

DAVIS COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

REPORT FOR 1947 YEAR

Interest and activity in the Davis County Soil Conservation District has continued on a high level for the 1947 year. As commissioners, we are pleased with the reception our program has received in the three years that we have been operating. Soil Conservation is progressing in our county, however cropping has remained heavy during the war years and we are alarmed whether the rate of progress is adequate to hold our own in soil losses.

A disasterous season with an excessive wet spring followed by a severe drought has impressed upon us the need for changing our type of farming. Operators who have been carrying on a good soils program came through the year with less soil loss and more satisfactory yields than the farmers who have failed to adopt improved practices. Along with other agricultural agencies, we have been encouraging the shifting to a forage type of agriculture. An effort has been made to impress upon our farmers the possibility of doubling and in some cases even tripling their production in hay, grass and grains. This area is adapted to the production of hay and grass which associates it closely with livestock production. We have encouraged the production of sheep, beef and dairy cattle with emphasis on the latter for the average size unit. This type of operation lends itself to a strong soil conservation program as well as offering maximum income to a family size farm. With our ability to produce forage combined with other favorable conditions we believe we can compete with any area in livestock and dairy production.

In an effort to change farming methods we have introduced new types of clovers, grasses and grains to this area. Birdsfoot Trefoil,

Ladina Clover, and Reeds Canary Grass are some of the newer plants now in use. We have encouraged the use of winter cover crops such as Balboa Rye, improved varieties of wheat and winter vetch. Where it is possible we have been getting the seed for the grasses and legumes to put out on demonstration plots as well as encouraging the production on a commercial basis.

Our lime quarry furnished an estimated 22,000 tons of agriculture limestone for Davis County as well as servicing parts of Van Buren, Wapello and Jefferson counties. In addition to this, road rock has been made available to the four counties. Our contract with earth movers was renewed for the 1947 year with satisfactory results.

During the year just closed we have sponsored various programs instrumental in carrying on improved farm practices. Last fall we held a district and county contouring plowing match with some 2500 people in attendance. Considerable time in promoting an experimental farm on the Edina type of soil was expended in the year just closed. Although we ran into a good many obstacles, it now appears that the program is under way and it is anticipated that the campaign to raise funds for the purchase of the land now under option will be launched in January. Arrangements have been made with our District Conservationist to hold a soil conservation school for the county. It is planned that we will invite community leaders to attend the 4-day school of basic soil conservation information that can be taken back and divulged to all parts of the district.

Associate commissioners were named during the year to assist in carrying out county-wide programs. We found this added personnel to be

of assistance in sponsoring programs and in getting out information to all parts of the county. Agricultural agencies in the district cooperated in carrying on a county-wide contouring demonstration. Through this measure we were able to reach far more people than we would have otherwise been able to assist.

During the year some 1400 acres of intertilled crops were contoured with 4.4 miles of rolling land terraced. Two hundred acres of strip cropping was laid out with 8700 feet of diversion ditches built. Five ponds were constructed under the supervision of our services. Fifty farm plans were completed for the year making a total of 110 for the district. Twelve news articles appeared in the local publications with 14 demonstrations being held in the county. Emphasis is being placed on rotations based on complete farm plans. Pasture rejuvenation is stressed in formulating unit programs.

In the few years of our service in soil conservation work we have come to realize that the problems before us are gigantic. The foremost problem is one of education, arousing the people to a point where they are conscious of the need of conserving our most valuable national asset -- soil. Second to the educational problem is the one of capital. Many operators including owners, tenants and landlords are not in a position to pay for lime, fertilizer, seed, fencing and other items basic to starting and carrying out a thorough program. Another limiting factor is technical assistance in aiding farmers in their planning and carrying out recommended programs. Soil Conservation is a relatively new field and the know-how must be forthcoming to supplement interest if our program is to be worthwhile and longlasting.

Davis County Soil Conservation District has met some of the problems confronting us in developing a soils program. Our lime quarry

has solved one of our paramount problems, that of treating acid soils. Our dirt moving contract has assisted in developing drainage projects, ponds, water conservation and other dirt work that presented problems. Our demonstrations have assisted in developing interest and have been helpful in teaching operators to work out their problems on their respective farms. News releases and educational information has been instrumental in bringing new converts into the Soil Conservation fold. Ground work in organizing our experimental farm has developed new interest and stimulated thinking in our soil needs. The complete farm plan developed in various parts of the county is awakening neighbors to the merits of soil conservation.

Although we are advancing in the soil conservation field the rate of progress at times seems too slow. At the present time we are developing 50 farm plans a year when it seems altogether possible on a voluntary basis to be reaching four times this number or a total of 200 a year if technical assistance could be made available. Our recommendation for speeding up a Soil Conservation program would be a more definite educational program. A program that would not only reach our leaders but every farm operator in the district. Operators should be confronted and exposed continually with every feasible educational measure available, such as demonstrations, movies, radio, pamphlets and news releases. After we have taught farm owners the need of soil conservation we then need technical assistance. In carrying out a sound program, capital also enters into the picture. This can be alleviated somewhat by continued soil conservation payments and available credit on a long time, low rate basis.

We want to take this opportunity to commend the work of our farm planner, Leland McCord in the G.I. training program. For the past year he has been working in the capacity of an instructor in the Veterans' Training Course and doing an excellent job of instilling Soil Conservation in the minds of these young operators. This will, no doubt, be of untold value to this group of farmers as well as the District in establishing a better Davis County.

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Not only has our lime quarry and earth moving contracts been of a value in carrying out Soil Conservation practices but has also been a source of revenue to our district. With funds in the treasury, we are able to sponsor programs that otherwise would not be possible. Expenses are incurred in carrying on an active program and funds in the treasury has been a material asset to our district.

TREASURY REPORT FOR 1947

RECEIPTS

Royalty on Agricultural limestone, 50509.10 tons @ .06¢	\$3030.54
Royalty on road rock 9411.90 tons @ .06¢	564.71
Royalty on road rock (Wapello Co.) 17572.40 tons @ .05¢	878.62
Earth moving contract	317.23
	<u>4791.10</u>
Cash Balance, January 1, 1947	336.53
	<u>\$5127.63</u>

450
on hand

DISBURSEMENTS

Royalty on agricultural lime, @ .05¢	\$2525.44
Royalty on road rock, @ .05¢	470.60
Royalty on road rock, Wapello Co., @ .05¢	878.62
Adv. on earth moving contract	32.80
Recording papers	2.25
Corporation fees	5.00
Mileage and postage	12.59
Bond	2.50
Testing lime	1.50
Dinners	61.45
Camera	73.39
	<u>\$4066.14</u>

Cash Balance, January 1, 1948

\$1061.49

Pearl W. Spillman
Pearl W. Spillman, Chairman

Dale Blackwell
Dale Blackwell, Secretary

Fred Melvin
Fred Melvin, Commissioner