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Fayette SWCD Annual Report

Levern Thyer receives State Watershed Achievement Award

By Carrie Boyer

Levern and Shirley Thyer of rural Fayette were recently named the State Watershed Achievement Award Winners—an honor given by the Conservation Districts of Iowa at their annual conference in Marshalltown. This award seeks to recognize an individual who has made significant contributions to the solution of conservation problems.

Levern and Shirley along with their son Curtis farm 410 acres southeast of Fayette. The Thyers operate 60 head of dairy and several head of beef cows. In just the past two years, Levern and Shirley have installed more conservation practices on their farm than many people do in decades.

The Thyers are able to utilize additional cost-share funding because most of their land lies within the Grannis Creek watershed. Grannis Creek is currently the focus of a watershed project aimed at improving the quality of Grannis Creek. During the three year project additional cost-share dollars are available to producers within the watershed to implement conservation practices that will reduce the amount of sediment and nutrients delivered to the stream.

Levern and Shirley feel that without the incentives they would not be able to afford to install all of the conservation practices they have. The incentives make the installation of conservation practices more feasible. Levern also believes that in the future regulations may be implemented that require certain conservation practices to be installed without cost share money, such as waste storage facilities. He feels that you can either "use it or lose it" in regard to cost share money and incentives and believes that resources such as watershed projects should be taken advantage of while they are available.

The Thyers recently constructed an animal waste structure utilizing Grannis Creek Water Quality and EQIP cost share incentives. Completed last August, the manure waste structure has lead to many

changes in the way the Thyers manage their animal waste. They now have room

increase in wildlife. The Thyer's said it has been almost 15 years since they have



Levern Thyer, Shirley Thyer, Bill Bennett

to store manure for over two months, allowing them to wait until conditions are optimal for spreading. This system has worked so well for them they are looking into expanding the structure in the future.

The Thyer family has installed close to 14 acres of CRP filter strips along streams on their farm. Most of these areas had cattle on them with direct access to the stream. These areas are now excluded from cattle and are seeded to brome, increasing wildlife habitat. Levern and Shirley have enrolled over 50 acres of cropland into CRP. Producers enrolled in CRP plant long-term, resource-conserving covers such as native grasses or trees to improve the quality of water, control soil erosion, and enhance wildlife habitat. In return, producers receive rental payments and cost-share assistance.

Twenty acres of CRP contour buffer strips have also been implemented on several fields. The benefits of the buffer and filter strips are evident not only in the reduction of soil loss but also in the

seen a pheasant on their farm. Less than a year after installing their filter strips they began seeing pheasants on their farm. They agree that there has been a major increase in the number and types of birds present since installing the filter and buffer strips.

Levern and Shirley have implemented a pasture management plan on almost 20 acres of pastureland. They have several paddocks set up in which cattle are continuously rotated to maintain optimum forage heights. A grade stabilization structure (pond) was also built to reduce gully erosion along with providing wildlife habitat.

The Thyers have turned their farm into a conservation showplace and have become stewards of Grannis Creek and Fayette County in just a few years. They should be applauded on the improvements they have made not only for themselves and their farm but for everyone, as we all gain the benefits of conservation, not just those that own the land or live on the stream.

Upper Maquoketa River Water Quality Project completes third successful year in 2003

By Tom Sperfslage, Environmental Specialist Fayette, Clayton, Delaware and Buchanan SWCD's Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship 15 January 2004

For the third consecutive year, landowners in the southeast corner of Fayette County have agreed to make substantial changes that will benefit the farm, the Upper Maquoketa River, and ultimately, Backbone Lake.

The Upper Maquoketa River is a cold water trout stream that starts near Arlington and runs through Backbone Lake in Backbone State Park. Eighteen fish species have been identified in the River, including the American Brook Lamprey, a threatened/endangered species that looks like an eel. The River is stocked with Brook, Brown and Rainbow trout on a put and take basis. The water quality project is sponsored by many groups, including the local SWCD's, EPA, Iowa DNR, Iowa Dept of Ag, ISU, USDA-NRCS, the local Headwaters Council and others.

For the year, grassed waterways through the CRP were once again the most popular practice to install. Nineteen agreements were completed with landowners and resulted in 14.3 miles of waterways being constructed. Since project inception in September 2000, over 48 miles of grassed waterways have been installed.

CRP filterstrips proved to be the second most popular practice with eleven agreements developed for almost 88 acres of treatment along the river itself (or it's

tributaries). Since project inception, over 256 acres have been enrolled into the filterstrip program resulting in nearly 24 miles worth of linear treatment along the river and it's tributaries. Filterstrips not only provide significant water quality and erosion control benefits but also create excellent pheasant hunting habitat. Many successful pheasant hunting trips were had in the southern part of Fayette County this fall, largely due to good habitat such as filterstrips.

Over 103 acres were seeded down to a grass in the Strawberry Point area through the CRP wellhead program. This program looks to protect a zone around municipal wells, which helps prevent well contamination due to surface activities.

Contour farming, wetlands, field windbreaks, terraces and no-till farming were also adopted in the watershed. All of these practices, no matter the size or extent, add up to a greater whole and good. Better water quality is a direct result of all individuals doing what they can to reduce sediment and nutrient delivery to the river.

For 2003, over 3,324 tons of sediment was prevented from reaching the river. Since project inception, calculations show that over 18,870 tons of sediment has been prevented from reaching the river.

Farmland protection, water quality and conservation take commitment. Many thanks are extended to all the citizens in the Maquoketa watershed who are making the long term changes necessary to protect the farm and the river.

Mink Creek Watershed Project

By Carrie Boyer

The Fayette Soil and Water Conservation District has recently submitted a water quality project application for the Mink Creek Watershed. Mink Creek, a tributary of the Volga River, is located in eastern Fayette and western Clayton Counties. This 12,348-acre watershed lies in the Paleozoic Plateau landform region and is dominated by rolling hills, deep valleys, and rock outcroppings. Of these 12,348 acres 66% is cropland, 21% is pasture/non-cropland, and the remaining 12% are farmsteads and roadways.

As a cold water fishery in Fayette County, Mink Creek has been experiencing a major decline in angler trips. Fisheries Biologist, Bill Kalishek said, "The silt in Mink Creek is causing the decline in angler trips. Silt fills up the deep holes and buries the rocky habitat and gravel that trout need."

The goal of this project will be to improve the water quality of Mink Creek by reducing sediment delivery to the stream and to reverse the negative impact that sediment is having on the cold water ecosystem. This will be achieved through assisting landowners and tenants within the watershed in the implementation of conservation practices and methods through increased cost share and incentive programs. Along with this, an educational and informational campaign aimed at increasing public awareness of water quality issues will be undertaken.

The Mink Creek Water Quality Project Application has been forwarded to the EPA for final approval and it is anticipated that the grant will be awarded early in 2004, with funding available to individual projects by mid-2004. If funded, this project will be a great opportunity for landowners within the watershed to take a large step forward in terms of conservation.

The Upper Maquoketa River Water Quality and Grannis Creek Watershed Projects are supported in part or in total by the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Division of Soil Conservation, through funds of the Watershed Protection Fund and by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources through a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under the

Federal Non-Point Source Management Program (Section 319 of the Clean Water Act). Technical assistance is provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service. All programs and services are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status, or handicap.



The Fayette County Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners are pictured above. Front row, from left: Judy Bennett, assistant commissioner; Joyce Trotter, commissioner; and Will Ogle, assistant commissioner. Back row from left: Bill Bennett, commissioner; Rod Marlatt, assistant commissioner; and John Grafenberg, commissioner. Absent from photo are Deb Desel, Assistant Commissioner, Paul Nuss, Commissioner and Richard Jensen, Commissioner and Joe Wingert, assistant commissioner

Thank you!

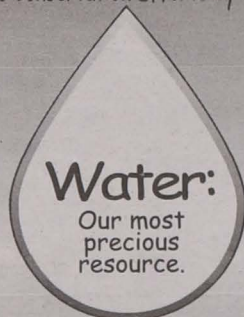
The Fayette County Soil and Water Conservation District would like to say "Thank You" to all the cooperators in the county who have refrained from tilling soybean ground this fall. By not working up soybean ground in the fall, soil erosion in the county has been greatly reduced. The number of fall tilled soybean acres has decreased from last year.

Studies show that there is no economic advantage or benefit of doing fall tillage on soybean ground. We'd like to ask all of those who do this to please stop. By discontinuing this practice, you will not only be benefiting the environment, but also saving yourself fuel cost and time.

IDENTIFICATION STATEMENT

The Fayette Soil & Water Conservation District's Annual Report
Published by the Fayette SWCD, Hwy. 150,
120 N. Industrial Pkwy.,
West Union, IA 52175.
Issue No. 6
Published February 2004
Statement of Frequency: Annually

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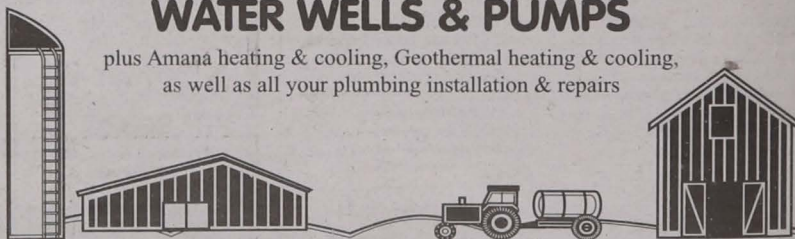
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Fayette County establishes new wildlife area

Rod Marlatt

Fayette County Conservation Board

The Fayette County Conservation Board is pleased to announce the acquisition of a new Wildlife Area in Fayette County. This area will be known as the Glovers Creek Fish and Wildlife Area. The area was purchased by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources with United States Fish and Wildlife funds. The Fayette County Conservation Board will be entering into an agreement with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources to develop and manage the area.

This 187 acre parcel was acquired from Conley and Vicky Meyer of West Union. The property encompasses most of the fishable portion of Glovers Creek and the upland crop around it. The area lies adjacent to Echo Valley State Park just east of West Union. The parcel will be developed into a public hunting and fishing area. In the spring of 2004, the Fayette County Conservation Board will be implementing habitat improvements such as tree plantings, nesting cover, and native grasses. The Fayette County Chapter of Pheasants Forever has committed to funding these improvements.

The Fayette County Conservation Board would like to thank the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Fayette County Pheasants Forever, and Conley and Vicky Meyer for their foresight in placing this valuable resource in public hands for all to enjoy.

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The NRCS staff – front, from left: Lori Kohlmeier, Secretary, LaVonne Koch, Federal Technician, Angie Freilinger-Mohs, Soil Conservationist. Back: Royce Bowman, IDALS Temporary Technician, Carrie Boyer, Grannis Creek Watershed Coordinator, Jerry Muff, District Conservationist. Absent from photo: Tom Sperflage, Upper Maquoketa Watershed Coordinator, Alan Crowe, State Technician, Joe Wingert, District Employee, Jim Wolfe, Part-time Soil Conservationist.

North Fayette & Valley High Schools assist district

During 2003 the North Fayette FFA assisted the district by helping plant wetland plants on district property and along Dick Jensen's Nature Trail. Some of the FFA students removed trash from Otter Creek, while others planted wetland plugs in district wetlands along the trail.

In the spring, the Valley freshman and sophomore classes came to the Ralph Houg Conservation Education Farm and planted about one thousand two hundred oak, ash, and walnut seedlings and then attended a short outdoor class on forestry

management. After this, some of the students walked the Dick Jensen Nature Trail, while others explored the sinkhole, ponds and wetlands on the farm. In the fall, the junior class returned to make and install tree guards. Some of the students made and installed the wire tree guards while others painted trees with a deer repellent. This is part of a test to check different ways to protect trees from being damaged by deer.

The district enjoys working with these fine students as they learn more about our environment and ways to enjoy and protect it.

Soil Conservation Saves Iowa Farms!

We thank area farmers who practice soil conservation.

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Revolving 2003 SWCD supporters listed

Fund

Beginning Balance 07-01-02 \$1,100.09

Income

IM Reimbursement	1,905.00
Computer Sales	300.00
Deposits from	
Farmers Savings Bank	11,684.60
Fabric Income	2,780.00
Houq Money Market Transf.	5,457.25
Money Market Transfers	
to Checking	17,000.00
Regional Meeting Income	362.25
Supporter Club	1,013.50
Tree Sales	2,620.70
Upper Maquoketa Reimb.	1,236.67
Workman's Compensation	
Reimbursement	426.00
Total Income	\$ 45,886.06

Expenses

IM Commissioner Expense	1,046.70
IM Office Expense	858.30
ATV	337.27
Buffers V	5,000.00
Checks Printed	45.75
Computer	817.97
Donations	811.97
Education	1,283.70
Fabric Machine	1,797.35
Gifts Given	83.90
GPS	219.73
Grannis Creek Expense	973.03
Houq Education Farm	4,514.10
Meeting Expense	1,183.16
Memorials	58.43
Office Supplies	1,280.11
Payroll	10,000.00
Postage	1,584.05
Sales Tax	571.35
Trees	7,615.42
Upper Maquoketa Expense	2,323.57
Total Expenses	\$44,405.86
Ending Balance on 06-30-03	\$1,480.20

Savings

Beginning Balance 07-01-02	\$659.26
Interest Earned	9.22
Ending Balance on 06-30-03	\$668.48

The Fayette SWCD would like to thank those who made contributions to the supporter club in 2003. The SWCD Commissioners and office staff work to educate and inform the public of the programs available to them. It is necessary to have the materials and financial support necessary to promote conservation and to assist our landowners, operators, teachers, students, churches, and citizens of Fayette County in their efforts to learn more about and prosper from our natural resources.

Below you will find the names of individuals and businesses of Fayette County and beyond who have made our programs possible. Please acknowledge these people for their generous contributions. Through continued conservation efforts, we can all make a difference.

Supporters: Ralph W Adams, Mary Batterson, George Boess Jr, Inez Brown, Laird Cline, Ken Diemer, Pat Duffy, Don Eberhart, Virginia Fedeler, Jeryl Fink, Paul Fox, Sheldon Fox, Dorothy Gilmer, Bernadine Granneman, Ted Hageman, Mark Hamlett, Lloyd Hultman, Daryl Humphrey, William Kauten, Arlin Knief, Garland Knight, Sam Koehler, Louis Langreck, James Lein, Colleen Marrs, Howard Meaney, Dorothy Medberry, MHRM Inc, Marilyn Mihall, Robert Mihm, Jason Moeller, Jean Moritz, Harry Naffziger, NCM Inc, Jim Nolte, Donald Oelrich, Ross Pleggenkuhle, Harold Popenhagen, Tim Recker, Lee Richards, LaVerne Ries, Dan Roffman, Randy Ruroden, Dan Schmitt, Robert Scott, Robert G Scott, Robert Smith, Iola Stannard, Grace Sunness, Carolyn Szemkus, Don Treloar, Varykino Inc, Roberta Warner, Vera Winter, Savers, Dora Lee Albertson, Lavern Alcorn, Lane Ash, Robert Bahe, David Baier, Irvin Bateman, Floyd Baumgartner, Charles Bauml, Kevin Bauml, Roger

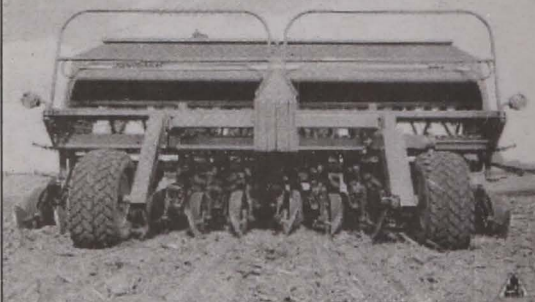
Beerman, Don Blaker, Killian Bodensteiner, Barbara Born, Stanley Boyer, Joe Breuer, Elmer Buhr, Gary Burger, Jerald Burrack, Ken Butters, Dale Calease, Robert Campbell, Curt Chensvold, Emory Christensen, Ron Copp, Kenton Cowles, Robert Cowles, Thomas Davis, Deering Family Farms, Stanley Diebel, Merlin Dunt, Don Durscher, Don/Barb Ehlers, John Falck, Robert Finch, Edward T Franzen, Eugene Franzen, Leo Franzen, Gary Gibbs, L Charles Gray, Galen Griffin, Ed Gross, Willis Grundmeyer, Norbert Hackman, Howard Hall, Dale Halverson, Charles Hanson, Brian Harper, Harrison Farm, Duane Hartman, Hawkeye Conservation Club, Lois Heick, Randy Helgerson, Ken Hemesath, Eugene Henn, Gladys Henry, Paul Hoeger, Mark Imoehl, James Ingels, Max Jennings, Robert Johnston, Carolyn Judy, Marilyn Juergens, Balz Kamm, Lynn Kelck, Charles Kerns, Ray Kueker, E B Kunkle, Keith Lansing, Les Lauer & Sons, Herman Lenz, L & H Ranch, Janita Loftus, Edith Mann, Karen Martin, Michael Meyer, Roger Michael, Janet Mitchell, Jon Mitchell, Don Mueller, Leo Mulford, Carol Nelson, Merrill Nerem, Stanley Ney, William Nus, Ron O'Kones, Victor Patterson, Darwin Peterson, Don Pliester, Eldon Polk, Matt Porter, David Rausch, Rausch Family, Clair Reed, Penny Reed, Roger Reeder, Roland Riensche, Helen Roberts, Elizabeth Robinson, Dean Rueber, Doug Rueber, Alfred Schlatter, Henry Schmitt, Darwin Schrage, Olette Schultz, Marilyn Seedorff, Ron Seedorff, Marvin Seegers, Cheryl Sill, Ken Springer, T J Stecklein, Duane Stickfort, Steve Story, Ernest Streicher, Nick Teig, Randy Tope, Jack Treloar, Robert Turney, Charles Underwood, Don Vagts, Dave VanDeBerg, Berniece Walsh, Kevin Winter, John W Woods, J R Wyneith, Stewards, John R Adams, Paul Adams,

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Jeckel, Charles Jencks, Collin Jensen, Richard Jensen, Robert Kalb Farms, Kingsland Family Farms, Ron Knudsvig, Alice Koempel, Dennis Kohlmeier, Daryl Kuhens, Kunkle/Barry Farms, C J Lensing, Don Leyh, Joseph Lider, Dan Lundt, McMillan Brothers, Robert W McMillan, Don Martins, Gary Maurer, Maynard Savings Bank, Kenneth F Meyer, Kenneth/Helen Miller, Missidine Farms, Diane Mohs, Jeff Moellers, Rodney Morse, Jerry Muff, John Muench, Tom Murphy, Mary Nagle, Myron Nagle, Millard Nelson Jr, Paul Niemann Construction, Northeast Iowa Coop, Gene Nuss, Paul Nuss, Will Ogle, Dwayne Ott, David Palas, Sidney Peterson, Ron Pleggenkuhle, Prairie Agri Entp, Mike Puff, Don Rausch & Sons, Karel Rawson, Eric Rehorr, Robert Reilly, Reliable Insurance, Florence Robinson, Dan Rosburg, Daryl Ruff, June Sanders, George Schaeffers, Edmund Schmitt, Steve/Connie Schmitt, Francis Schnor, Shereen Schnor, LeWayne Schrader, Nick Serra, Vernon Shaw, Eugene Sieck, Hans Siemers, Charles Smith, Smith Farms, Dwaine Stahr, Floyd Stensland, Eleanor Swent, Russell/Roberta Smith, Szabo Construction, TeKippe Engineering, Rick/Joyce Trotter, Don Ungerer, Julius VanDaele, Kenneth Wagner, Marcia Whiteford, Earl Wilbur, Joe Wingert, Dan Winter Jr., Don Woods Trst, Ron/Colleen Wymer

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District Activities • 7-1-02 through 6-30-03

Fayette SWCD Report • February 2004 • Page 5

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

JULY 1, 2002 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2003

IM BUDGET

Allocation	\$1,500.00
Supplemental Allocation	405.00
Total Allocation	1,905.00
Commissioner Expenses	1,046.70
Office Supplies & Expenses	858.30

3M BUDGET COST-SHARE PROGRAM

2002-2003 Allocation	\$16,979.00
Supplemental Allocation	34,576.00
Total Allocation	51,555.00
Spent or Allocated	50,242.25
Balance	\$1,312.75
2001-2002 Allocation	\$43,659.00
Spent or Allocated	38,477.45
Balance	\$5,181.55
2000-2001 Allocation	\$43,663.00
Supplemental Allocation	23,408.00
Total Allocation	67,071.00
Spent or Allocated	64,309.56
Balance	\$2,761.44
2003 REAP Practices Re-Allocation	\$11,755.75
Supplemental Allocation	13,081.00
Spent	10,646.13
Reallocated under 2004 Funds	14,190.62
2003 REAP Forestry Re-Allocation	\$3,345.00
Spent	2,894.69
Reallocated under 2004 Funds	375.00
Recalled	\$ 75.31
2003 Volga Lake Allocation	\$9,722.00
Spent	5,193.31
Recalled	\$3,421.19
2003 Upper Maquoketa 319 Allocation	\$26,400.00
Allocated	15,748.40
Balance	\$10,651.60
2003 Upper Maquoketa WPF Allocation	\$2,800.00
Spent	906.86
Recalled	\$1,893.14
2003 Upper Maquoketa WSPF Allocation	\$164,646.00
Spent or Allocated	83,869.37
Balance	\$80,776.63
2003 Grannis Creek 319 Allocation	\$110,150.00
Spent	54,748.87
Recalled	\$55,401.13

AUGUST

- Upper Maquoketa Watershed summer bus tour was held.
- \$ 16,979.00 was received for the Iowa Financial Incentive Program (IFIP).
- SWCD was reallocated \$ 11,755.75 in REAP Practices and \$ 3,345.00 in REAP Forestry funds.
- Commissioner Fall Regional meeting was held in Dyersville.
- SWCD received \$ 9,722.00 in Volga Lake 75% cost-share funds.
- The IM Budget and Spending Plan were approved.
- Eight EQIP applications were submitted for funding.

SEPTEMBER

- Grannis Creek Watershed Annual Meeting was held at the ISU Extension Service in Fayette.
- Upper Maquoketa Watershed Annual Meeting was held at Backbone Golf Course.
- SWCD received \$ 1,500.00 in IM funds.
- Annual Farm Bureau Awards Banquet was held in Fayette.
- Letter was sent to the Iowa Department of Agriculture requesting funds for technical assistance.
- Pheasant Forever Agreement was signed for District Employee funding.
- Mike Henderson, Grannis Creek Watershed Coordinator, accepted a job at NRCS in Waukon.
- Royce Bowman was hired as the Grannis Creek Watershed Coordinator.
- The driveway at the Houg Conservation Education Farm has been completed.
- The Woodland Turkey Habitat Improvement Project application was approved for 2.5 acres on the Houg Conservation Education Farm.
- Two EQIP applications were approved for animal waste structures.
- The Annual Education Field Day for third grade students was held at the Richard Jensen farm.

OCTOBER

- SWCD approved the Buffers V grant for District Employee funding.
- SWCD filled out application to hire employee through Conservation Districts of Iowa (CDI).
- Locally Led EQIP meeting was held.
- In fiscal year 2002, there were 222 Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contracts approved in Fayette County.

NOVEMBER

- Direct seeding of trees was completed on the Houg Conservation Education Farm.
- Richard Jensen and Joyce Trotter were re-elected as SWCD Commissioners.

DECEMBER

- \$ 13,087.10 in supplemental REAP Practices funds was received.
- William Bennett and Joyce Trotter attended the Annual Conference in Marshalltown.
- Annual Work Plan was reviewed.
- SWCD purchased a hand held computer (RDA) to be used for field layout.

JANUARY

- Election of officers, appointment of Treasurer, and appointment of Assistant Commissioners was held.
- Commissioner orientation was held in the basement of Farmers Savings Bank in West Union.
- Soil and Water Stewardship materials for 2nd grade students were ordered.
- CDI and NACD dues were paid.

FEBRUARY

- Mink Creek was submitted as a pre-proposal grant for Fayette County.
- A Commissioner Training Workshop was held at the Methodist Church in West Union.
- Farm Bureau grant was submitted for the Houg Conservation Education Farm.

MARCH

- SWCD hosted the Spring Regional held at the Methodist Church in West Union.
- Lady Landowner meeting was held in the basement of Farmers Savings Bank in West Union.

- Muff reviewed the Memos of Understanding, EEO, and Civil Rights with the SWCD.

- SWCD received \$14,569.00 in supplemental funds for the 2001-2002 Iowa Financial Incentives Program (IFIP).
- SWCD received \$ 3,700.00 in supplemental funds for the 2002-2003 Iowa Financial Incentives Program (IFIP).
- SWCD received \$ 405.00 in supplemental IM funds.

- Rick Cordes gave SWCD a report of ongoing and completed projects in the Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) office in Postville.

APRIL

- Annual Awards Banquet was held at the Methodist Church in West Union.
- Ryan Friederich was chosen as the SWCD scholarship winner of \$500.
- Valley 9th & 10th grade students assisted with the tree planting at the Houg Conservation Education Farm.

MAY

- Royce Bowman accepted a job with the DNR Fisheries in Manchester.
- Jim and Janice Nicholson were chosen as the Izaak Walton Windbreak Award winner.
- Bruce and Doris Gruetzmaier were chosen as the Owner/Operator of the year.
- LeVern Thyer was chosen as the Watershed Achievement Award winner.
- James Grace was chosen as the Woodland Owner of the year.
- Shelly Moeller, ISU student, started as a Life in Iowa student for the summer.
- Ninety-two tax exemption forms were approved totaling 1,644.87 acres.

JUNE

- Carrie Boyer was hired as the Grannis Creek Watershed Coordinator to start in July.
- Educational Day was held for the Grannis Creek Watershed.
- 4 manure structures, 2 rotational grazing applications, and 11 no-till applications were approved in fiscal year 2003.

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Lansing Loan Officers, front from left: Greg Ptacek, Jim Kerndt, Kevin Baumbler; back, Greg Rea and Daniel Porter.



West Union Loan Officers, front from left: Jeff Thoms, Tracy Nydegger, Joe Trewin; back, Wade Schmudlach and Merrill Nerem.

Field-scale Nitrogen demos reflect small-plot results

by Dan Burkhart, Fayette County Extension Education Director

Two years of field-scale nitrogen (N) demonstrations on corn-following-soybeans show that N use is optimized when applied at rates between 90 and 120 pounds N per acre. The results are remarkably similar to the multiple-year small-plot N demonstrations conducted in the Maquoketa and Mud Creek watersheds during 2000-03.

Chad Ingels, Nutrient and Manure Specialist with the Maquoketa Watershed Project said that thirteen producers in the Maquoketa River watershed hosted the field-scale demonstrations while 19 producers were involved in the small-plot demonstrations.

Field-scale N demonstrations were from ten to 50 acres in size. To initiate each demonstration, cooperating producers applied N treatments before, during or after (side-dress) planting either as anhydrous ammonia, 28 percent urea ammonium nitrate (UAN) solution or 32 percent UAN solution in large field-width blocks at five N application rates (zero, 60, 90, 120 and 150 pounds N per acre). The demonstrations were machine harvested using combines equipped with global positioning satellite-enabled yield monitors.

Average yield for each of the five N treatments ranged from 155 to 195 bushels per acre.

Residual nitrate-N in the cornstalks following corn maturity was measured for all N treatments. To measure the residual nitrate-N in the cornstalks, fifteen 8-inch segments of the lower stalk were collected from each N treatment and sent to a certified laboratory.

The check and 60 pounds N per acre treatments did not have enough N available to optimize corn production. Both the 90 and 120 pounds N per acre rates were within the optimum range of 700 to 2,000 parts per million (ppm), while the 150 pounds N per acre rate had

excessive N remaining in the corn plant after maturity.

The optimum range for cornstalk nitrate-N indicates a high probability that the appropriate N rate was applied to the crop to provide the most profitable return on the N investment.

The average return to dollars spent for N fertilizer was calculated with N priced at 20 cents per pound and corn at \$2.40 per bushel. The best return to N fertilizer, \$70 per acre, was the 90 pounds N per acre rate. Application of N at rates higher than 90 pounds N per acre showed no additional return to the N investment.

Small-plot N demonstrations covered one-half-acre uniform soil type areas; treatment areas were 15- by 40-feet. To implement the smaller N demonstrations, six rates (zero, 30, 60, 90, 120 and 150 pounds per acre) of N were applied at planting to replicated plots. Ammonium nitrate was used as the N source because it is non-volatile.

Average yield for the 90, 120 and 150 pounds per acre rate all exceeded 190 bushels per acre.

As with the field-scale N demonstrations, end-of-season cornstalk nitrate-N was measured at harvest for all N treatments. The residual nitrate-N was lower at all N rates than in the field-scale study due mostly to the N source being surface-applied rather than incorporated mechanically.

Iowa State University Extension and Maquoketa Watershed Project staff John Rodecap and Chad Ingels thank these producers for hosting N management demonstrations during 2003: Mark and Larry Recker, Arlington; Jon Downer, Lamont; Bruce Reade, Center Junction; and John Kummerfeldt and Wayne Braun, both of Durant; and the Iowa Corn Growers, for providing financial support.

For a copy of the 2003 demonstration results or more information, contact Chad Ingels at Ph. (563) 425-3233 or Dan Burkhart at 563-425-3331.

Grace chosen Woodland Owner of the Year

James Grace of Marion, is the Woodland Owner of the Year, chosen by the Fayette County SWCD

Grace has owned woodland in the northeast corner of Iowa in Clermont Township, for the past four years.

He began improvement on the land with a prescribed plan drawn by Gary Beyer through the national Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

Grace worked according to the plan, which called for the clear cutting of many mature trees. This made way for three acres of new shrubs and food plots. His woodland improvements also consisted of 13 acres of timber stand improvement, three acres of tree planting, three acres of direct seeding and 12 acres of harvest cuttings.

Grace's goal was to make his woodland a habitat for deer and turkey. He also saw it as an investment for future generations of children to enjoy. His dedication and enthusiasm for forestry has influenced others in the community.

"I thoroughly enjoy working with the land," he said.

The Marion man has worked closely with neighbors and friends on his forestry projects. His devotion to continuing improvement of his woodland is evident in that this past summer he graduated from the Master Woodlands Manager's course in Waucoma.

"It is more a personal award than anything for me," said Jim. He goes on to explain how he loves to work on the land and improve it. "I never once thought I could get an award for it," he stated.

In the future, Grace plans to continue with his timber stand improvement by removing older trees to make way for fresh young shrubs.

"It's an ongoing process and project," said Grace. And it's one he'll enjoy for years to come.

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30 Years of cost share and Iowa's water quality

There has been a lot of attention leveled at water quality in recent years. A lot can be learned by studying our lakes, rivers and streams; but in order to truly understand what is happening with water quality in a state like Iowa, it is necessary to turn around and look upstream. What happens on the landscape has a huge impact on the water downhill from that landscape.

Of the 157 impaired waters in Iowa on the 1998 list, well over half were included because of sedimentation problems. Keeping the soil where it belongs is not new to Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs). In fact, it has been the focus of Districts for well over 60 years.

This year during Soil and Water Conservation Week, November 16-22, we are celebrating 30 years of the "first in the nation" soil conservation Financial Incentives Program. Over its lifetime,

the State of Iowa has invested over \$150 million in financial incentives to assist landowners to protect their farms from the damaging effects of soil erosion. Those same landowners have invested an equal amount from their own pocketbooks, stimulating tremendous economic activity in local communities throughout Iowa.

The Division of Soil Conservation estimates that we have stopped over 18 million tons of fertile topsoil from escaping our fields in that 30 year timeframe. That is enough precious black soil to provide a six-inch layer for over 20,000 football fields. Put another way, the soil saved in the lifetime of the Iowa Financial Incentives Program would cover all four lanes of an interstate highway stretching from California to New York. Of course a good share of the lost soil may have found its way to our state's waterways, so in effect,

SWCDs have been a partner in improving water quality for years.

Improving water quality isn't difficult to understand. Placing waterways, terraces, grade stabilization structures, and diversions in the right locations, save soil and preserve water quality. Reducing tillage and leaving crop residue on the soil surface improve soil quality and reduce the movement of soil as well. In the end, soil conservation work means that less sediment makes its way to the water.

We can't go wrong. By investing in soil conservation, we get the best of both worlds: we improve the productivity of our farms and keep sediment out of our water. That's a win-win scenario where everyone benefits.

Bill Ehm

State budget freezes affect district

By Bill Bennett

The state of Iowa froze money for conservation twice in 2003 and once in 2002. This action has certainly had an adverse effect on conservation work in the state. The freeze in 2002 and the one this fall did not affect contracts that had already been approved by district commissioners, but did prevent use of funds allocated to conservation districts. The freeze in the spring of 2003 prevented districts from paying for supplies purchased and work done if the project was not completed at the time of the freeze.

The Fayette Soil & Water Conservation District had one project that was started when the freeze went into effect, where the contractor had already put over \$18,000 of out of pocket costs into the ground. Without cost share money the farmer was not going to be unable to pay the total costs of the terrace and waterway project that had been started. This project was very important to the well being of Backbone Lake, which is an important tourist attraction in northeast Iowa. The fall off in usage of the park has caused some local businesses to go out of business. This is only one of several projects that were affected.

Everyone was fortunate that the general public, Land Improvement Contractors and Conservation District Commissioner immediately contacted their state legislators and several hundred of them went to Des Moines to meet with legislators. The fastest legislative action that happened in the history of the state enabled the legislators to find the money to fund this important work. Our northeast Iowa legislators need a pat on the back for their bipartisan efforts to solve this situation. Unfortunately, this did not give anyone who is considering doing a conservation project a great deal of confidence in government agencies, whether local, state or federal, doing what they said they would to assist maintaining and improving our water and soil resources. The district has had several persons decide not to do project to protect our environment. One can't blame them when they lose confidence in their partners in this work.

Iowa invested \$18.45 per capita in state environmental and natural resource in FY 2000, which put them in 48th place

among the fifty states. Wisconsin invested \$145.71, Nebraska \$54.75, South Dakota \$52.70, Missouri \$51.40, Illinois \$48.20 and Minnesota was way down to \$26.32 per capita. In other words Iowa does a little better than half as good as the poorest providing state that adjoins it. It makes a person wonder, which is the number one business in the state? Which state is considered the number one agricultural state in the union? Which state is blamed for the most for causing damage to the Mississippi River and the Gulf of Mexico? If memory is correct, the answer is IOWA.

If you go to percentages of state budgets spent on natural resources, Iowa spends less than 1%. Montana leads the nation by investing 15% of the state's budget on natural resources, while West Virginia (ranked number 2) invested 13.7% of the state's funds. This information is for FY 2000 also.

According to information gathered by Iowa Environmental Council "it takes at least two cents per tax dollar for Iowa to have a healthy environment and a high quality of life. Healthy soil, safe water, and clean air are necessities - not a luxury to be abandoned in hard times. Iowa's economic and environmental health can no longer be separated. Pollution prevention is cheaper than pollution clean up. Conservation is not a partisan issue. Members of Iowa conservation organizations are 32% Republican, 38% Democrat, and 30% independent."

2003 State General Fund Spending was 60.8% for education, 18.5% for human services, 9.1% for correction/courts, 6.0% revenue and finance 0.9% conservation, and 4.7% for other things. Another interesting thing is that some where around 5% of the conservation money is invested in education also.

By now, you are probably asking yourself "What can I do about this?" "How can I help improve the quality of my generations and future generations life?" You can visit with your legislators about improving the economic and environmental conditions in Iowa. When we all work together we can accomplish great things, but it takes everyone doing his or her part. The Fayette SWCD looks forward to working with you to provide everyone with a good today and a better tomorrow.

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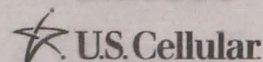
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Gruetzmachers are owner/operator award winners chosen by SWCD

Bruce and Doris Gruetzmacher of Oelwein are the owner and operator award winners for the Fayette SWCD. The Gruetzmachers started farming in 1956 on 120 acres of land, which they own and operate in the Oran Township of Fayette County. They crop farm and have no livestock.

The Gruetzmachers are operating land that is classified as not highly erodible. However to reduce soil loss and have wildlife on their farm they enrolled in the continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Through this they have taken the soil loss of approximately six tons per acre per year on 74 acres down to two tons per acre per year by applying the CRP practices to the land. The soil loss on the remaining acres not in CRP is four tons per acre per year. Bruce decided to add filter strips along streams for water quality, a field windbreak to stop wind erosion, contour buffer strips to control soil erosion, and waterways to prevent gully erosion on their farm.

He uses a crop rotation of corn and beans on the remaining 69.3 acres. Conservation tillage on cornstalks is fall mulch tilled and in spring he field finishes and plants. Bruce applies liquid nitrogen, field finishes and plants in the bean stubble. He uses the local agriculture services to keep him current in soil testing and applies the needed herbicides for weed control. The average yield on beans has been 55 to 60 bushels and corn has been 175 bushels.

The Gruetzmachers' goal in life is to pass along a cleaner environment to the next generation and their farm is a great example as it is well groomed, weed controlled, and successfully exhibits conservation practices.



Bruce and Doris Gruetzmacher, Oelwein



Grannis Creek handicap sidewalk completed

By Carrie Boyer, Project Coordinator

The Fayette SWCD and Grannis Creek Watershed Project are pleased to announce that a Handicap Sidewalk has been installed along a portion of Grannis Creek during the summer of 2003. The sidewalk starts at the DNR parking lot on the upper end of the stream along Grannis Road and continues along the bank for approximately 375 feet. The sidewalk then widens out at fishable locations where trout habitat and bank stabilization projects were completed in the summer of 2002.

Few trout streams in Iowa have handicap accessibility and it is our hope that this sidewalk allow people of all ages access to one of northeast Iowa's great natural resources.



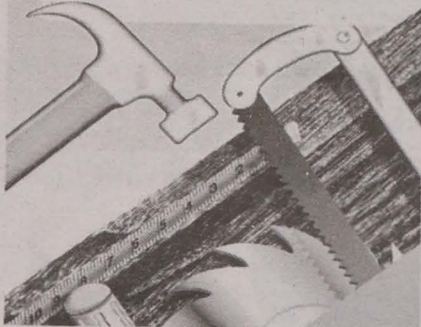
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City living with country amenities

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Jim and Janice Nicholson not only built a new house in Maynard but also created an impressive windbreak, which has grown and flourished for the past 12 years.

The Nicholsons are the winners of the Izaak Walton League Windbreak award as chosen by the Fayette County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD).

The area had previously been cropland when the house was built.

Jim says he asked Maynard area conservationist Jon Steege, for a recommendation about putting in a windbreak.

Steege said a windbreak would be a good idea for the area and worked together with the SWCD to design an appropriate windbreak for the Nicholsons.

The SWCD also picked out trees that would be best suited for the windbreak, which consists of honeysuckle, ninebark, lilac, scotch pine and blue, and black hills spruce.

"All the trees started out small so it only took a week to plant and mulch,"

said Nicholson. The Nicholsons, with the help of a seeder, planted each tree themselves. The trees required a lot of water and attention the first two years, but now that they are older all they need is mowing between the rows to keep them looking good.

Nearly all of the trees are the originals that the Nicholsons first planted; they only had to replace one that their boys ran over with a golf cart. "Boys will be boys," Jim chuckled.

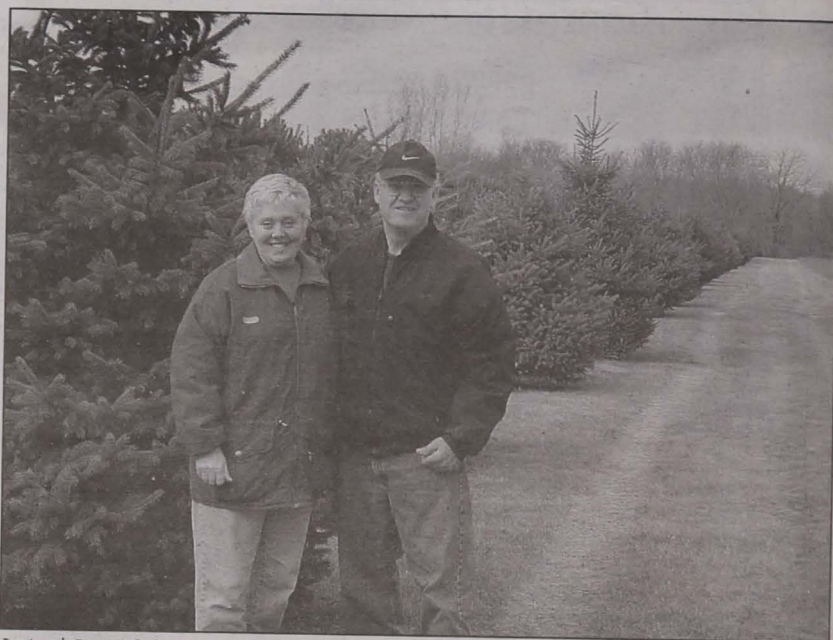
The Nicholsons have never had any problems with insects or diseases invading their trees. Once in a while deer will rub their antlers on them but for the most part the trees have stayed healthy from careful watering and mowing.

While the windbreak serves as a snow fence in the winter it can be a haven for all sorts of animals in the spring and summer.

Jim has seen deer, rabbits and birds.

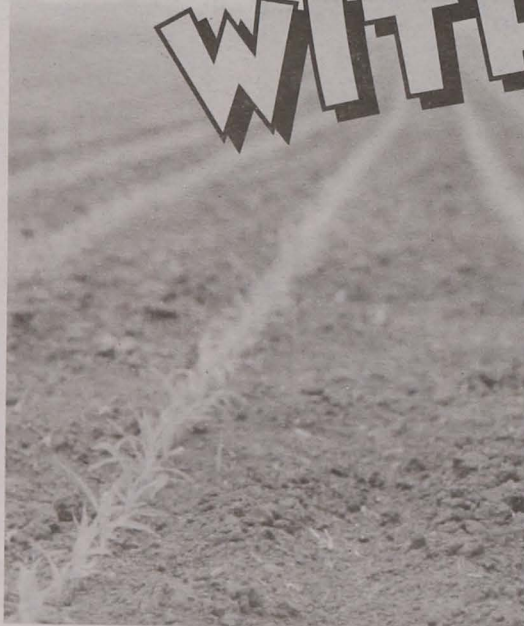
Janice enjoys taking walks throughout it saying, "It's a nice place to take a walk if you are feeling down."

Both Jim and Janice agree that the windbreak smells wonderful. "Every year the break gets better and there is no need to add anything more to it," said Jim.



Janice & Jim Nicholson received the Izaak Walton League Winbreak award.

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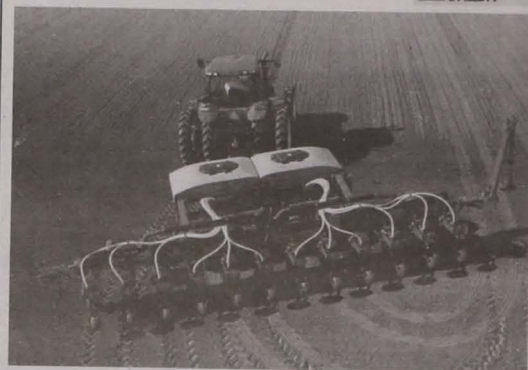
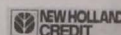
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Grassed Waterways	551.8 ac.
Riparian Forest Buffers	213.1 ac.
Wetlands	162.5 ac.
Wellhead	73.6 ac.
Conservation Tillage (no-till)	1,960 ac.
Contour Farming	567.8 ac.
Water and Sediment Control Basins	17 structures
Manure Storage Structures	2 structures
Terraces	14,063 ft.
Timber Stand Improvement	115 ac.
Trees & Shrub Plantings	48 ac.
Totals:	
Conservation Reserve Program	24,097 ac. (1,820 Contracts)
Conservation Systems Planned & Applied	19,077 ac.
Cropland Benefited	5,088 ac.
Nutrient Management Applied	2,388 ac.
Pasture Management Planned & Applied	743 ac.
Upland & Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management	892 ac.

Iowa NRCS reached historic funding levels

By Leroy Brown,
State Conservationist,
Natural Resources
Conservation Service, Iowa

Nearly all the Farm Bill conservation programs, except for the Conservation Security Program, were in full swing in 2003. From the Environmental Protection Incentives Program (EQIP) to the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP), Iowa NRCS received historic funding levels. More money meant more landowners received financial and technical assistance. And more landowners needing help, meant more work for Iowa NRCS and its partners.

So how did it all get done? And how will it continue to get done? For starters, the role of the Soil and Water Conservation Districts plays a huge part in tackling this increased workload. For example, Iowa NRCS took a new approach with implementing EQIP last year. Each district set its own priorities under the national guidelines, set ranking criteria and completed the selection process for their EQIP allocations. Each district was allocated a minimum of \$60,000 to start. In the end, some districts ended up with much more—Sioux County SWCD received \$428,000.

The efficient use of Technical Service Providers (TSP) also helped NRCS meet the increased challenges and opportunities of the 2002 Farm Bill. Iowa received an initial allocation of more than \$750,000 earmarked for TSPs. Iowa ended up using about \$1.1 million on

TSPs. About half these funds were used to assist landowners with planning and implementing grassed waterways and for WRP easement monitoring. The rest was used through contribution agreements with Conservation Districts of Iowa (CDI) and Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS). Every penny spent on TSPs helped save time for the field office staff, providing them more opportunity to do what we do best—provide conservation planning assistance to private landowners. And it is this conservation planning that is the entryway for farmers to making the most of the Farm Bill conservation programs. Without having a workable, solid conservation plan, farmers and landowners will not maximize the benefits available to them.

Increased record keeping and reporting efficiencies will also play a big role in helping get the work done. All our database systems including SCIMS, Toolkit, PRS and the new ProTracts web-based database are working towards complete integration. This means they will share much of the information entered by the field offices about conservation program applications, contracts, and conservation practices. With this new system, field staff should only have to enter data once, which will be a great improvement. PRS will pull data from the other systems to feed many of its reports.

ProTracts helps manage NRCS conservation program applications and

cost-share agreements. Some of ProTracts' functions include: tracking applications, processing applications and contract forms, completing and printing application letters, and processing payment approvals. This fiscal year ProTracts will be available for EQIP. No longer will field offices be required to send EQIP Access database files to the State Office to keep track of applications and funding. This will all be done in "real time" by ProTracts. Texas tested ProTracts last year. In a six-week period, they used ProTracts to enter 17,000 EQIP applications and award 5,000 contracts.

Increased staff and computer efficiencies are important to our goals. But our partnership with you and others in the conservation community is the most critical element. We have shown ourselves that we can achieve much more by working together. One example of this is the Rathbun Lake Special Project in southern Iowa. More than a dozen government agencies and private groups have joined efforts in a multi-year project to protect the water source serving 70,000 people in rural Iowa and Missouri. More than \$4 million have been pooled to target specific resource concerns identified through Geographic Information System (GIS) modeling software.

With continued partnership and joint projects I know 2004 will be as successful as last. I thank you for your hard work and dedication and wish you a healthy, successful New Year.

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Veneman announces proposed rule for the conservation security program

Water Quality Enhancement is Top Priority

Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman recently announced the release of a proposed rule to implement the new Conservation Security Program (CSP) designed to reward the best conservation stewards of the most environmentally sensitive areas in targeted watersheds.

Additional Information: Tele-News Conference Update on Environmental Issues with Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman; CSP Rule-PDF; CSP Fact Sheet-PDF; CSP Summary-PDF (requires Adobe Acrobat); Audio (Windows Media Player).

"The Conservation Security Program will reward the best and motivate the rest by identifying those agricultural producers who historically have been the best stewards of their land while providing incentives for those who want to increase conservation practices," said Veneman. "The results will be improved soil and water quality, reduced soil erosion and enhanced critical wildlife habitat."

Authorized by the 2002 Farm Bill, the fundamental intent of CSP is to complement existing conservation programs by supporting ongoing conservation stewardship of agricultural working lands and enhancing the condition of America's natural resources. To ensure that CSP's limited resources are focused first on the most pressing environmental concerns, the rule proposes to prioritize eligibility based on selected priority watersheds. The eligible watersheds would be announced and identified through a CSP sign-up notification, which is targeted for the summer of 2004.

Additionally, through intensive management to increase soil and water quality, such as conservation tillage, nutrient management and grazing management, the program is expected to yield significant benefits for critical wildlife habitat and at-risk species of wildlife.

Under the proposal, agricultural land in cropland, orchards, vineyards, pasture and range will be eligible for CSP, regardless of size, location or crops produced. Exceptions are forest land or land enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program, Wetlands Reserve Program or Grassland Reserve Program.

Applicants must address water quality and soil quality concerns as program eligibility criteria and enrollment will be targeted to those demonstrating the highest levels of stewardship. CSP payment limitations will be based on three "tiers" that represent increasing levels of resource treatment. Payments rise with increased levels of treatment.

Payments can include four components: 1) an annual base component for the benchmark conservation treatment, 2) an annual existing practice component for maintaining existing conservation practices, 3) a one-time new practice component

for implementing additional practices, and 4) an enhancement component for exceptional conservation effort. The three tiers are capped at \$20,000, \$35,000 and \$45,000 annually and will last for five years for Tier I and 5-10 years for Tier II and Tier III.

Earlier this year, an advance notice of proposed rulemaking was published in the Federal Register, giving the public the opportunity to comment on key issues regarding implementation of CSP. The process generated more than 700 responses and 3,000 specific comments on all aspects of the program. All comments were reviewed and considered as the proposed rule was developed. Comments on the proposed rule will be considered as the final rule is developed with specifics on program implementation.

The proposed rule, as well as additional information on CSP and other conservation programs, is available on the NRCS Web site at

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farmbill/2002/products.html>.

This proposed rule has a 60-day comment period. As part of the comment process, listening sessions will be held in a number of locations across the country to gain additional input. Locations, times and additional information on the listening sessions will be published in an upcoming Federal Register notice. Comments on the CSP proposed rule may be sent to

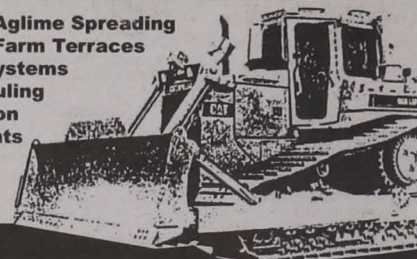
david.mckay@usda.gov or by mail to Conservation Security Program Comments, ATTN: David McKay, NRCS Conservation Operations Division, P.O. Box 2890, Washington, D.C. 20013.

Information on the 2002 Farm Bill can be found at www.usda.gov/farmbill.

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Financial incentives offered for conservation

2004 Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) Available To Fayette Co Producers. The Fayette County Locally Led Group met recently to review the county's 2003 EQIP program and improved the program for 2004. The Fayette County program divides the cost-share into three categories designed to protect the soil and improve water quality. The three categories are: soil conservation practices, intensive rotational pasture management, and manure storage structures.

Practices addressing the soil resource include several erosion management practices. Incentive payments are made on a per acre basis. All applications will be evaluated with the use of a ranking system by the local NRCS office personnel to determine which applicants will be approved. The following are practices covered under soil resource concerns.

Practices with a 5 year lifespan:

No-till and strip till planting, \$10/Ac/Yr, payment for three years – total \$30/Ac.
Contour stripcropping, \$30/Ac/Yr, payment for three years – total \$90/Ac.
Grassed Field Border, \$40/Ac/Yr, payment for three years – total \$120/Ac.
(To be applied to fields with contour or buffer strips).

Practices with a 10 year lifespan:

Use Exclusion (livestock), \$25/Ac/Yr, payment for three years – total \$75/Ac.

(To exclude livestock from streams, woodlands and other critical or sensitive areas.)

Fencing, 50% cost-share of actual cost, not to exceed \$1.50/Ft.

(For livestock exclusion)

Manure storage structure, is cost-shared at 50% of the total cost. A cost-share limit of \$30,000 (\$60,000 total cost) has been placed on these structures. The EQIP participant must have a comprehensive nutrient management plan developed and then implement it.

An approved applicant who qualifies as either a limited resource producer or new farmer can receive 75% cost-share rather than the 50% level. Documentation must be provided to justify this status.

Prescribed grazing provides an incentive payment ranging from \$20/Ac/Yr. up to \$90/Ac/Yr depending on the intensity of management of the pasture. This level is primarily determined by the number of paddocks the producer sets up for their grazing program. The payment is for one year.

Anyone interested in this program should contact the NRCS office at the USDA Service Center in West Union, or call (563) 422-3868, ext. 3.

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President Bush to propose record level \$3.9 billion for conservation programs

Veneman releases proposed rules for Environmental Quality Incentives Program

Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman today announced that President Bush will propose a record \$3.9 billion, an increase of \$582 million over the FY 2003 level, for conservation programs to strengthen environmental stewardship on the nation's farmlands. The FY 2004 funding request is \$1.9 billion higher, or more than double the funding for these activities, when the Bush Administration came into office just two years ago. During an address to cattle producers and ranchers at the National Cattlemen's Beef Association annual convention, the Secretary also announced the release of proposed rules for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

"This Administration has worked hard to ensure strong environmental programs are available to our nation's farmers and ranchers," said Veneman. "Farmers and ranchers are the best stewards of the land and we will continue to ensure these programs are administered effectively and in the best interest of producers and the environment."

Nearly \$3.5 billion of the President's record-level proposal will be used for financial assistance or other direct payments to farmers. Highlights of the budget include:

- * \$2 billion for the Conservation Reserve Program for rental and other costs on new and old acreage, an increase of approximately \$140 million over 2003;
- * \$850 million will be provided for the EQIP program, a \$255 million increase above FY 2003;
- * \$250 million for the Wetlands Reserve Program to enroll an additional 178,000 acres;
- * \$112 million for the Farmland Protection Program, which is \$27 million over the 2003 level;
- * \$85 million for the Grassland Reserve Program, a \$13 million increase over 2003;

* \$51 million for Ground and Surface Water Conservation, a \$6 million increase over 2003;

* \$42 million for the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, an increase of \$16 million over 2003;

* \$19 million for the new Conservation Security Program on which an Advanced Notice of Proposed Rule (ANPR) is expected shortly; and * \$8 million for water conservation and water quality enhancements in the Klamath Basin of Oregon and California.

"In the short time this Administration has been in office, we are more than doubling our investment in environmental and conservation programs that not only benefit farmers and ranchers, but communities throughout the country," said Veneman. "This record-level request illustrates the priority the President places on conserving natural resources by providing landowners the tools they need for private land management."

The Secretary also announced that the proposed rule for EQIP, reauthorized in the 2002 Farm Bill, is being released today for publication in the Federal Register for public comment. This will allow farmers and ranchers the ability to utilize program funding in the coming year.

Highlights of the revised EQIP proposal include a reduction in the amount of planning requirements needed to develop a contract; provides up to 90 percent cost share for limited resource and beginning producers; provides livestock producers with cost share assistance for waste storage facilities regardless of size, but must develop and implement a comprehensive nutrient management plan; allowance of producers to have more than one contract per tract at any given time; allocates 60 percent of EQIP funds towards livestock related practices; and, eliminates the program's dual administration by delegating EQIP to the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

"Conservation incentive programs for working lands, in combination with technical assistance, help reduce the regulatory burden on farmers and ranchers faced with air and water quality restrictions," Veneman said. "The team at USDA has worked to ensure these proposed rules are producer-friendly and will achieve the intended results of these programs."

Comments on the EQIP proposal will be accepted for 30 days after publication. Additional information on EQIP and other conservation programs is on the Web at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/>.

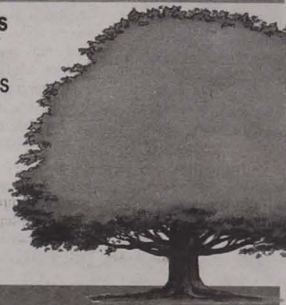
During her remarks, Secretary Veneman also discussed other issues of importance to cattle producers, including animal disease protection programs, risk management tools, trade, food safety, country-of-origin labeling, and forest management. For a transcript of her remarks, as well as a summary of USDA's mid-term accomplishments, visit <http://www.usda.gov/>.

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Tracy Gruetzmacher, with his wife Barb, son Mike and their dog Skittles, are pictured in front of the 20 acres of C.R.P. on their Oelwein farm.

The Gruetzmachers planted a 1500 tree wind break in 2000 to help soil loss due to high winds.

"First National Bank has been my financial partner my whole life," said Tracy. "Rich really understands farming."

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New continuous CRP practices for pastures & non-crop areas

By Royce Bowman

The Continuous CRP program has introduced two new buffering practices that offer producers additional options for enrolling idle areas, pasture and non-crop acres. These practices require livestock exclusion from the enrolled areas and typically rental rates fall around \$85 an acre for 10 or 15 year contracts. In the past, a landowner with a stream, spring, sinkhole or wetland area lying in pasture or non-crop ground could only enroll eligible acres into the CP-22 Riparian Forest Buffer. This conservation practice involves planting trees, shrubs and native grasses adjacent to the stream or eligible area. The two new practices do not require tree planting. The CP-29 Wildlife Habitat Buffer, and the CP-30 Wetland Buffer require that native prairie or native vegetation will be re-established where practical.

The CP-29 Wildlife Habitat Buffer aims to restore native plant communities, improve water quality and provide habitat for wildlife. The eligible area must have a stream, spring, sinkhole or wet area with less than a 50 % canopy of trees. When a producer signs up for this practice, the NRCS Field Office will check the site for eligibility.

The CP-30 Wetland Buffer practice restores hydrology and wetland vegetation around a degraded wetland. All three practices offer \$100 to \$150 per acre signing incentives and generous cost share to establish cover.

These two new practices are generating a lot of interest from landowners and creating another avenue to improve water quality and enhance wildlife habitat in Fayette County. Stop in the West Union NRCS Field Office to sign-up for a practice or for additional information.

No-Till Has Top Yields NCGA in Iowa... and Nation

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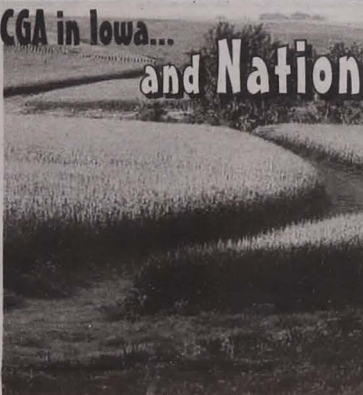
David Oberbroeckling of Davenport 260.1 BPA with no-till.
Chris Linder of Keokuk 250.6 BPA with tillage

National Winners:

David Hula of Charles City, VA 321.84 BPA with no-till
Robert Little of Hebron, IN 273.94 BPA with tillage

Be more profitable with no-till, have lower input costs plus higher yields. Be a winner...no-till.

Bill Bennett - Chair, Fayette SWCD



Grannis Creek Watershed Project

Carrie Boyer, Project Coordinator

It has been another busy year in the Grannis Creek Watershed. We are now in the third year of the Grannis Creek Watershed Project and things have been going very well. Grannis Creek, a tributary of the Volga River, is located in eastern Fayette County and is currently the focus of a watershed project that aims to improve the water quality of this cold water trout stream. Grannis Creek has been named as one of northeast Iowa's 25 highest priority cold water streams. This designation originated from the Northeast Iowa Rivers Basin Study conducted by the NRCS in 1986.

My name is Carrie Boyer and I was hired as project coordinator in July. I graduated in May of 2003 from Winona State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in environmental science: geology and a minor in biology. I currently live near Hawkeye and am getting married this May. Between graduating, wedding plans, and getting caught up with all the great things that have been accomplished in the watershed it has been a busy year. I would like to give everyone a brief summary of the great things that have been accomplished this past year in the Grannis Creek Watershed.

Jack Frey and Jon Siskelka, farm manager for Janet Herz Trust, planted two riparian tree plantings on a farm operated by Jack Frey. They have also recently installed several acres of filter strips and 8.5 acres of contour buffer strips.

Jack Frey has installed 14 acres of contour buffer strips and Lowell Langerman installed 4 acres of contour buffer strips. Contour buffer strips applied within the Grannis Creek Watershed have an additional \$100/acre incentive payment through the project funding.

Vernon and Raynor Hoffman completed a pond this summer and are in the planning stages for another one to be built during the spring of 2004.

The Jellings have completed a large water and sediment control structure project within the watershed and Robert Steinbronn had 1.7 acres of non-functioning waterways reworked this fall.

Levern Thyer has implemented almost 20 acres of pasture management, 10 acres of filter strips, almost 20 acres of contour buffer strips, and installed an animal waste structure. This winter the Thyers were honored by being named the State Watershed Achievement Award Winners.

A handicap sidewalk was also completed along a section of Grannis Creek in cooperation with the Iowa DNR and the Fayette County Secondary Roads Department stabilized 300' of eroding streambank along Grannis Creek. A big thanks to everyone who helped to make the past year a success.

Sediment delivery reduction calculations can be done to determine how much sediment has been saved from entering Grannis Creek. Since the projects inception in 2002 it has been calculated that a 46% reduction in the total amount of sediment delivered to the stream has been accomplished through the implementation of conservation practices and methods such as those mentioned previously.

Water quality affects all of us, not just those living next to a stream or lake. With the cooperative efforts of landowners and producers, like those in the Grannis Creek watershed, we can slow down and even reverse the damage that may have been done in the past and keep Grannis Creek one of northeast Iowa's great treasures.

The Grannis Creek Watershed Project is supported in part or in total by the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Division of Soil Conservation, through funds of the Watershed Protection Fund and by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources through a grant from the U.S. Environment Protection Agency under the Federal Non-Point Source Management Program (Section 319 of the Clean Water Act). Technical assistance is provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service. All programs and services are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status, or handicap.

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Day practices conservation in Starmont area

This is the third in a series of articles from watershed landowners/operators on why they adopted conservation practices.

David Day, who no-tills in the Starmont area of the watershed shares his experiences.

Q. How long have you been farming? Where did you start your farming career?

A. After working for John Deere and the Arlington Coop, I started farming my Dad's ground – the home farm, in 1998. Farming is my hobby as I now work at Hall-Roberts and Sons.

Q. What got you interested in no-tilling and when did you start with it?

A. I saw the soil loss happening in the area with conventional tillage and I started no-tilling to save soil. In 1998, I started no-till with the corn crop into soybean stubble.

Q. How many acres of each crop in a given year do you farm no-till?

A. 75 acres each of corn and soybeans.

Q. In your experience, what is the first and most important thing a producer should consider when starting no-till?

A. Number one is fertility. No-till does present some challenges as far as placing potash. Soil sampling is important. Drainage is important. You don't want to mud the crop in the soil – it needs to be fit. Exercise patience. Seed selection, seed emergence and disease resistance. Take a good hard look at all of them.

Q. How were your 2003 yields in comparison to other years? What kind of yield variability do you see with weather differences?

A. Corn was about average at 163-165 scaled. Soybeans scaled 39.5. With a terribly dry summer it appears I fared as well or better than a lot. I'm not interested in talking about the best spots on my farm, I'm interested in field yields. I was disappointed with soybeans until I talked with the neighbors. I used beans treated with Rival and Apron to get them out of

the ground on one field. I'm very happy with where I ended up.

Q. In your experience, how has no-till corn performed for you?

A. Excellent. As of right now, I'll never till bean ground going to corn. There is no reason. That's how satisfied I am with no-till.

Q. Do you plan to stick with no-till for the long term?

A. Yes. I would work lime into the soil if and when necessary.

Q. You mentioned about pH/lime needs. Can you offer your experiences?

A. pH doesn't seem to need to be as high for corn on corn. Soybeans need higher pH. I lime on the corn stalks and mix it into the soil.

Q. What are your experiences with nutrient application and no-till? Any comments on methods, placements, timing?

A. Before I no-tilled I made sure the phosphorus and potassium levels were high to very high. Any fertilizer applications for replacement are done in fall. I don't apply any starter fertilizer for the corn going into bean stubble. It's easier to have the soil built up at the start, then maintain.

Q. In a general sense, does it make economic sense for you to no-till? Would you be willing to share generalized profits or financial savings per acre when no-tilling compared to traditional tillage?

A. My thoughts are you save \$25-30 per acre minimum by eliminating 3-4 tillage passes. At a minimum. It's probably on the low side.

Q. Do you have any comments on water quality in the Upper Maquoketa basin or around the State as a whole? In your opinion, how much soil does no-till save you?

A. In '96 or '97 we had terribly hard rains and my conventional tillage corn on corn made me almost cry because of the ditches. I can physically see reduced erosion due to no-till – its got to be huge. We used to fish and swim at the Hwy 187

bridge and in the late 1990's I wouldn't have gone in the water but today I would. It appears cleaner.

Q. Do you have any experiences with no-till beans, as far as white mold control, etc.?

A. ALWAYS plant soybeans resistant to white mold – end of story. I plant 210 thousand when planting in rows looking for a final stand of 150 thousand and 190 thousand when planted narrow row. There will always be a few skips. Plant slow for better seed placement. I prefer drilling soybeans.

Q. How do you handle cool, moist soils as a no-tiller?

A. For both the corn and soybeans, plant treated seed or add seed treatments to the corn. Select varieties known for emergence quality.

Q. Have you experienced any weed/insect pest shifts and if so, how do you handle them?

A. No trouble in corn, every year I have to spray the beans, whether its for loopers (very unusual to see them here), bean leaf beetles or aphids. But then everyone has those. My fear is cut worms in the corn but scouting has worked for that. I don't think I can attribute those problems to no-till – they were probably going to happen anyway.

Q. Do you have any thoughts on scouting your fields? Is scouting valuable to you?

A. It's a necessity. As important as any other farming operation.

Q. What do your soil tests show is happening to organic matter in your fields – increasing, decreasing or staying the same?

A. Increasing.

Q. In your experience, what type of planter has worked well for you as a no-till planter? What planting speeds do you use? Any other tidbits when it comes to the planter set-up?

A. Planting corn into stubble we've added a single wheel trash whipper. We use spiked press wheels and we are much happier with the final stand for corn. For beans into stalks, I run a drill with ripple coulters, but not in the ground deeper than the seed is to be planted, about 1-1.5 inches. We plant corn at 4-4.5 MPH and beans at 5-5.5 MPH, no faster.

Q. What are your fields showing with regard to compaction or other maladies?

A. I notice a reduction in compaction from the corn-corn rotation to the corn-soybean rotation. By far less. Drainage in the fields are better too.

Q. Do you have any other comments or experiences you would like to share as a no-tiller?

A. Exercise patience. You're not the first one to plant as a no-tiller. The soil needs to be warmer. I plant hybrids that

do well and they save my bacon. Patience. It's hard to do.

The Upper Maquoketa River Water Quality project is supported in part or in total by the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Division of Soil Conservation, through funds of the Water Protection Fund and, by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources through a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under the Federal Nonpoint Source Management Program (Section 319 of the Clean Water Act). Technical assistance is provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service. All programs and services are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status, or handicap. The publication of this document has been funded in part by the Division of Soil Conservation, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, and by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources through a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under the Federal Nonpoint Source Management Program (Section 319 of the Clean Water Act).

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State awards won in Fayette SWCD

By Bill Bennett

The Fayette SWCD for the third year in a row was honored with one of three Conservation Buffer Awards. The award is given for an outstanding job of getting conservation buffers on the land. To win this award requires extra effort and cooperation from staff and district partners. Others involved in getting this work done include the landowners and operators, Pheasant Forever, FSA, IA, Dept. of Ag. & Land Stewardship, NRCS and many others.

The Earth Team volunteers that work each year at the Districts Third Grade Conservation Education Field Day were awarded the state NRCS Earth Team Group of the Year Award. This award given for the effort put in by many people working each year to make this a very worthwhile educational event. Several Earth Team members have worked the field day for all twelve years it's been held, while others have not had the opportunity to take part as long. These awards were earned with team effort.

The Watershed Achievement Award was won by a cooperator in the Grannis Creek Watershed. Lavern and Shirley Thyer of Fayette were presented the award at the Conservation Districts of Iowa annual meeting in Marshalltown. The Thyer's have completed many different conservation projects of their farm. The projects vary from structures such as animal waste storage structures to different management practices. Outstanding persons like the Thyer's stepping forward to cooperate in protecting our natural resources is one of the main reasons that the district will be having three watershed projects going in 2004. Thank you.

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Term of three commissioners to expire in 2004

In the general election November 2, 2004 three persons will be elected to serve as Fayette Soil & Water Conservation District Commissioners. Any Fayette County voter may run, however, no township may have more than one commissioner. Due to this part of the law no one will be eligible to run from Oran or Union Townships in 2004, however on 2006 people living in these township may run for the office of district commissioner. To place your name on the ballot, you need to have a nominating petition signed by at least, twenty-five registered voters. The petition must be filed with the Fayette County Auditor between the dates of August 2 and August 25, 2004.

The commissioners provide direction for many federal, state and local financial and educational programs. Commissioners are required to attend at least 60% of all conservation district meetings. On average, the district commissioners participate in about three meetings a month. Meeting lengths vary from two hours or more for local meeting, from half day to a day for state regional meetings, national regional meetings are normally two to three days and the national annual meeting is five days.

A commissioner shall not receive compensation for the commissioner's services. However, to the extent funds are available, a commissioner is entitled to receive actual expenses necessarily

incurred in the discharge of commissioner's duties, including reimbursement for mileage at the rate provided for state business.

Commissioners direct some federal, most state and all local conservation programs, within guidelines set under federal and state laws. They investigate soil loss complaints and enforce Iowa soil loss laws with the cooperation of the state attorney general. They work with a great many government agencies; private organizations and most importantly they work with any person those requests services that they can supply.

All activities of the district are performed under Iowa's open meetings law and under the federal non-discrimination law. Full information of

the powers and duties of soil & water conservation district commissioner and districts are in Iowa Code, chapter 161A and available in the district office.

If, you are interested in serving as a commissioner to help provide the best future possible to present and future generations, contact any of the present commissioners or the office in West Union. Present commissioners are: Joyce Trotter, of Fairbank (Oran township), Paul Nuss of Hawkeye (Center township), Dick Jensen of Elgin (Union township), John Grafenberg of West Union (Dover township) and Bill Bennett of Elgin (Pleasant Valley township). The present commissioners encourage you to serve as a district commissioner.

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Miersen gives timber stand improvement a go

This is the 4th in a series of interviews with watershed landowners. Many thanks to Rick Miersen, who owns land on the west side of Backbone Park (Delaware County). This interview dealt with timber stand improvement (TSI).

Q. What is the history or your farming operation? What are your goals with the property — as far as long term management? How many acres do you own?

A. I bought the property in 1993. My goals are to provide recreational opportunities while also being a long term investment. I have 26 acres, m/l, with 4.7 of those acres enrolled into the general CRP. The rest is timber.

Q. Why did you decide to complete TSI? When did you do it?

A. In '94 I took a Master Woodland course and wanted to apply the things I learned. My timber was in need of cleaning up. The next year I received a SIP grant to complete TSI and prepare the area for trees.

Q. What types of TSI techniques did you do on your farm?

A. Crop tree release and weed tree eradication.

Q. Would you recommend this practice to other woodland owners? Why or why not?

A. Absolutely. Gary Beyer, IDNR District Forester, told me it's the only time in your life you can earn \$1,000 per hour, but your kids cash the check. I think of that every time -- man, I'm making some money when I do this.

Q. Was your TSI very costly to complete?

A. Not at all.

Q. Have you ever held a timber harvest? Any tips or advice for selling timber?

A. No. Trying to though. Take bids for the better timber. Always be a part of the logging process. Be in the woods.

Q. How are your trees coming along? Is the growth what you expected?

A. They're doing well for the soil they're growing in.

Q. How do you see water quality in the Maquoketa River/Backbone Park area?

A. I wouldn't have any feelings except for the testing that has been done. You don't know until then.

Q. What do you believe TSI will do for the wildlife habitat in your local area?

A. It will always improve wildlife habitat but main benefit is the landowner can manage for his interests, whether that's squirrel hunting, grouse or neotropical migrants (spring and summer songbirds that migrate south for the winter).

Q. Do you harvest any alternative forest products from your timber like nuts, pine cones etc.? What do you do with those products?

A. I feed the family with the deer meat and mushrooms, and collect craft things like grape vines for my wife.

Q. If you had it to do all over again, would you do the same thing to improve you timber?

A. Yes.

Q. What do think of other timber in the watershed? Do you think other

landowners would benefit from doing some TSI?

A. I think there's tremendous opportunities for landowners to increase their net worth and do good for the environment at the same time.

Q. Any last comments?

A. Lots of them, but what do you pick and choose? It's a very simple operation to do, and things like crop tree release have a proven track record of working. The Upper Maquoketa River Water Quality project is supported in part or in total by the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Division of Soil Conservation, through funds of the Water Protection Fund and, by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources through a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under the Federal Nonpoint Source Management Program (Section 319 of the Clean Water Act). Technical assistance is provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service. All programs and services are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status, or handicap. The publication of this document has been funded in part by the Division of Soil Conservation, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, and by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources through a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under the Federal Nonpoint Source Management Program (Section 319 of the Clean Water Act).



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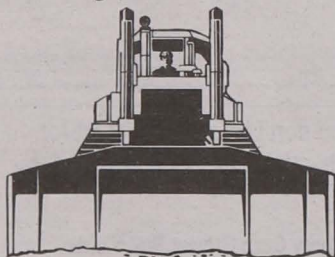
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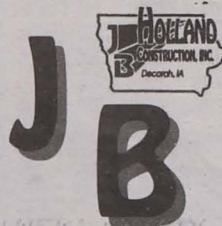
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Backbone Lake watershed works toward a hazardous material spill response plan.

By Tom Sperfslage, Environmental Specialist Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship - Division of Soil Conservation
27 January 2004

The watershed for the Backbone Lake in Backbone State Park is nearly 80,000 acres and drains through portions of four counties including Fayette, Clayton, Delaware and Buchanan.

Traditionally, water quality improvement projects have focused on preventing sediment and nutrients from reaching the water body of interest, and rightfully so. Across Iowa, numerous sources and data suggest that excess soil and nutrient loss plague our streams, rivers and lakes.

Landowners in the Upper Maquoketa River (Arlington and Strawberry Point areas) and South Fork (Aurora and Lamont areas) have worked for the past several years to improve the quality of runoff water as it leaves their land and enters the river system. Much has been done—and there is much yet to do.

Citizens in the Backbone watershed have indicated an interest in addressing other potential sources of pollution, most notably hazardous material (HAZMAT) spills along the State and County paved roads that criss-cross the watershed. One tanker truck toppling off a bridge in the wrong spot can mean quick transport of contamination through the cold water trout stream (killing trout) and possibly reaching Backbone Lake beach. According to calculations, at base flow, the Maquoketa River moves at about two feet per second. During flood flows, the water moves through the River at just more than four feet per second. It takes the average drop of water in the River just 6-12 hours, depending on conditions, to travel from Arlington to the tip of Backbone Lake.

In response, the participating Soil and Water Conservation Districts, County

Emergency Management Coordinators, State Troopers, Strawberry Point Mayor and City Council/Police, Iowa DNR, Iowa Dept of Ag, Friends of Backbone Lake, and citizen representatives have met to discuss a HAZMAT plan for the watershed. The plan is expected to be the first in the State to address a cold water trout stream and the State-owned Backbone Lake. The plan will address types of containment kits needed, location of the kits, call priority and other necessary steps needed to protect the stream and Lake.

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- Natural Resources Conservation Service
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• Farm Service Agency

Environmental Protection Agency - (Clean Water Act, Section 319)

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

State:

Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship:

- Division of Soil Conservation Iowa Department of Natural Resources - Environmental Protection Division Iowa State University:

- Cooperative Extension Service and TIAER Local:

- Fayette, Clayton, Delaware and Buchanan County Soil and Water Conservation Districts City of Strawberry Point:

- Chamber of Commerce

- Economic Development Private:

- Local landowners

- Dubuque Fly Fishers

- Hawkeye Flyfishing Association

- Maquoketa River Alliance

- Trees Forever

- Iowa Farm Bureau

- Headwaters Council

Proper utilization of manure nutrients improves the environment and saves dollars

By Angie Freilinger-Mohs, Soil Conservationist Natural Resources Conservation Service West Union Field Office

Conservation planning consists of several aspects that are commonly associated with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) practices and programs. Common conservation practices include grassed buffers along streams, grassed waterways, terraces, ponds and other practices. Unknown to landowners are practices that aren't as common including rotational grazing practices, animal manure storage structures, conservation tillage systems such as zone till or no-till, nutrient and pest management, the list goes on. Proper nutrient management has the ability to not only improve the environment, but also save time and money.

NRCS is currently completing nutrient management plans for landowners with the possibility of receiving cost-share for their efforts. Nutrient management plans are completed based on satisfying crop removal rates with appropriate nutrient additions in the form of manure and/or commercial fertilizer supplements. After completing several nutrient management plans it has come to my attention that in most cases producers are over applying the required nutrients to satisfy crop needs resulting not only in a loss of nutrients causing unnecessary

environmental impacts, but also a loss of dollars.

Currently landowners often apply manure to cropland without taking credit for the available nutrients in those applications. Wayne Gieselman from the Department of Natural Resources simply states "Take credit for the available nitrogen, test your manure and land apply following a nutrient management plan. You'll save money and help the environment." Believe it or not it is almost as simple as it sounds. Several agencies and private individuals offer the services of providing a nutrient management plan including the NRCS.

Often associated with taking credit for manure application is the concern dealing with the cost of hauling manure. Most of you have heard the term "you can't afford to haul manure, the nutrients won't pay for it". In an article written by Greg Brennenman, ISU Extension, he states

"Before looking at the economics of manure hauling, I would ask, if you don't haul the manure out what are you going to do with it!! The point is, something will have to be done with the manure. You can either just dispose of it or you can put a little extra time and effort in and utilize the manure as the good fertilizer that it is." In his article he emphasizes the fact that the cost of hauling manure longer distances can be justified by the better utilization of the nutrients in the manure.

There are more benefits than just utilizing valuable nutrients when applying manure. In an article written by Jeff Lorimor, Department of Agriculture and Biosystems Engineering, he emphasizes this fact by stating, "If managed correctly, manure is an excellent plant nutrients resource and soil "builder", resulting in many important environmental benefits. Soils regularly receiving manure require less commercial fertilizer (conserving energy and limiting phosphorus reserves); are higher in organic matter, contributing to greater soil productivity; and may experience less runoff and erosion and

better moisture conservation." Organic matter is often associated with manure application, which increases soil organic matter levels and reduces erosion.

After completing several nutrient management plans, I have realized that it isn't just manure that is being over applied, but also commercial fertilizer applications. Nutrient management plans developed by NRCS not only addresses farms that deal with manure application, but also farms that deal strictly with commercial fertilizer applications.

Bringing a different view to this article, I have to ask those of you who don't have livestock if you have ever considered allowing applications of manure on your cropland? There are several livestock operations in this county. In which some don't have enough cropland to properly apply their nutrients according to their nutrient management plan recommendations. I have worked with a few landowners that allow these livestock operations to apply manure on their cropland for a reduced hauling cost. Essentially the landowner is not only receiving an application of fertilizer, but they are also saving dollars when considering additional fertilizer application costs in terms of machinery and time.

Our goal is to reduce the environmental impacts from over application and help landowners to properly manage their nutrients. When landowners partake in the nutrient management program they are not only saving time and money through reduced nutrient inputs from over application, but they also may potentially be eligible to receive cost-share payments for their efforts to follow such a plan. To sum it up there are numerous benefits associated with following such a plan, which includes protecting the environment for future generations and putting dollars back into the landowner's pocket.

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Page 20 • Fayette SWCD Report • February 2004 2003 Gilbertson Conservation Research Plot Results Announced

BY DAN BURKHART, FAYETTE COUNTY EXTENSION EDUCATION DIRECTOR

Dan Burkhardt, Fayette County Extension Education Director has released the 2003 research data and results from the Gilbertson Conservation Area research plots near Elgin. The continuous corn plots have been in place for all most 20 years, thanks to the following cooperators.

Fayette County Conservation Board-use of the land.

Ben Hunsberger for planting and harvesting.

Chris Strong, NE Iowa Cooperative and Chuck Kolbet, DeKalb/Asgrow for the seed and the weigh wagon.

Northeast Cooperatives for application of the nitrogen fertilizer and herbicide.

Mark Thompson, Monsanto for the Harness Extra herbicide.

Brian Lang, Iowa State University Crop Specialist for plot design, layout and statistical analysis.

Gilbertson Conservation Education Area, Elgin, Ia Research and Demonstration Results, 2003

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Soil type:	Dorchester silt loam, 0 to 2% slope, 2 to 3% organic matter, CSR 85.			
Soil test, 2001:	pH	P, ppm	K, ppm	Zn, ppm
North plot	7.9	39 (VH)	138 (Opt)	1.2 (H)
Center plot	7.8	56 (VH)	135 (Opt)	1.1 (H)
South plot	7.9	52 (VH)	147 (Opt)	1.0 (H)
Statistical design:	Randomized complete block with 3 replications. Each research plot is about 5 acres. Individual treatments range in size from 0.1 to 0.3 acre.			
Crop history:	Long-term continuous corn.			
Planting date:	May 21, 2003.			
Fertilizer:	100 lbs per acre 9-23-30 starter. 150 lbs N per acre as 28% applied May 24.			
Herbicide:	Harness Xtra at 2 quarts per acre applied pre-emerge on May 24.			
Insecticide:	Aztec applied T-band at planting on appropriate treatments.			

RESEARCH FOR 2003

1. Comparing Isogenous Corn Hybrids (North Plot and Central Plot): Isogenous corn is corn with the same genetic background. When these lines are bioengineered with traits such as European Corn Borer tolerance or glyphosate herbicide resistance, there may be concerns that other important traits, such as yield, are altered. The 2003 research at this site compares isogenous corn with bioengineered traits of:
 - Bt for protection from European Corn Borer
 - Bt for protection from Corn Rootworm
 - Roundup Ready for tolerance to glyphosate herbicide.
2. Comparing affects of planter speed on plant population and yield (South Plot).

2003 NORTH PLOT - Bt versus non-Bt corn for Protection from European Corn Borer.
- Comparison of Isogenous Corn with and without the Roundup Ready Trait.

Cropping system: Continuous corn, no-till, zone-till planter.

Treatments: Compare isogenous hybrids:

- DK537
- DKC53-33 RR (Roundup resistance)
- DKC53-34 RR/YGCB (Roundup resistant and European corn borer tolerant)

Results: Harvested on October 24, 2003.

Treatment	Yield, bu/ac, adjusted to 15.5% moisture	Grain harvest moisture, %
DK537	162 a	17.8 a
DKC53-33 RR	162 a	17.5 a
DKC53-34 RR/YGCB	165 b	18.2 b
LSD 0.05	3	0.4

Treatments with the same letter are not significantly different from each other.

Conclusion:

No significant difference among isogenous hybrids. There was a small significant benefit with the Bt trait for protection from European corn borer.

2003 CENTER PLOT - Rootworm insecticide versus none versus Bt Corn Rootworm protection.
- Comparison of Isogenous Corn with and without Traits of:

Round Ready for glyphosate resistance

Bt for European Corn Borer tolerance

Bt for Corn Rootworm tolerance

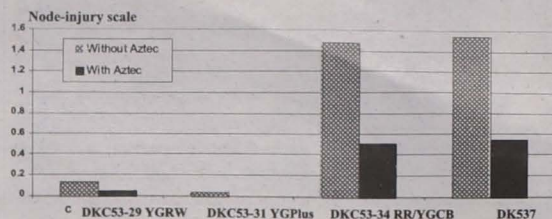
Cropping system: Continuous corn, no-till, zone-till planter.

Treatments: Compare isogenous hybrids with and without rootworm insecticide:

- DK537
- DKC53-34 RR/YGCB (Roundup resistant and European Corn Borer tolerant)
- DKC53-29 YGRW (Corn Rootworm tolerant)
- DKC63-31 YGPlus (Corn Rootworm and European Corn Borer tolerant)

Results: Evaluation of corn rootworm larval feeding damage on July 18, 2003.

A rating of "0.25" is considered economic threshold. A rating of "1" means one entire node of roots was significantly injured, a rating of "1.5" means the equivalent of 1 nodes of roots injured.



Results: Harvested on October 24, 2003.

Treatment	Yield, bu/ac, adjusted to 15.5% moisture	Grain harvest moisture, %
-----------	--	---------------------------

DK 537 w/o Aztec	159 a	18.2 b
DK 537 w/ Aztec	166 b	17.5 a
DK C5334 RR YG w/o Aztec	168 bc	19.3 c
DK C5334 RR YG w/ Aztec	173 cd	19.3 c
DK C5329 YG w/o Aztec	181 e	17.6 a
DK C5329 YG w/ Aztec	178 de	17.8 ab
DK C5331 YG w/o Aztec	179 de	17.6 a
LSD 0.05	6	0.5

Treatments with the same letter are not significantly different from each other.

Comparing Isogenous Hybrids - Average of Corn Rootworm Comparisons

Hybrid	no insecticide	insecticide	Hybrid	Bt Corn rootworm
DK537	159		vs. DKC53-29 YGRW	181
DK537		166	vs. DKC53-29 YGRW	178
DKC53-34 RR/YGCB	168	173	vs. DKC53-31 YGPlus	179
Average (LSD 0.05)	164 a	170 b		179 c

Comparing Isogenous Hybrids - Average of European Corn Borer Comparisons

Hybrid	Non-Bt	Hybrid	Bt
DK537 w/o Aztec	159	DKC53-34 RR/YGCB w/o Aztec	168
DK537 w/ Aztec	166	DKC53-34 RR/YGCB w/ Aztec	173
DKC53-29 YGRW w/o Aztec			DKC53-31
DKC53-29 YGRW w/ Aztec	179		
Average (LSD 0.05)	169 a		173 b

Conclusions:

Significant root damage occurred from corn rootworm, with an average yield response of 6 bu. per acre from using insecticide. The Bt hybrids with corn rootworm protection yield provided an additional 9 bu. per acre yield advantage. As with the North Plot study, there was a small but significant yield response from Bt protection of European corn borer, with an average yield response of 4 bu. per acre.

2003 SOUTH PLOT - Planting Speed Study

Cropping system: Continuous corn, fall chisel plowed, zone-till planter.

Hybrids: Pioneer 36N71 YG and 36N72 (Hercules)

Treatments: Planted at either 2.5, 5.0, or 7.5 mph with a JD 7000 planter.

Results: Plant population evaluation on June 10, 2003; Harvested on October 24, 2003

Treatment	Population plants/acre	Yield, 15.5% bu/acre	Grain moisture %
2.5 mph	31,130 a	185 c	17.9 a
5.0 mph	30,700 a	178 b	18.2 a
7.5 mph	29,560 b	172 a	17.9 a
LSD 0.05	680	4	0.4

Treatments with the same letter are not significantly different from each other.

Conclusion:

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