Conservation District. If all the terraces installed in the past 25 years were laid out in a continual line, they would reach 550 miles. Over 90 farm ponds have been constructed and more than 100 erosion control structures. Nearly 1,400 acres of Cherokee County are in waterways seeded to grass and more than 90,000 acres are protected by contouring.

This conservation on the land involves people and Cherokee County farmers have received considerable recognition for their soil and water conservation farming. In the 25 years, the District has received The Sioux City Permanent Agriculture Program Area Award eight times. Those men recognized in this manner include James Fee, Pete Carsten, Herb Althaus, Vere Corrington, Art Dorr, Ralph Kludas, Clifford Chapman, Harvey Harrison, Keith Fee, Eldred Beeghly, Forrest Spencer, Robert Florine, Ralph Peterson, Herbert Peterson, John Husman, LaVern Gustafson, Lawrence Hohbach, Duane Hollenbeck, James Bush, Robert George, Ronald and Royce Mortenson, Melvin Robinson, Joe Eisenmenger, and Whitfield and Darrell Adamson. In 1964, the District was also honored for having the Sweepstakes Winner in the Soil Conservation Achievement Awards Program sponsored by the Des Moines Register. The farmer recognized was Robert Rawson of Pion, Iowa.

Nine watershed projects have been completed in Cherokee County and plans are completed on the tenth. The small watersheds are organized for the purpose of controlling soil and water erosion within a complete drainage area. This involves the cooperation and participation of all the neighbors in a small drainage area who go together to solve the problems of soil and water conservation which go beyond the efforts of an individual landowner.

Report on 1969 Dist. Activities

The Cherokee County Soil Conservation District observed its 25th anniversary in 1969. This report is dedicated to the conservation foresight of its three original commissioners elected to serve in April, 1944. These men were James R. Fee, C. C. Martin and Louis C. Bengtson.

Harvey Lindberg retired after serving 25 years in the Cherokee County Soil Conservation District and a total of 35 years with the Soil Conservation Service beginning with the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) in the 1930's.

Miss Cathy Meloy of Cherokee was the District soil conservation speech contest winner. She also won third place honors in the regional contest at LeMars.

Dan George worked part-time as conservation aide in the summer. A combination ASCS, Extension, FICA, and SCD booth was set up at the county fair. Theme of the booth was to give information on rural water systems.

Paul Meylor, Leonard Degan and Richard Anderson were the County winners in the Des Moines Register Contest.

The Whitfield Adamson-Darrell Adamson, Lewis Shea, Joe Eisenmenger, and McWilliams-Melvin Robinson farms were the County and Area winners of the Sioux City Program for Permanent Agriculture.

One set of America the Beautiful pictures was taken to Southeast Asia for teaching purposes.

Outdoor conservation science classes for the Meriden-Cleghorn schools were held at the Martin Access Area on May 13th and for Rainel Knob County Park Area on May 14th.

An air survey over the county determined the flood damage caused by the runoff of the snow melt in the spring of 1969.

The Commissioners held 10 regular monthly meetings and one special meeting during the year. Commissioners also attended two regional commissioners meetings at LeMars.

The District Conservationist presented a slide talk to the Spring Township Farm Bureau and the Aurelia Women Club. A talk on the proposed rural water system

was given at the Cherokee Rotary Club.

The District Conservationist served on a panel at a town hall meeting called by the Cherokee Community Action Committee to discuss the Cherokee flood problem.

Two meetings were held with the County Board of Supervisors with Wallis Tonsfeldt, Area Conservationist and John Worster, Area Soil Scientist, to discuss possible standard soil survey for Cherokee County.

An Area Water Pollution Control meeting was held at the Sheffield Hotel in July.

District Clerk, Gladys Schroeder, attended the Annual Conference for Soil Conservation Commissioners at Hotel Savory, Des Moines, Iowa in September.

In Retrospect

by Bernard Braband, DC

1969 (as no one will need to be reminded) was a year of sufficiency of moisture. This was reflected in the great amount of drainage done in the county. Farmers saw the need and this became a priority for them. Having an adequacy of moisture resulted in bountiful yields also. Farmers were short of storage and drying space. (This reminds a person of the biblical character who tore down all his granaries to rebuild more and greater ones to store his bountiful harvest).

When you think back on 1969 to try to visualize what you did differently to bring about such good yields, you will have to admit that it was all because of adequate moisture.

This brings about the realization that of all the management practices we can use to bring about a good return in corn yield, the one important ingredient is moisture. Therefore, any moisture conservation practices that can be used, such as contouring, terracing or mulch tillage and the combination of these practices where needed are important to good crop production.

Don't overlook the need for soil and water conservation. There are too many years in Northwest Iowa when too little moisture is the case during the growing season.

Reflects on 25 Years with Co. Soil Conservation Service

by Mildred Smith

"It's a long way back," comments J. Ford Ralston as he cogitates on the 25th anniversary of the organization of Cherokee County Soil Conservation District, conservation in general and its effect on the agriculture picture through the years.

Ralston has often been called "Mr. Conservation," a title justly applied. One quarter of a century ago when the concept of soil conservation service was in its infancy in this county, this Grand Meadow Township farmer had the first complete farm plan in the county drawn up for his farm west of Washta.

In other words, he was the first cooperator for this newly organized district.

Now 25 years later he is looking forward to the completion of 2,650 acre Ralston Watershed that encompasses his farm and those of his neighbors. Work on the

watershed is expected to begin this spring.

The proposed watershed is 60 percent in Cherokee County and 40 percent in Woodbury. When the watershed was organized in 1964, landowners involved voted to call it the Ralston Watershed in honor of the first man to cooperate in the conservation program.

Some preliminary work in soil and water conservation had been accomplished prior to establishment of the Soil Conservation District here when the Civilian Conservation Corps camp was assigned to erosion control work under supervision of Soil Erosion Service. One such camp was established in Cherokee before World War II and worked started on approximately 50 farms. These marked the beginning of soil conservation work in Cherokee County and provided some demonstration areas.

But, generally, in these early years, the idea of terraces, contours and grassed waterways were unacceptable, a good straight corn row, regardless of terrain, was one measure of a good farmer.

Ford's contribution to total conservation picture is outstanding. He served as Soil Conservation Commissioner for 12 years, 1950-62 and was chairman for four of those years.

A former member of the Little Sioux Work Committee, he spent many hours of his own time promoting soil and water conservation. He promoted several local projects beneficial to soil conservation and was one of the first two representatives for Cherokee County to the Northwest Iowa Experimental Farm Association.

Ford was always present when meetings or projects in conservation needed doing, faithfully attending commissioners meetings and watershed tours, helping state contour lands for State and Pilot Rock Plowing Matches and attending



Don Carlson has added a tool of his own design for press wheels following the till plant-ers. Shown are Evan and Paul

Carlson "helping" dad out at the ends of the field. Don also plants on the contour using 38 inch row spacing.



Leonard Degen uses 38 inch row spacing on the contour. All applications of fertilizer, seed, herbicide and insecticide are accomplished in one trip.

Leonard says it is hard to visualize that all the crop is in after two trips across the field, once chopping stalks and the next for planting.

Mulch Tillage Changing Picture

Mulch tillage machines utilizing the system of planting the crops directly in the residue of last year's crop with no other ground preparation other than chopping the stalks is making a fast change in Cherokee County according to Bernard Braband, DC.

To obtain the reaction to mulch planting, the comments of two conservation farmers are noted. Leonard Degen of Aurelia started mulch planting this year and Don Carlson of Cherokee is a veteran.

Leonard Degen planted 300 acres of corn this spring with a till planter. He confessed having doubts about the operation because it is his first experience with the planter. Degen chopped his stalks and disced ahead of planting, although he believes it was a mistake to disc as the planter works best in land which has not been disturbed. Degen further remarked how effective the planter worked when planting directly in alfalfa with nearly knee high growth.

As a parting comment, Degen said his fuel consumption after planting 300 acres of row crop this spring has been quite low, compared to conventional operations.

Don Carlson of Cherokee has planted row crops on a minimum tillage basis for so long, he can't compare the results he gets to service and neighborliness have always ranked high in their scheme of life.

The Ralstons have two daughters, Mrs. C. J. (Ella Belle) Barwick and Mrs. Dale (Emma) Trapp, both of Grand Meadow.



ing short course for district commissioners at Ames.

Ford also served one term on the County Board of Supervisors and as director from his township on the Cherokee County Farm Bureau board of directors.

Ford's farm typifies conservation at work on his rolling half section. He has 275 acres of contouring, 3.9 acres in grassed waterways, 5.6 miles in terraces plus a weir notch for erosion control.

Ford now classifies himself as "retired" but a complete livestock program boosted his overall good farming practices through his active farming years.

Working side by side with Ford in all his endeavors is his wife, Belle. Church work, community

Accomplishments

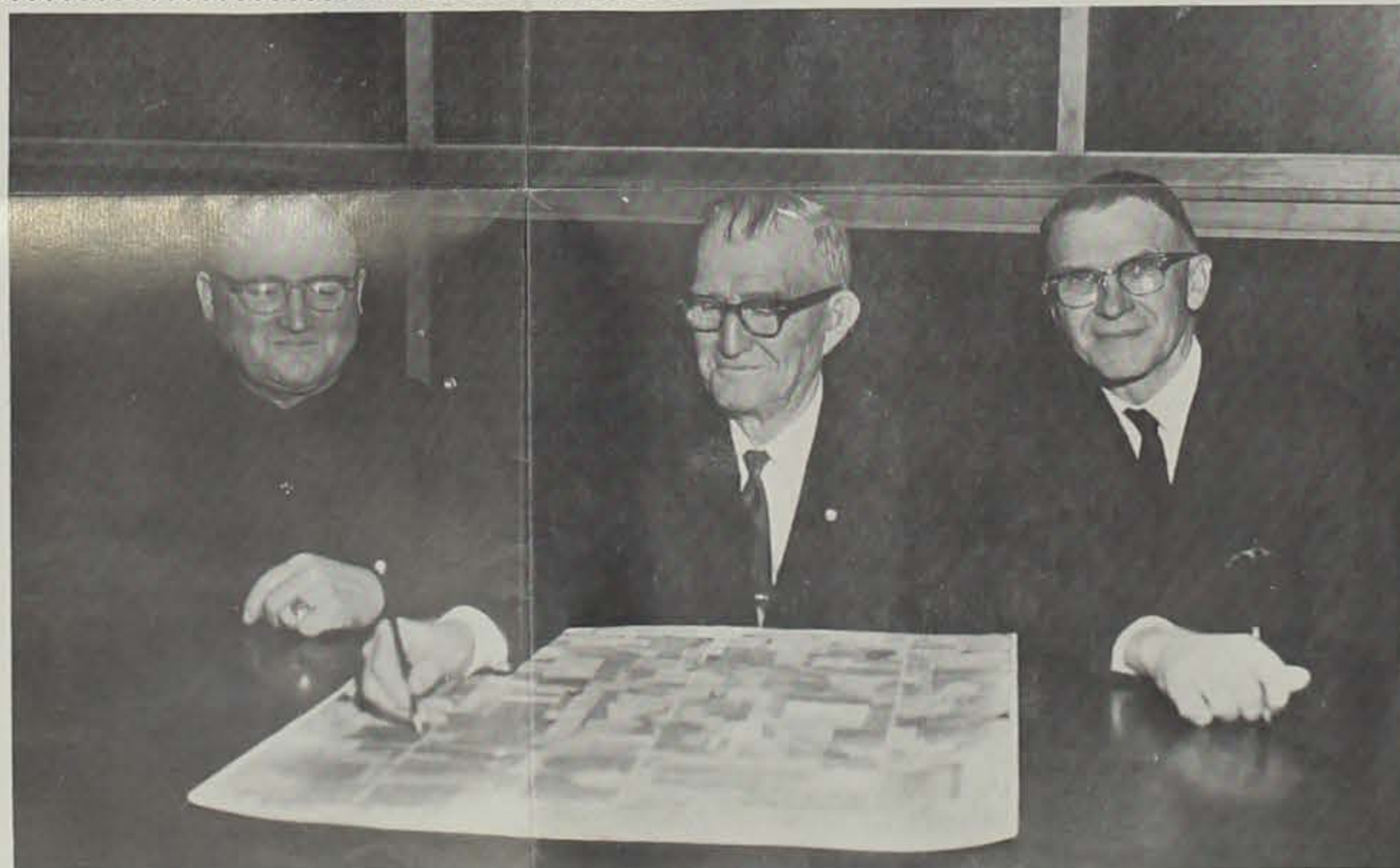
	This Year	Total to Date
Terraces	47,784 feet	2,902,540 feet
Grass Waterways	58 acres	1,385 acres
Ponds	1 each	94 each
Concrete Structures	2 each	119 each
The Drains	94,006 feet	1,894,881 feet
Diversions	650 feet	56,354 feet
Drainage Ditch	833 feet	30,703 feet
Wildlife Planting	8 acres	262 acres
Contouring	300 acres	93,089 acres
District Cooperators	22 each	865 each
Basic Plans	7 each	733 each
Plans Revised	9 each	

Personnel

DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS		
Vere Corrington	Cherokee, Iowa	Chairman
Arthur Dorr	Marcus, Iowa	Member
Donald DeWitt	Washta, Iowa	Member
STATE SOIL CONSERVATION COMMITTEE		
Mrs. Gladys Schroeder	Quimby, Iowa	District Clerk
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE		
Bernard L. Braband		District Conservationist
Monas C. Nixon		Conservation Technician
Alex H. Paul (Sept. 1969 to present)	Cherokee and O'Brien County	Conservation Engineering Technician
With technical assistance on request from:		
Wallis Tonsfeldt		Area Conservationist
John Worster		Area Soil Scientist
Vernon Meyer		Civil Engineer
Fern Delbridge		Area Clerk
STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION		
Bill Farris, stationed at LeMars, Iowa		District Forester

Financial Statement

July 1, 1968-June 30, 1969	
Louis C. Bengtson, Treasurer	
The 1-M and 2-M budgets are provided by the State of Iowa	
1-M Budget Allocation	\$ 500.00
Carryover from 67-68 fiscal year	191.66
Total Allocation	\$ 691.66
Expenses:	
Commissioners expenses	\$ 166.25
Office Supplies	140.49
Printing Annual Report	91.25
Prizes for contests	25.00
Office expense	42.15
Total expenses	\$ 465.14
Fiscal year balance returned to State Committee office 6-30-69	226.52
2-M Budget Allocation	\$ 5,061.69
Salary, FICA, IPERS, Travel, Insurance—Total expended	\$ 5,061.69
DISTRICT GENERAL FUND:	
Balance on Hand 7-1-68	\$ 634.62
Income	88.50
Total	\$ 723.12
Expense	224.80
Balance on Hand 6-30-69	\$ 498.32
DISTRICT WATERSHED MAINTENANCE FUND:	
Balance on Hand 7-1-68	\$27,591.06
Watershed Maintenance Payments	2,282.77
Interest	1,185.00
Expenses	\$31,058.83
Balance on Hand 6-30-69	\$30,907.08
Disposition of the \$30,907.08 is as follows:	
\$19,000.00 in Certificates of Deposit	
\$10,000.00 in H Bonds	
\$1,907.08 in Checking Account	



VERE CORRINGTON, Chairman

ARTHUR J. DORR, Commissioner

DONALD L. DEWITT, Commissioner

We wish to take this opportunity to thank related agencies and service organizations and businesses for their continued support to the local soil conservation movement.

Especially we wish to remember the ASCS, Extension Service, Federal Crop Insurance Corporation, State Conservation Commission, the County newspapers, Radio Station KCHE, County Board

of Supervisors and the Cherokee Chamber of Commerce Community Action Committee. Also the many people who individually gave of their time, talent, and experience to further the local program.

Without the interest of the entire community, development is not possible.

THE AGRICULTURAL PROGRAM

by Clifford L. Chapman, Cherokee Co. Executive Director

The 1970 Agricultural Conservation Program has been developed and is carried out on the basis of the following general principles.

1. The Cherokee County program contains broad authorities to help meet the varied soil and water conservation problems of the county.

2. These programs are designed to encourage those soil and water conservation practices which provide the most enduring conservation benefits practically attainable in 1970 on the lands where they are to be applied.

3. Costs will be shared with a farmer only on satisfactory performed soil and water conservation practices for which Federal cost sharing was requested by the farmer before the conservation work was begun.

4. Costs are shared only on soil and water conservation practices which it is believed farmers would not carry out to the needed extent without program assistance.

5. The purpose of the program is to help achieve additional conservation on land now in agricultural production rather than to bring more land into agricultural production. This program is not applicable to the development of new or additional farmland by measures such as drainage or land clearing.

This program is administered by the Cherokee County ASC Committee: Wm. F. Turner, Chairman, Eric Carlson, Vice-chairman, and Louis C. Bengtson, Member, in cooperation with the Cherokee County Soil Conservation Service and District Commissioners.