

IDA COUNTY, IOWA, SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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SOIL FERTILITY CANNOT BE IMPROVED
WITHOUT CONTROLLING SOIL EROSION

INTRODUCTION

The Ida County Soil Conservation District submits the following report of its activities for the 1952 calendar year.

The District is still following the general scheme of (1) getting the farmer interested, (2) developing with him a plan of action for his farm and (3) assisting him technically to put this plan into action.

Because ACP assistance required so much of the technicians time this year it was impossible to contact the anticipated number of prospective cooperators to develop interest, and to make plans for soil conservation. Nevertheless we feel that cooperation with Production and Marketing Administration has set up a situation that created much interest and understanding among farmers relative to soil conservation.

Cooperating and assisting agencies, firms and individuals are hereby given credit for their contributions to the work of the Soil Conservation Service and the Ida County Soil Conservation District.

The agencies listed below made major contributions in the amounts set forth:

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service:

Soil Conservationist GS-7 - 12 months service
Soil Conservationist GS-5 - 12 months service
Conservation Aid GS-4 - 5 months service
Conservation Aid GS-2 - 2 months service
Transportation, office space and supplies for the above.
(U.S. Post Office Department furnished office space.)

The Ida County Farm Bureau, Extension Service, and the Iowa State Extension Service cooperating with the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Assistance for the County Extension Director in arranging meetings, schools and the like and in acting as secretary for the District Commissioners

Ida County Production and Marketing Administration:

Assistance in laying out contour guide lines
\$2000.00 in offset funds for Agricultural Conservation Program

Iowa State Soil Conservation Committee

Assistance in coordinating our activities with those of other districts
\$1880.10 for clerical and technical assistance
\$ 309.04 for miscellaneous expenses

DEVELOPING INTEREST IN SOIL CONSERVATION

The Production and Marketing Administration through its Agricultural Conservation Program continues to attract some of the farmers of this district to conservation practices. However, this effect is not so pronounced as it was a few years ago.

The Sioux City Program for Permanent Agriculture, sponsored by the Sioux City Chamber of Commerce and Journal Tribune Publications, has attracted many farmers to conservation farming through its intense publicity campaign. The District has participated in this contest since its inception. In 1952, Emil Schmidt, Holstein; Elvie Dreeszen, Holstein; Ed Perion, Ida Grove and Justin Hayward, Ida Grove were county winners in this contest.

The instructor for the veteran's on-the-farm training course, now in operation in the District, has been teaching the value of sound soil conservation. Most of the trainees have been influenced to start conservation practices on their farms.

The Agricultural Resources Program, set up by the Ida County Agricultural Resources Council, has crystalized the thinking of leaders in the District. It now provides for a unified approach to the overall program of sound agriculture. It still remains for organizations such as the District to carry out programs that will influence farmers to establish conservation on the ground in step by step and year by year manner.

The news papers of the District have done and are doing a commendable job of carrying the story of soil conservation to the public. During the past year the District has inaugurated the policy of purchasing some advertising as a means of assisting the papers in this work.

It has been the policy of the District to furnish speakers, slides, movies and literature to requesting groups and organizations whenever they desire to set up special programs on soil conservation. This holds particularly true during Iowa Soil Conservation Week, held annually in June.

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

During February 1952, the County Extension Director conducted a Leaders Land Use Training School. The school consisted of four daytime sessions of six hours each. Participants were selected by consultation with agricultural leader and sending invitations to 12 farmers residing in each township. They in turn agreed to attend at least three of the sessions. If they did not agree the list was filled by additional invitations.

Emphasis was placed on the why rather than the how. Extension Specialists were used in most cases. The result of this activity was encouraging. Average attendance at the four sessions was approximately 85.

During the past year Veteran's On-the-Farm Training Classes in our district have been given the fullest cooperation. The group in turn has participated fully in the District Conservation Program. In order that trainees may be able to put their farm conservation plans in operation while they are still in school the District has set up the policy of giving these individuals top priority for planning and application assistance.

One of our district commissioners has been appointed to the Program Planning Committee for the local County Extension Program. While lack of personnel for educational purposes has required that some phases of soil conservation be slighted, never-the-less we feel that soil conservation is in line with other educational activities in the District.

The rapidly changing policy and procedure for the Agricultural Conservation Program of PMA has required a large number of meetings and news releases in order that the public be kept informed. This has been done, in 1952, by the local county PMA committee in a satisfactory manner. Work Unit personnel have assisted where needed and practical.

PLANNING FOR SOIL CONSERVATION

As of December 31, 1952 the District had 255 active farm conservation plans. This includes 28 initial agreements entered into under the progressive planning procedure inaugurated during the year. The added flexibility of this approach appears to us to be a desirable change.

Plans have been completed for construction of flood control measures on the East Aldrich Creek sub-watershed. Work will be started when funds become available.

APPLYING SOIL CONSERVATION PRACTICES

In 1952 the District personnel gave on-site assistance in applying soil saving practices in the amounts shown:

Contour farming	9575 acres
Terraces	7.17 miles
Contour Field Boundaries	7411 rods
Adequate Cropping Systems Planned	1856 acres
Tiling	36381 feet

The Ida County PMA reports the following establishment of conservation practices in this District. This is based upon total practices reported and not just those upon which payments were made:

PRACTICE	UNIT	1952	1951
Standard terraces	Mile	5	5
Contour plow and plant	Acre	17,195	11,705
Contour plant only	Acre	11,043	10,641
Contour plant row crop	Acre	28,238	22,346
Seeding waterways	Sq.Yd.	79,033	674,166
Lime spread	Ton	1,571	1,580
Fertilizer spread	Ton	100*	993
Green Manure crops	Acre	27,048	45,291
Grassed headlands established	Lin. Rod	919	19,051
Above normal seeding	Acre	994	1,581

* P205 counted only on legume and grass seeding.

PROBLEMS

The aim of the District is to have farmers use each acre according to its capability and treat each acre according to its needs for protection and improvement. The broad problem is then one of interesting the remaining approximately 1100 farmers in a planned conservation program.

In order of their importance our soil conservation problems are:

1. Sheet erosion or loss of soil from hill sides.
2. Maintenance of fertility.
3. Selection and maintenance of crop rotations best suited to soil type and lay of the land.
4. Grassed waterways and gully control.
5. Weed control

The Little Sioux Flood control problem can best be solved by keeping rain water on the land where it falls. This can best be done by the solution to problems listed above with addition of retention reservoirs.

* P205 counted only on legume and grass seeding.

PROGRESS SUMMARY
 IDA COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT
 ESTABLISHED - FEB. 19, 1945
 Work Unit Office Opened - March 13, 1946

	In 1952	To Date
Sub-Watershed Groups Organized	0	13
Soil Conservation Surveys (Acres)	4,180	75,509
Farm Conservation Plans Completed (No.)	16	236
(Acre)	2543	40,436
Acres Contour Laid Out	9575	
Miles Terraces Built	7	55
Acres Definite Crop Rotation Planned	1856	28,981
Educational Meetings Held (No.)	7	107
(Attend)	440	3607
Tile Lines (feet)	36,381	36,381
News Articles	5	152
Demonstrations and Tours (No.)	3	41
(Attend)	128	565
Radio Talks	0	3
Birthday Party (No.)	1	7
(Attend)	135	1285

H. L. Elk, Chairman
 Ida County Soil Conservation District