

POWESHIEK COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

P. O. Box 216 Malcom, IA 50157 (515) 528-2065

Ron Clayton, chm. Doug Brown Russell Winburn H. W. Mathes Kyle Montgomery

Sodbuster Small Area Exemption Reinstated

Small area exemptions have been reinstated for sodbusting under the 1985 Farm Bill. For a short time this past fall they were eliminated. Again, small areas such as the following can be exempted from sodbuster rules: regular fencerows, building sites, tree piles, rock piles, etc.

This means that converting these types of areas to cropland will not require a sodbuster plan prior to planting a crop if it is considered a highly erodible area.

If you are planning on cropping any areas that were not considered cropped during the years of 1981 to 1985 you should report these areas to the ASCS office and request a highly erodible land or swampbuster determination.

Highly erodible areas being converted to cropping require an approved conservation plan that needs to be followed when cropping such areas. For more information, contact our office or the ASCS office.

Soil Conservation Videos Available

How will you apply your soil conservation plan on highly erodible land? The USDA Soil Conservation Service and the National Association of Conservation Districts have produced a video tape on eight topics that will help. This video tape shows, step-by-step, how to do practices with little help from SCS. Each segment is 5 to 9 minutes long. Here's what is covered in the tape.

How to measure and manage crop residues, layout contour lines and use field borders, layout contour buffer strips, control small gullies with grass, plant and maintain a field windbreak, keeping your terraces working and points to consider in stripcropping.

30 VCR tapes will be available to borrow in the county at the SCS and Extension Offices, Farm Bureau Office in Brooklyn and the Vo-Ag department at the schools in Montezuma and Grinnell. Other loan points may be added. Each tape may be borrowed for a day or two at no charge.

Cost-Share Funds Available Now

Federal and state cost-share funds for applying conservation practices are expected to be available again this year. If you are planning on applying for help, please contact this office or the ASCS office. For both funds, applications must be approved by the proper office before work begins.

State cost-share funds are available at the Poweshiek County SWCD Office to pay up to a maximum of 50% of the estimated or actual cost of doing work. The following practices are available for cost-share: terraces, water and sediment control basins, diversions, erosion control dams and critical area planting.

Cost-share is also available for the following: no-till planting at \$10.00 per acre, maximum of 40 acres, first time cost-share; contour farming at \$6.00 per acre, maximum of 65 acres; and contour stripcropping at \$15.00 per acre, maximum of 60 acres.

Conservation Plans Can be Revised Now

Conservation plans developed under the 1985 Farm Bill can be revised at any time. Many of the first plans written were done so under rules which have now changed allowing for greater soil loss than before. This allows changes in crop rotations, tillage, etc.

A plan can be changed any time that both SCS and the landowner agree to make a change. Landowners must sign the new plans just as they did the original ones.

If you wish to review your plan or discuss what changes might be possible contact the Poweshiek SWCD Office in Malcom. If you wish an appointment, please call.

Consider Applying Conservation Plans Early

Farmers with 1985 Farm Bill compliance conservation plans should consider applying at least some of the planned practices early. SCS will not have time to help everyone at the same time due to limited staff.

Persons with much to do should consider doing some work ahead of schedule to spread out work so there is not an impossible amount of work to be done at once.

Check Before Converting Land

Check before converting land to cropping use, especially if it was not cropped during the years of 1981 to 1985. Sodbuster or swampbuster provisions of the 1985 Farm Bill may affect your eligibility for certain USDA programs.

Swampbuster rules of the 1985 Farm Bill prevent alteration of wetland areas for farmers to remain eligible for USDA benefits. Wetland areas have hydric soils with a majority of wetland vegetation growing on it. These areas include ones many people do not think of as being wetland. Request a wetland determination before altering noncropland areas. Start at the ASCS office.