



SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION UPDATE

A Newsletter from the Dickinson County SWCD

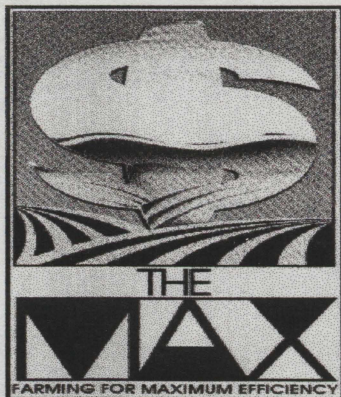
May 1997

Learning about Profit on your Farm

The MAX Program, farming for Maximum Efficiency, a study run by the Dickinson SWCD and sponsored by the Bayer Chemical Company, CASE IH, Monsanto Chemical, and the Conservation Technology Information Center (CTIC) is currently asking for volunteers to provide tillage information and crop inputs. In return the Dickinson SWCD will compile information on the most profitable areas, which you can then use to fine tune your farming operation.

Many people find that even though they have great yields, their profit is not quite as high as they originally wanted. With the information provided by the MAX a farmer can see where the most waste is and trim off the excess to improve profitability.

This is the second year that the Dickinson SWCD has participated in the national study, which operates mainly on a watershed basis now. The response has been terrific, last year we had over 50 entries in Dickinson County. Some interesting observations were made, of primary importance we found that the farmers in Dickinson County are among the best in the State and the Nation. If used properly the MAX can be a terrific boost to your farming management plan.



In fact we are finding the most conscientious, efficiency focused managers are the ones profiting the most.

If you would like to learn more about the MAX Program and what it can do for you, stop at the NRCS office in Spirit Lake and pick up the 1996 MAX Report or contact John Wills at (712)336-2604. Everyone can benefit a great deal by participating in the MAX.

Conservation Staff

Carroll Oskvig — District Conservationist
John Wills — Environmental Specialist
Ann Ditsworth — State Secretary
Heath Dodge — Conservation Aide
Jim Bell — Earth Team Volunteer
Clarence Call — Earth Team Volunteer
Maurice Dougal — Earth Team Volunteer

Contractor List

CRP has been very successful and the construction season is upon us. To provide you, our conservation partners, with the best quality services, we will be updating our Contractors List. This list includes those willing to provide 'farm services' such as conservation practice construction (waterways, terraces, basins, etc.), equipment rental, and No-till or seeding services. If you offer any of these services and would like to be included on this listing, please contact the SWCD office at (712) 336-2604.

Storm Drain Stenciling

**DUMP NO WASTE
DRAINS TO LAKE**

Storm water from rain or melting snow carries street debris, trash, leaves, grass clippings, pet wastes, and lawn chemicals into storm drains. Many do not realize that the debris entering these drains does not go to a treatment plant, it is discharged directly into nearby rivers, lakes, streams, and wetlands. Anything dumped into a storm drain can end up in surface water or groundwater, where it degrades water quality and threatens drinking water supplies. **NEVER** dump used motor oil, antifreeze,

paints, pesticides, fertilizers or other hazardous chemicals into the street or down a storm drain. Please dispose or recycle these materials properly.

Storm drain stenciling is a simple way to prevent this kind of pollution in your neighborhood. By stenciling a "Dump No Waste" message next to storm drains you can let your neighbors know that anything dumped in the street winds up in our waterways. Storm drain stenciling is part of a community service and education project sponsored by the Dickinson County Soil & Water Conservation District - Iowa Great Lakes Watershed Project.

We are looking for groups of all ages to assist with the actual stenciling. For example 4-H, FFA, Girl/Boy Scouts, Church Groups, Kiwanis, Lions, Legion, Rotary or any group looking for a project that will benefit the communities in Dickinson County for years to come. Contact the Soil & Water Conservation District office at (712) 336-2604 for more information.

Scholarship Awarded

This year the Dickinson SWCD offered a County Scholarship for \$500 to a graduating senior to further their education on the college level while pursuing programs of study in any field of agriculture or the environment. The criteria considered included leadership, scholastic achievement, and need.

The recipient of the 1997 Scholarship is Noah Wehrspann, a graduating senior of the Okoboji High School. In addition to the District Scholarship, Noah's application will advance to the State level with a potential of additional scholarships in the amounts of \$600, \$400, or \$300.



Congratulations Noah!!

Conservation Buffer Strip Initiative

The USDA, state conservation agencies, National Corn Growers Association, National Association of Conservation Districts and private industry have begun a buffer strip initiative to encourage farmers to use grasses and trees to protect and enhance resources.

Conservation buffer strips are areas maintained in permanent vegetation to help control pollutants. Examples of buffer strips are riparian forest buffers, windbreaks, grassed waterways and shelterbelts. Buffer strips can be used along streams, on field edges, or within the field.

Buffer strips help protect water bodies because they slow runoff, trap sediment, reduce water temperature, stabilize streambanks, trap fertilizers, reduce wind erosion, trap pesticides, and enhance infiltration. Buffer strips can improve habitat for pheasants, deer, and other wildlife.

Programs such as the continuous sign-up for the Conservation Reserve Program, Wildlife Incentives Program, Wetlands Reserve Program, Environmental Quality Incentives Program, state and local programs offer both technical and financial help in establishing buffers.

If you would like more information, contact the staff at the USDA Service Center in Spirit Lake.