

Ray concerned about erosion

By GOVERNOR ROBERT D. RAY

I continue to share the concern of our Iowans about soil erosion. We continue to lose millions of tons of valuable topsoil each year. One soil-saving technique of getting increased attention holds considerable promise.

Conservation tillage—a method of farming that leaves crop residues on surface after planting—can significantly reduce soil losses to wind and water erosion. Soil conservation experts tell us that, when combined with necessary permanent practices, this type of tillage is one of the most effective means available for protecting our soil.

More than half of Iowa's row-cropped farm lands are prepared for planting in such a fashion without the use of a moldboard plow. Two-thirds of our farmers, about 85,000, have tried some form of reduced tillage.

These figures indicate what individual landowners and farm operators can do on their own initiative to combat soil erosion losses. Reduced tillage not only saves soil, but energy as well.

Iowa landowners and farmers have always recognized the need to protect our precious soil and water resources. Only in recent years has technology allowed more extensive use of crop residue. Nearly all of the state's 22 million row-crop acres could benefit from some form of conservation tillage used in combination with other needed permanent conservation measures.

A smaller but growing number of farmers are taking the process one step

further by switching to no-till—planting their crop directly in the residue of the previous year's crop with no other preparation of the seedbed. No-till acres increased from 74,910 in 1979 to 111,636 in 1980. The number of farmers using no-till almost doubled from 801 to 1,459.

The strength of our agricultural economy always has depended on the innovative and resourceful Iowa farmer. Just 10 years ago, less than one out of six farmers had ever attempted to utilize reduced tillage systems. We owe a debt of thanks to researchers, implement manufacturers, equipment dealers, soil conservation officials, and especially to farmers themselves. Without their willingness to accept change, try new methods, and work together, the significant strides made through greater utilization of reduced tillage systems would not have been possible.

We must continue to look at measures like conservation tillage as an alternate means of conserving our soil and water resources. The goals we have established for our "Iowa Soil 2000 Program" call for significantly reducing soil losses in the next 20 years.

Join me and Iowa's 100 soil conservation districts in saluting our conservation farmers during Soil and Water Conservation Week, Sept. 13-19, 1981. We all need to work together to insure that our state's precious natural resources are adequately protected. With your help, Iowa will continue to lead the nation in innovative achievements for soil conservation and natural resource management.

Geiken pleased with no till plots

BY ANTHONY BOPP
Times Staff Writer

Stan Geiken is no newcomer to soil conservation. He's been practicing it for 10 years by contour farming. But now he is trying something else to further keep his soil from sliding away from his fences.

On two plots of the 550 acres he farms, Geiken is testing out the no-tillage method of farming.

No tillage means that he does not disc or plow at all, but plants seed in the field the way he finds it in the spring.

"It doesn't expose freshly tilled earth in the spring," Geiken explained.

Geiken says that he was skeptical of the method at first, but now he is pleased with the results.

"Weed control was why I was skeptical," Geiken said. "Many of the best chemicals available for weed control are dependent on water to work. This was an exceptionally dry year, no rain, but my weed control in those plots was still good. I'm really pleasantly surprised."

Geiken went on to say that if this method of farming worked well when conditions are bad, then they should work when they are good.

He did admit, however, that this year the government allowed a heavier weight of chemical than they have before, which might have made the difference in Geiken's field.

Geiken used two plots totaling 20-25 acres in his experiment in different areas of his field and used different

planters.

He is so pleased with the results of the experiment that he will repeat the experiment on a larger scale next year, though he will not convert his entire farmland over to no-till—at least not next year. One day he hopes to use all no-till, however.

"I plan to do more whether it comes out good or bad this year," Geiken said. "If I get it planted so it grows and the weed control and the yield are the same, I plan to step up year by year until the whole farm is no till."

Geiken, a soil commissioner, well understands the need for soil conservation.

"The next generation has to have something to eat," he said. "I think we can grow the same amount of food with no soil loss."

Geiken said that in the ten years that he has been farming, contouring the land and using minimum tillage, he stayed at or above the limits that

nature can replenish the soil.

According to Geiken, nature can replenish about 8 tons of soil per acre per year in Benton County. Most of the farms in this area, he said, lose 12-15 tons per year.

"There is no valid reason not to try it (no tillage)," Geiken said. "There is no justification for doing it the old way just because it has been good to you. Trying is the only way you learn anything."

Geiken claimed that erosion would be cut in half if everyone would contour farm, and that it would be cut in half again if they would all use no tillage.

"When I came here 10 years ago there were a lot of farmers plowing straight up and down the fields. Farmers have made a long stride to change since then," Geiken said.

"Soil erosion is not the farmer's problem," Geiken continued. "It's society's problem. We all eat produce from the soil. When that resource is damaged we all suffer."

Farmers already 'thinking spring'

BY PAUL ANDERSON
Chairman, Benton County Soil Conservation District

Iowa farmers are "thinking spring." Yes, even in September, before the fall harvest, they're planning ahead for next year.

That's especially true for no-till and many conservation tillage farmers at harvest time, they make the decision to leave residues untouched over the winter.

That makes a lot of sense. For one thing, the corn or bean residue gives protection to the soil over the winter against wind and water erosion. For another, it saves in several ways, especially on soybean ground. There's no evidence that fall tillage of soybean ground increases yields. Fall discing or plowing of soybean ground increases erosion, and wastes time, effort and fuel.

Another point. Leaving residues untouched in the fall leaves options wide open for reduced tillage systems in the spring. You have all winter to read and talk about no-till, till plant, disc, chisel and other reduced tillage systems.

The Benton County Soil Conservation district Commissioners believe less tillage is the key to protecting cropland in the county against erosion. Sept. 13-19 is Soil Conservation Week in Iowa,

and as county farmers think about soil conservation, we hope they will also "think spring" and consider minimum tillage or no-till farming.



This row of corn on the Stan Geiken farm shows that his weed control is excellent even though it is a no-till plot. Corn residue can be seen on the ground.



This is Darrell Kaestner's newly contoured field. He has planted corn and beans, with a strip of alfalfa between them to help stop erosion even more.

Kaestner begins contour farm

BY ANTHONY BOPP
Times Staff Writer

TIMESNEWS — Darrell Kaestner got tired of watching his soil wash down the ditch, so he did something about it. Last year Kaestner began contour farming some of his land and was pleased enough with the results that he has contoured more this year.

Kaestner said he can already see the difference.

"The water doesn't run down the hills as fast as it used to," he claims. "It saves on dirt and on water."

Kaestner said he got motivated to begin contour plowing after watching his soil drain away. "I got tired of watching the dirt go down the creek," he said.

Kaestner redesigned his farming methods last year with a portion of his ground, taking out some fences in order

to be able to follow the contour of the land. This year he has planted corn on the highest ground in the contoured field, put a strip of alfalfa beside it and finished the lower ground with soybeans.

Next year Kaestner says he will move the alfalfa strip up or down the field. Kaestner said he can already see the difference it has made.

"You can see the difference after a hard rain," he said. "It (the rain water) doesn't come rushing down the rows now."

"It's easy to farm straight up and down hills," Kaestner continued. "But you have to save some soil for the next generation."

He admits, though, that contour farming isn't the easiest way to farm. "It is more work. It doesn't make it as nice to turn around in."

Kaestner, however, has a trick for getting around much of that difficulty. He has three 60 foot waterways built into his field that he says make it somewhat easier to turn around in.

Kaestner said that he hasn't seen a great deal of difference in yields yet. "In the short run you won't see much of a change, but in the long run it will benefit and you will be able to tell more difference than if you had just been farming straight over the years."

Kaestner said that there are years when you don't have to worry too much about losing soil...but watch out for the ones when you do.

"Some years you don't have real hard rains that wash the soil away," he said. "But one year you have one that does, and that's when contouring helps."

Kaestner also spoke of a method that anyone can use to see where soil erosion is a problem.

"You know there's a lot of erosion when corner posts in a field that used to stick up 3 or 4 feet now only stick up 2 feet. The extra dirt has to come from some place."

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Soil and water appraisal available

The most comprehensive appraisal ever conducted of the Nation's soil and water resources will be available for reference Sept. 1 in local offices of the Soil Conservation Service and the Agriculture Conservation and Stabilization Service (ASCS).

SCS Chief Norman A. Berg said the appraisal—which was called for by

the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act of 1977 (RCA)—reveals

that soil erosion is critical in many important farming areas in the United States. If continued, Berg said, these high erosion rates will reduce the future ability of the country to produce food and fiber. He added that upstream flood damage and other resource losses also

are likely to increase if current trends continue.

The appraisal is published in two volumes, Part I, Status, Condition, and Trends presents data on soil, water, and related resources in the United States. Part II Analysis of Resource Trends, shows likely future consequences if current practices continue.

Explanation of conservation agencies given

DES MOINES—Have you ever been confused about which government agency does what in the field of conservation?

Conservation agencies in Iowa often cooperate on joint projects because they have similar goals in conserving natural resources. But through this cooperation some confusion may exist about what each does.

For example, if a farmer wants to build terraces to protect his land, he gets involved with more than one agency. The US Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service gives technical help on where to put the terraces and how to build them. The Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service or the soil conservation district provides cost-sharing funds. Soil conservation district funds come through the Iowa Department of Soil Conservation.

Other major agencies involved in conservation are the Iowa Conservation Commission and county conservation boards. A brief description of each of these agencies may help you keep them straight.

There are 100 local soil conservation

districts in Iowa—one per county and two in Pottawattamie County. Each district is governed by five locally elected commissioners who serve without pay. The soil conservation districts set policy for local conservation projects.

County conservation boards, another local agency, are established at the discretion of each county. The county board of supervisors appoints five persons to oversee the operation of the county conservation program and its staff. County conservation boards are authorized to levy up to one mill of property tax for acquisition, development and management of county parks, museums, wildlife areas and other natural areas.

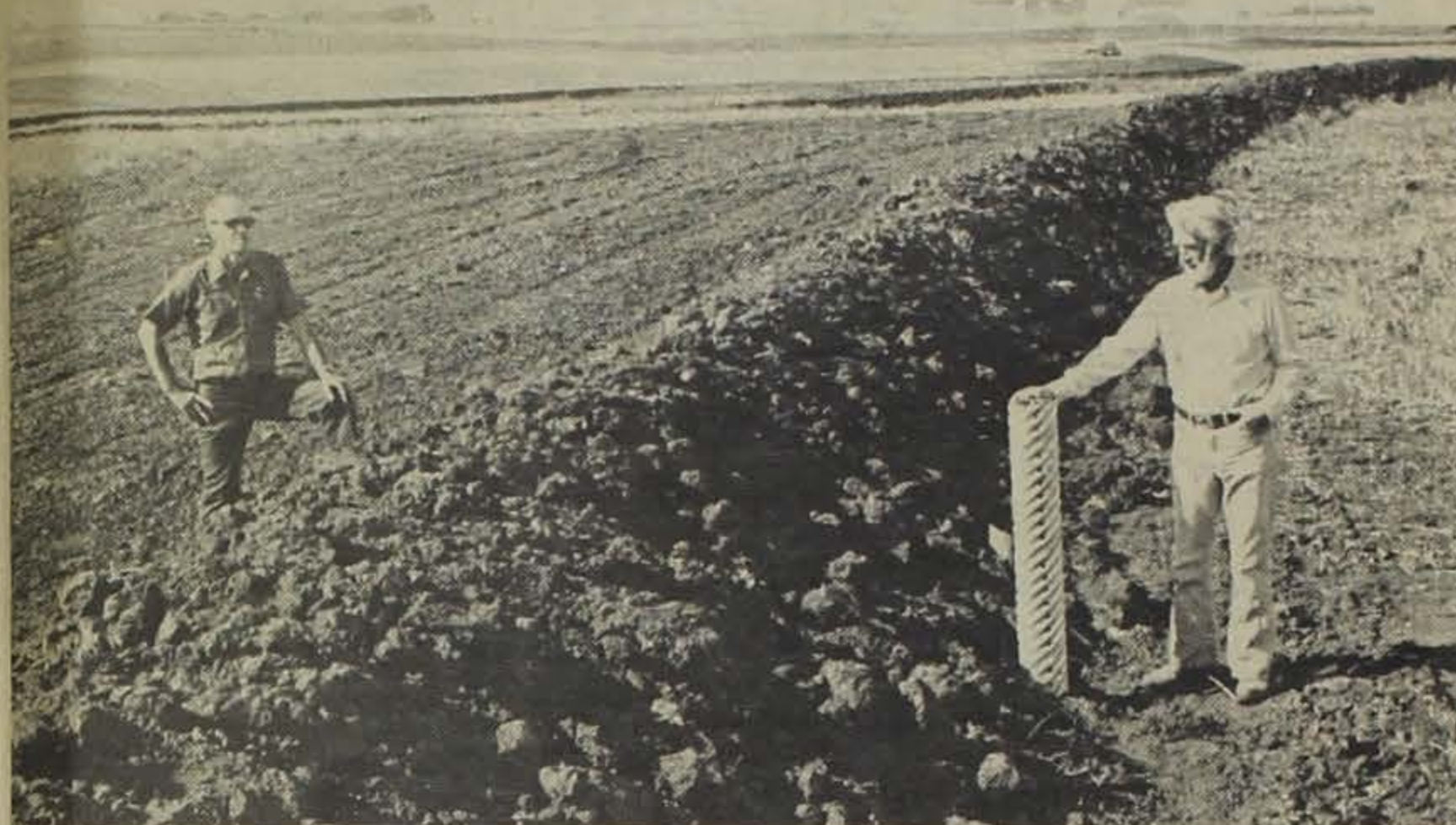
The Iowa Conservation Commission is the state agency that provides recreation areas, wildlife areas, forests and natural and cultural preserves. The commission also regulates outdoor recreation activities and helps coordinate the county conservation boards.

The Iowa Department of Soil Conservation, also at the state level, assists soil conservation districts with local resource management and allocates

state financial incentive program funds. The department also administers the state's mine reclamation laws and assists conservancy districts in developing water management plans for the state's six major river basins.

On the federal level, the USDA Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation service administers most of the cost-sharing programs for soil conservation. These include federal funds for a basic cost-sharing program with farmers, forestry incentives, emergency conservation funds and special projects. Other programs include loans and price supports, crop disaster relief, rural clean water and production adjustment. ASCS is guided at the county level by locally elected, three member county committees.

Another USDA agency is the Soil Conservation Service. SCS provides technical assistance to land owners and operators applying soil conservation practices. This agency is responsible for developing soil surveys, monitoring soil and water resources and organizing small watershed and flood prevention programs. SCS personnel work through the soil conservation districts.



From left to right are Robb Morrow and Clyde Merchant, Conservation Technicians, shown looking at new narrow based terraces on a Rainbow, Inc. farm near Van Horne. One of the advantages of the new narrow-based terraces is that the initial cost is lower.

New terraces completed

Sixty-five hundred feet of new narrow based terraces have been completed on a Rainbow Inc. farm near Van Horne. The purpose of the terrace was to reduce sheet erosion to 2 tons per acre per year. Jim Sage, Waterloo, spokesman for the corporation, says that he plans to use a corn-corn-corn-oats-meadow rotation in the future. The terraces would keep soil loss at 4

tons per acre per year with a corn and soybean rotation, according to Floyd Peters, district conservationist.

Slopes on the farm vary from 4 to 5 percent. A corn and soybean rotation on these slopes, farmed up and down hill, would result in the loss of 17 tons of soil per acre per year. Sage wanted to make

sure that this didn't happen on this farm so he installed narrow base parallel terraces. Waterway and tile work has also been completed on the farm. Another reason for the terraces is to insure that the new waterway does not fill with silt. Conservationists feel that soil loss should be less than 5 tons per acre per year to keep the soil permanently productive.



Willis Roth is shown looking at corn contour strips on his farm near Luzerne. The Roth farm was the county winner in the owner-operator division of the Iowa Soil Conservation Awards Program.

Willis Roth wins award

Willis Roth, Luzerne, was the winner in the owner-operator division of the Iowa Soil Conservation Awards Program in Benton County.

Willis' son John, is operating the 240 acre farm which is protected from erosion by 55 acres of strip cropping. A

29 acre field is terraced and all the row crops are planted on the contour with a system of conservation tillage.

Willis has one concrete structure which protects the lower end of one of his main waterways.

Willis and John have stock cows and John raises 150 hogs each year.

4-H clubs meet

KANE BUSY BEES

The meeting of the Kane Busy Bees was held at the home of Jill Pickering. Roll call was "Name Your Favorite Athlete." Members filled out enrollment forms for 1982. The club will meet Sept. 15 at the Keystone shelter and then go to Newhall to have pictures taken. Officers elected were: president, Susan Kasal; vice president, Jill Gillespie; secretary, Kristi Franzzenberg; treasurer, Ginger Gillespie; reporter, Kristi Oehlerich; historian, Michele Vileta; photographer, Vicki Vargason; recreation, Renae Selken and Kelly Hennings. Talks were given by Kelly Hennings on "What Every Athlete Should Know," Susan Kasal on "Fast Foods and the Athlete," Diane Vileta on "Calories" and Amy Pickering on "A Fast Fruit Snack."

Michele Vileta, reporter

FREMONT LIVELY LASSIES

The Fremont Lively Lassies met Sept. 14 at the Atkins Memorial Hall, with 17 members attending. Project sheets were filled out. Officers elected and installed for 1981-82 were: president, Linda Jacobi; vice president, Becky Care; secretary, Robin Becker; treasurer, Lou McKechnie; reporter, Lynae Heins; historian, Annie Sorum; recreation chairman, Wendy Butler. New club members are Janell Mitchell, Mindy Schminke, Clarissa Howe and Kelly Butler. Hostesses were Julie Krug and Janell Mitchell.

Lynae Heins, reporter

Cost-share program helps farms

TIMESNEWS — Farmers who want to practice soil conservation but have been deterred by the cost of the particular program they want to enter have another means open to them to help offset such costs.

Through the Iowa Cost-Share Program, state funds are made available to pay a portion of approved soil and water conservation practices.

These funds, appropriated from the Iowa General Fund to the Iowa Department of Soil Conservation, are allocated to each of Iowa's 100 Soil Conservation Districts (SCD) and are used solely to cost-share conservation practices on land used for agricultural or horticultural purposes.

All cost-share agreements are administered by local SCD commissioners.

Unfortunately, it seems there is a cloud around the fringes of this bright spot for farmers, and that is that funds for the program are not as plentiful as they have been in the past.

Any landowner who is a cooperator with the SCD and who enters into a voluntary agreement with the district to install and maintain an approved conservation practice is eligible to receive 50 percent of the estimated or actual cost of the project, whichever is cheaper.

Also, if a complaint is filed against a landowner, the SCD may issue an administrative order to correct the erosion problem. In this case, the landowner will be entitled to receive 75 percent of the actual cost of the installation of the soil conservation practices.

Types of practices eligible for the cost-share program are: basin terrace,

gradient terrace, level terrace, parallel terrace, diversion, erosion control structure, grassed waterway or outlet, sediment and water control basin, pasture and hayland planting, field windbreak, critical area planting, tree planting, contour stripcropping and wind stripcropping.

According to Connie Lange, district clerk for Benton County's Soil Conservation District Office, parallel terraces and grassed waterways and outlets are the most common structures built under the cost-share program in Benton County.

During the 1980-81 funding year, there were 7 parallel terraces built and 9 waterways built. This year there have

been 6 parallel terraces and 5 waterways built, and one critical area planting structure.

But this year's funds have already been used up, and the SCD office won't be getting any more until next June.

The Iowa Department of Soil Conservation, in a report to all Soil Conservation districts, blamed reduced state revenues for the across-the-board cut of the cost-share program. "The 4.6 percent across-the-board cut in December, 1980, has been carried forward to this year, reducing financial incentive (cost-share) funds by \$275,052 this year," the report said.

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Grovert plants 30 acres of no-till corn

George Grovert planted 30 acres of no-till corn in corn stubble in the spring of 1981. He wanted to see if he could control weeds and get a good stand of corn without any tillage previous to planting. When he looked at his field early in September, it looked like he had achieved his goal.

Dry phosphorous and potash were applied to the soil surface before planting. The corn was planted with an

Allis Chalmers no-till planter. George applied 3 quarts of Lasso per acre in 55 gallons of liquid containing 125 pounds of nitrogen per acre after planting. When the corn was 6-8 inches high, he applied 3 quarts of Banvel and 1 gallon of 2-4-D on 20 acres. George cultivated the corn once with a shovel cultivator. He feels that he has reduced his production costs and has little or no erosion on a field with about a 12 percent slope.



Pauline and George Grovert are shown examining no-till corn on their Eden township farm. The corn was free of weeds and the stand was excellent.



Left to right are John and Michael Hanson looking at the grassed backslope on one of the parallel tile outlet terraces on the Harold Smith farm. The Smith farm was the winner in the tenant-operated division of the Iowa Soil Conservation Awards Program. The Hanson brothers operate the farm.

Smith farm wins award

The Harold Smith farm operated by Michael and John Hanson was the winner in the tenant operated division of the Iowa Soil Conservation awards Program.

Forty-five acres of the 360 acre farm have been terraced. All the row crops are contoured and a system of conservation tillage is used. Next year the

Hansons are planning to use a system of no-tillage on part of the bean stubble.

Two concrete structures have been built to control gully erosion. 47,500 feet of tile have been installed on the farm. A windbreak protects the farm buildings from winter winds. 6,600 feet of terraces are to be built this fall on the farm.

Burrows lowers tillage costs and erosion

Ben Burrows decided to plant and grow his 1981 corn crop using a system of no-tillage. He wanted to reduce his tillage costs and do a better job of controlling erosion. In the fall of 1980 he applied phosphorous and potash to the surface of four-year-old alfalfa. In the spring of 1981 when the alfalfa was about 10 inches high, it was sprayed with 2-4-D at the rate of 1 quart per acre to kill the alfalfa. One week later it was sprayed with 120 pounds per acre of liquid nitrogen containing 2 quarts Paraquat, 3 pints of Atrac, 3 pints Bladex and 3 quarts of Lasso with a spreading material.

Three days later on May 2 the field was planted with an Allis Chalmers no-till planter. One hundred pounds of ballast was added per row to get the planter to penetrate dry ground.

Floyd Peters, district conservationist, stated that when he saw the crop on Sept. 10, the weed control was excellent and the stand of corn was about what Burrows had planned.



Ben Burrows is shown looking at no-till corn on his farm southwest of Garrison. The corn was planted in alfalfa sod. Weeds were not a problem and the stand was excellent.

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Essay contest brings 35 entries

TIMESNEWS — In years past, the Benton County Soil Conservation District has sponsored with Eden Mutual Insurance Co. a conservation speech contest.

Things have changed this year, however. Instead of a speech contest they are holding an essay contest.

The deadline to enter the contest was Sept. 9. Entries had to be a maximum of 500 words and the contest was open to all students between grades 6-12.

The winner of the district contest will be sent on to a regional contest, and the winner there will be sent to the state contest, where the grand winners will be asked to read their essays at the annual conference.

The Benton County Soil Conservation District office received over 85 essays to be judged.

Although the essays have not been judged yet, following are some samples of essays entered in the contest. These are not necessarily winning essays.

Dust in the Wind

By Jim Walton
The year is 2011. Steve Bennet is driving his government-owned solar-powered truck out of his driveway for the last time. The sun is shining brightly but Steve can hardly see the road in front of him. For years now the dust storms have steadily gotten worse, blowing away the tiny amount of topsoil left and dimming the sun across most of the Midwest.

Steve's world is one of widespread starvation, where the U.S. does not export any food to needy countries because it no longer has the ability to feed even its own inhabitants. The small amount of food Steve does manage to raise is taken by the government to be rationed out to the hungry millions of this country.

The problem is easily solved. What is needed is to plant all of the farmland with prairie grass, which will restore

the soil. Later, after only a couple of centuries, the grass is plowed up and enough fertilizer is added until it almost reaches the condition it was in 30 years ago.

But how can the people be fed in the meantime? The government chose one out of every 500 farms to be allowed to continue growing food. Steve's farm was not chosen and it is being seeded over with prairie grass. He is being forced to move to the city where he will stand in line for his food ration just like everyone else.

Steve can remember back on his father's farm in the 80's when the government pleaded desperately with farmers to use some of the conservation measures which were proven to save the soil and keep erosion under control. The measures were not that tough, building terraces, planting trees as windbreaks, and using no-till planting techniques. But the farmers ignored the pleas, mainly because they would lower crop yields and involve more work.

Then came the Illegal Trade Law in which the government, faced with either allowing the farmers to sell the food abroad at a huge profit or saving it for U.S. citizens, chose to shut down all food exports for an unspecified time limit.

This was followed by the Great Farmer Revolt where individual farmers formed their own trade agreements with foreign countries. This led to the government take-over of all farms, but it was too late. There wasn't enough soil left to use any of the conventional methods of conservation so the government was forced to use drastic measures to save our country.

Steve knew all this but he really wasn't thinking about it. He was thinking of how, with just a little more work, the farmers of the 80's could have saved the hundreds who were dying of starvation every day. He was thinking

of how his life was needlessly torn apart because the farmers of the 80's waited until they were forced to use conservation methods.

Steve turned for one last look at his farm, but he could no longer see it. It was obscured by the everpresent cloud of dust.

Soil Conservation — The Farmers Way

By Jan Struve
Millions of people everyday walk on it, play on it and live only by what it produces. What is it? It's soil. Otherwise known as dirt, mud, earth and so on. Many take it for granted. It's always been here and most think it always will be. That's where they are wrong. Our nation's soil has been used up faster than we can replenish it.

To help replenish the soil we must first take note of the waste of soil some have been brought up with. For example, to see dust blow across the field and so called duststorms on windy days, all of that is precious topsoil. It is not uncommon to see snow in the field covered with a brown film from blowing dust. After a rain you may have seen the water run down gullies as brown, muddy water. All of this soil is wasted and flows down to nearby rivers.

Secondly, we must learn how to prevent these types of problems. There are many ways to conserve soil such as rotating crops, contour farming, and no fall plowing. Rotation crops is when a farmer switches years for each crop he plants. One year he may plant corn and the next year hay. This stops the topsoil from draining down a certain row each year. Farmers may also contour farm. That is to plant in circles on hills, going around the hill instead of straight up and down a hill. This is done so the water won't drain the topsoil to the bottom of the hill. Another way is not to plow in the fall. To leave the end result

of a crop, such as cornstalks, in the ground. Then disk it in the spring. This keeps the northern winds from blowing the topsoil away in the winter months. If the farmers want to plow in the fall, a better way to plow would be with a chisel plow. It's a plow that has teeth 54 inches apart and it shakes up the ground, not just turn it over as an ordinary plow would do. It makes a hump in the field and the hump holds moisture so you're ready to work in the spring.

These methods are easy to adjust and help a lot in soil conservation. Let's all try and do our part to make soil conservation a sound investment.

It's Our Loss

By Karen Ritscher

Soil, what is it? Is it really our responsibility to care for it, keep it productive, and use it wisely? "It sure is!" quotes a Benton County farmer. He added, "In the last hundred years, half the original topsoil has been lost from Iowa's soils." What will happen to our land in one hundred years? Will all our topsoil be gone? This problem cannot go any longer ignored.

Just how valuable is our soil? The United States Soil Conservation Service estimates that 700 million tons of soil are washed down the Mississippi River and into the Gulf of Mexico each year. If a dollar amount could be placed on this, it would amount to over 4 billion dollars. These facts point out how serious soil conservation is.

There are two main types of erosion, water and wind. Water erosion takes soil with it in two different forms. First, sheet and rill erosion which removes topsoil in thin layers and narrow channels. This type can be easily observed when the fields are bare. Second, gully erosion. It gouges topsoil and subsoil out of drainageways to form deep gullies that farm equipment cannot cross. This type of erosion can be seen in the spring after the snow is melted, and when there are heavy rains.

Wind is the other natural force that erodes the soil. Clear evidence of wind erosion includes dust in the air and deposits of windblown soil in road ditches.

What then can a farmer do to reduce erosion on his land? In many cases, minimum or reduced tillage will help to reduce water runoff with the added benefit of fewer passes over the field. Machinery used in minimum tillage includes: chisel plow, offset disk, and rotary tillers, such as a Sidewinder. With reduced tillage one makes fewer trips across the field and leaves plant residue on top of the soil.

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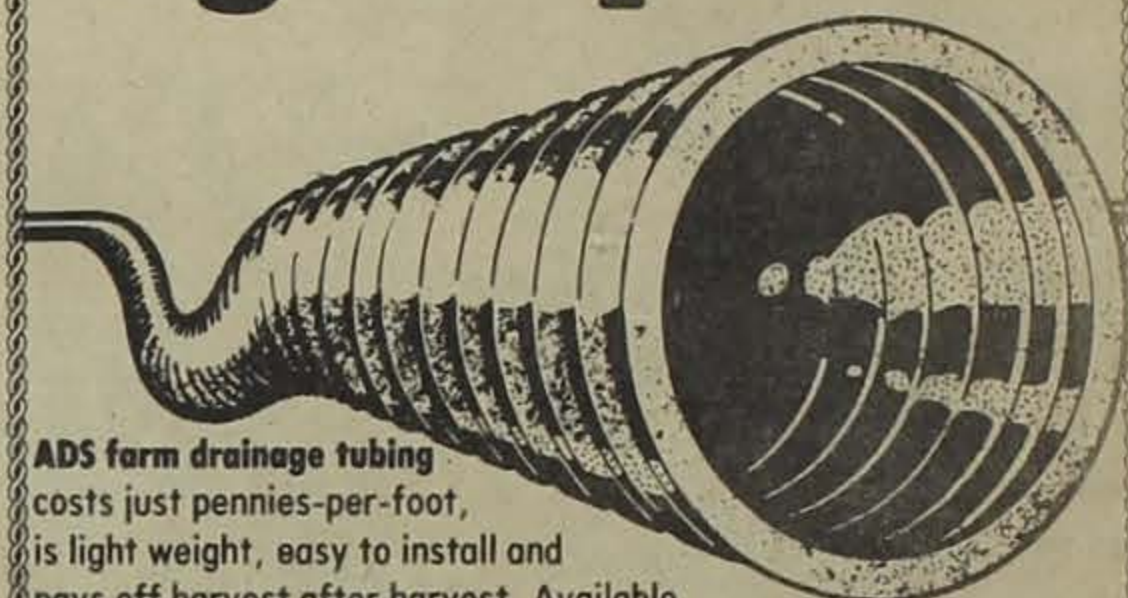
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continued on page 12



Left to right are Larry Holst and Hank Kavalier looking at the newly seeded waterway which is also protected by a mulch material called Enkammat. The use of the Enkammat will replace a concrete structure at this waterway outlet and will only cost one-fourth as much.

Enkammat used on Holst farm

Larry Holst, Dysart, had a waterway which would not stabilize on the lower end. He thought about using a concrete structure but he didn't want to spend that much money. Robb Morrow and Becky Clark, conservation technicians, surveyed and helped design a system for controlling the gully with a new product called Enkammat.

Enkammat is a nylon mat-type material coated with carbon black which is laid in place on top of the ground surface in areas where gully erosion is a problem. It is then staked down. The area is shaped and seeded before staking the Enkammat in place. The Enkammat serves to hold the topsoil and seed in place until the seeding roots and grows up through the excelsior material and the Enkammat.

Larry covered an area about 30 feet long and 40 feet wide with Enkammat. The overfall to be controlled was about 4.5 feet high. The cost of the shaping and the Enkammat was about one-fourth as much as a concrete structure would have been. It appears now that this system will work very well to control the lower end of the waterway.

BIG GROVE BUILDERS

The Big Grove Builders 4-H Club met Sept. 5 at the home of Allison Hicks, with six members, two leaders and six guests attending. Allison Hicks gave a demonstration on "How to Make Sugar Cookies." The girls were told to be at the County Extension Office in Vinton at 8:30 p.m. Sept. 16 to have club pictures taken. Record books were turned in. Members talked about Family Night, which will be a potluck supper and meeting Nov. 8. Officers elected were: president, Patricia Christy; vice president, Jenny Jorgensen; secretary, Allison Hicks; treasurer, Tina Geiken; reporter, Kelli Merchant; historian, Carri Seiler; recreation, Susan Kloppling. Lunch was served by Allison and her mother.

Kelli Merchant, reporter

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Essay explains contour farming

Continued from page 11

Other methods to reduce erosion are stripfarming, planting on the contour, and terraces. Strip farming slows water runoff, and also serves as a form of crop rotation. Planting on the contour helps keep the soil from being washed away because water follows the row around the hill thus allowing time for water to soak into the soil. Terraces hold water and soil which then prevent soil from being washed down the hill.

On my family farm we have practiced a number of soil conservation practices. They include construction of terraces, strip farming, minimum tillage, and planting on the contour.

It's easy, I guess, to blame soil problems on others, but the problems of soil management are still here. We learn to manage, use, and preserve our soil resources or we will destroy our ability to produce. Time is going fast and so is our soil. Now we must stop the problem, before it stops us.

Albright wins conservation award

Ron Albright, LaPorte City, was the winner in the new cooperator division of the Iowa Soil Conservation Program in Benton County.

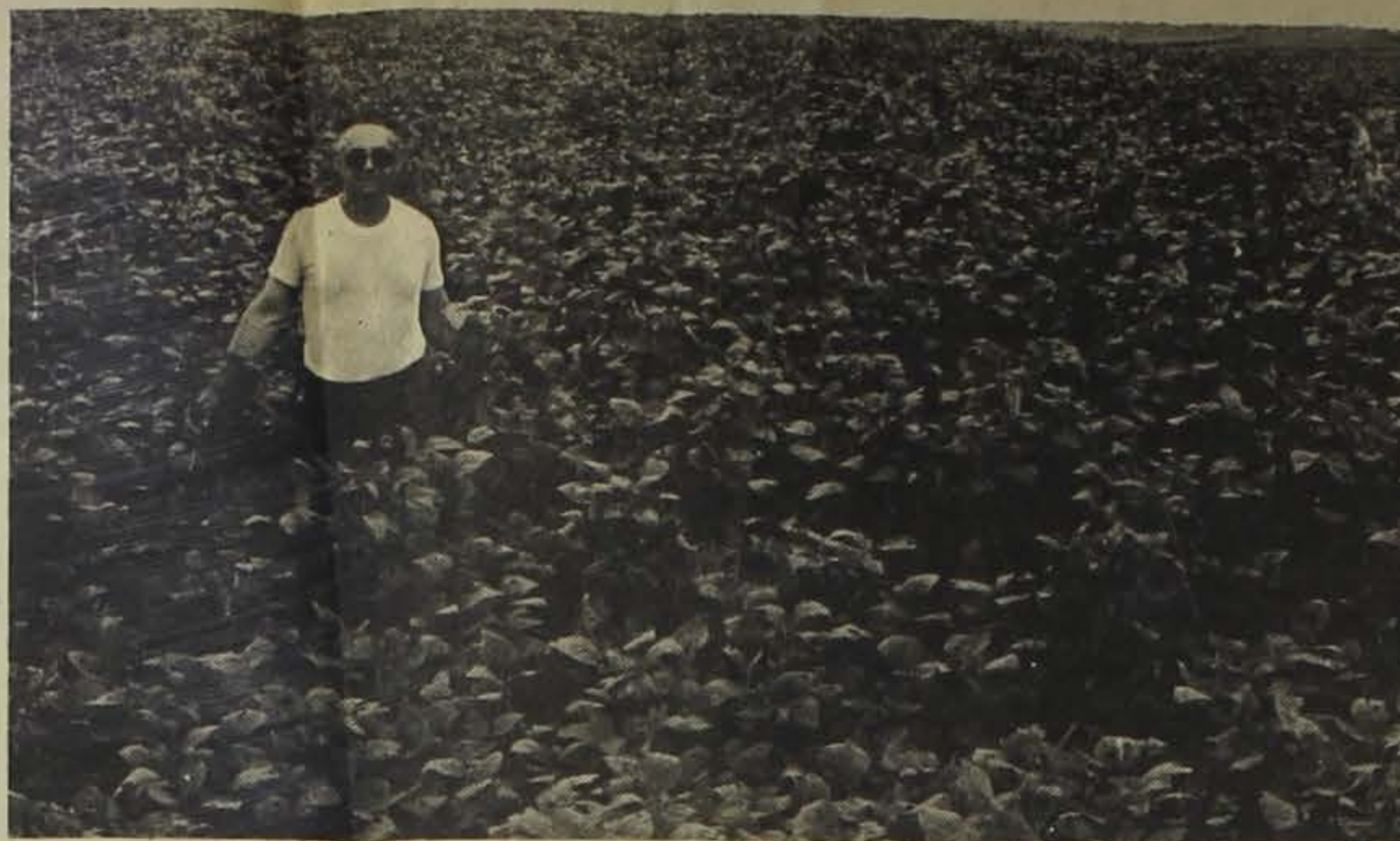
Ron owns and operates 85 acres and rents 280 acres from Helen McCandless. He uses a corn and bean rotation and contours all the row crops. The row crop was planted with a Buffalo Till planter which leaves most of the previous year's residue on the surface. Ron chops his stalks in the spring and applies dry fertilizer on the surface. After the crop was planted

with starter fertilizer, Ron sprayed 2 3/4 quarts of Lasso and 1 1/4 quarts of Bladex using 40 gallons per acre of 30 percent liquid nitrogen as a carrier. Ron used 2 3/4 quarts of Lasso per acre for a herbicide on his bean crop. Most of his weeds were controlled.

All of the row crop is cultivated at least once. Ron said that this system really reduced his fuel bill. He will use less than 1,000 gallons of diesel fuel to produce and harvest his corn and bean crop from 365 acres.



Ronald Albright is shown looking at his corn which was planted with a Buffalo Till planter. Corn residue can be seen on the ground. This residue will cut erosion losses in half. Ron's farm operation was declared the winner in the new operator division of the Iowa Soil Conservation Awards Program.



Duane Dostal is shown standing in beans on one of his broad based terraces. They were built in 1961 and are still doing an excellent job of controlling sheet erosion.

Dostal likes four terraces, waterway

Duane Dostal, Dysart, likes his broad-based parallel conventional terraces. He feels that erosion is very minor on a 30 acre field which has some slopes as steep as 8 percent (8 feet of fall per 100 feet of horizontal distance).

Four parallel terraces were built on this field in 1961. The waterway which drains from them has not filled with soil.

Duane uses a corn and bean rotation and his tillage is done with an offset disk. He uses Trellan and Sencor to control weeds in beans. Sutan is incorporated before corn planting. Banvel and 2-4-D are applied after the corn is growing.

Duane and his family operate 520 acres. Duane is an assistant commissioner with the Benton County Soil Conservation District.

No-till planters rented by many Iowa counties

DES MOINES — Iowa farmers who want to try no-till farming on a few acres with little investment will have an excellent opportunity in 1982.

The opportunity exists because of planter loan programs being conducted across the state. This year, soil conservation districts, implement dealers and others involved in no-till promotion made planters available in 45 Iowa counties.

There were 65 no-till planters and five till planters loaned to Iowa farmers at costs ranging from no charge to \$15 an acre. Most costs were between \$4 and \$7 an acre.

Tractors, operators and monitors were furnished with many of the planters. Farmers were expected to furnish their own fuel, seed and chemicals.

William Brune, Soil Conservation Service state conservationist said, "The program is an excellent way to get first hand experience with no-till without a lot of investment." Farmers also could hire custom operators to do no-till planting in counties where the program is not offered.

In Adair County, for example, 1981 was the first year a planter rental program was available for no-till. Two conservation planters, a four-row and a six-row, were available from the John Deere dealer. The Adair Soil Conservation District and Iowa State University Cooperative Extension Service helped in the program.

The charge for either planter was \$4 an acre. The price included a person from the dealership who adjusted the planter. An employee from extension service or SCS was also available to provide technical assistance.

In order to get planters to as many farmers as possible, the Adair County organizers limited each renter to 40 acres or less. About 40 farmers participated and planted about 1,200 acres of no-till corn and soybeans. Each farmer agreed to keep records on what was done, including yield checks.

Across the state about 650 farmers took advantage of the planter loan programs in 1981, planting an average of 30 acres each.

Brune urges interested farmers to contact their local soil conservation district or county extension service office to see if a program will be offered in their county in 1982. To participate in the program, no tillage (plowing, disking, etc.) should be done this fall.

BIG GROVE BUILDERS

The Big Grove Builders 4-H Club held the local Achievement Show, June 25, at the State Bank of Vinton community building. Judges were Mrs. Leona Gardner of Garrison and Mrs. Bonnie Rohlena of Keystone. Three members of the club will go to the State Fair, Connie Seiler with "There's More to Beef Than Steak" and Jenny Jorgensen and Tina Geiken with "Manners." Participating in the Fashion Show, July 2, at Trinity Lutheran Church were Diane Christy, Cari Seiler, Patricia Christy, Kelli Merchant and Susan Kloppling. At the Benton County Fair home economics judging contest, the intermediate judging team of Jenny Jorgensen, Patricia Christy and Tina Geiken was the top team. Kelli Merchant placed third in juniors in the county individual contest. Others judging were Diane Christy and Susan Kloppling. The club gave to the 4-H United Fund. The club's community project this year was planting and taking care of the flowers at the Garrison Cemetery.

Kelli Merchant, reporter

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