

Cherokee County
SOIL
CONSERVATION
District

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ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1951

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District Commissioners

C. C. MARTIN, Cherokee, Iowa

L. C. BENGTON, Cherokee, Iowa

J. F. RALSTON, Washta, Iowa

INTRODUCTION

The basic physical objective of soil conservation activities in Cherokee County is the use of each acre of agricultural land within its capabilities and the treatment of each acre of agricultural land in accordance with its needs for protection and improvement.

In order to accomplish this objective as rapidly as possible it is necessary to enlist the help of every organization that has an interest in agriculture; it is necessary to work together and coordinate the activities of all who are working with this objective in mind.

The Cherokee County Soil Conservation District was organized in 1944, under the Soil Conservation District's Law of the State of Iowa. The governing body of the District consists of three commissioners. The commissioners are elected by vote of the Cherokee County land owners and serve six years. The District's official headquarters is the Soil Conservation Service office in Cherokee, Iowa.

The district is working towards its objective by: (1) promoting the use of all known good practical means of saving soil and water, including drainage, that are adapted to Cherokee County; and (2) securing assistance, technical and other, to aid land owners and operators of Cherokee County in:

1. Becoming acquainted with existing soil conservation problems and the recommended remedial treatments for same.
2. Developing farm conservation programs for each farm unit of Cherokee County.
3. Applying farm conservation programs.

The District has enlisted the aid of both State and Federal agencies as well as the aid of the many local agencies and organizations, to carry out the district program.

DISTRICT COOPERATORS

At the close of 1951, 343 farmers were cooperating with the District in applying farm conservation plans on their land (a total of 67,700 acres). The distribution of cooperators, by townships, is as follows:

Cherokee County

Marcus Township	2
Liberty Township	11
Cedar Township	9
Spring Township	20
Amherst Township	13
Sheridan Township	12
Cherokee Township	23
Afton Township	16
Tilden Township	20
Rock Township	26
Pilot Township	32
Pitcher Township	24
Grand Meadow Township	33
Willow Township	44
Silver Township	48
Diamond Township	10

Progress Made By District in Establishing Soil Conservation Practices

ITEM	UNIT	1951	TO DATE
1. Farmers developing farm conservation plans	Number	67	343
2. Soil Conservation practices established by farmers (with district assistance:			
a. Contouring of row crops	Acres	7,551	34,351
b. Contour field divisions established	Rods	14,713	79,896
c. Waterways tiled	Ln. Ft.	10,110	25,185
d. Terraces built	Miles	3.5	72.5
e. Diversions built	Ln. Ft.	630	8,318
f. Waterways seeded	Miles	7	100
g. Headlands seeded	Acres	88	869
h. Pasture improvement	Acres	54	190
3. 188 Cherokee County farmers receive technical assistance from the District in establishing soil conservation practices during 1951.			
4. Over 475 Cherokee County farmers contoured at least one field of corn or beans in 1951.			
5. The Little Sioux Rod and Gun club sponsored the planting of wildlife areas on 3 cooperating farms during 1951. Arrangements have been completed to plant at least 6 wildlife areas on cooperating farms during 1952; this is in cooperation with the State Conservation Commission and the Little Sioux Rod and Gun club.			
6. 96% of farmers developing farm conservation plans (343) have established one or more conservation practices on their farms (the remainder will start in 1952); over 50% have all needed contour guide lines established (including contour field divisions).			

OTHER DISTRICT ACTIVITIES

Additional activities of the technicians assigned to the District by the Soil Conservation Service were:

1. Adult Night Schools:

Information on soil conservation was presented to the agriculture class of the Quimby adult night school.

2. Civic Organizations:

Programs on soil conservation were presented at the Marcus and Cherokee Rotary clubs and the Cleghorn Lions club. Also a tour was arranged for the Marcus Rotary club.

3. Cherokee County Farm Bureau:

A program on soil conservation was presented at the January meeting of Junior Farm Bureau.

Slides showing local soil conservation accomplishments were shown at the June meeting of the Afton Township Farm Bureau.

4. High Schools:

Slides were shown and soil conservation information presented to the Cherokee High School agriculture class. They were also taken on a tour of the Mortenson watershed (south of Cherokee).

5. Veterans Agriculture Training Classes:

Soil Conservation information was presented and slides shown to both veterans agriculture classes at Aurelia, Iowa.

6. Radio:

Three radio programs were presented over the Storm Lake radio station.

7. Group Planning Meetings:

Soil conservation planning meetings were held with seven neighborhood groups during 1951.

SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

During the past year the Soil Conservation Service has provided the district with the following technical assistance:

- 1 Planning Technician (12 months)Harvey Lindberg
- 1 Planning Technician (3 months)Mervin Danielson
- 1 Junior Planning Technician (8½ months)Dale Barker
- 1 Conservation Aid (12 months)Glen Craft
- 1 Conservation Aid (12 months)Glen Berglund

In addition to the above, the District received part time assistance from a District Conservationist, a Soil Scientist and the staff of the flood control section of the Soil Conservation Service.

It is anticipated that, during 1952, the District will have the full time services of one planning technician, one junior planning technician and two conservation aides.

CO-OPERATION OF EXTENSION SERVICE

The following is a brief resume of special activities engaged in by the Extension Service in promoting the District's program:

1. A soil conservation farm layout was inspected on each 4-H club tour. The value of rotations and supporting practices were pointed out to the members.
2. One 4-H leader's training school was conducted on wildlife conservation in preparation for wildlife conservation activity in the 4-H Clubs.
3. The need for renovation of pastures was discussed at Farm Bureau meetings and was given publicity through the local papers. Three pasture renovation demonstrations have been established.
4. Birdsfoot trefoil is being tried as a legume to be used in permanent pastures. Satisfactory stands have been obtained in two bluegrass pastures.
5. Two soil sampling training schools were held. It is felt that soil test should be made the basis for fertilizer recommendations.
6. Farm leases as they affect the conservation of soil were discussed at the Adult Night School "Farm Problems" class at Cherokee and at township Farm Bureau meetings.
7. The need for conservation of all natural resources with particular emphasis on soil conservation was presented to the Cherokee Junior High School science class. This was a two lesson series. The class was taken to the F. O. Mortenson farm to inspect the Flood Control installations there.
8. An Assistant Extension Director in Soil Conservation was employed during three months of the year.

LITTLE SIOUX FLOOD CONTROL PROGRAM

The District has continued giving first priority of assistance to small watershed groups of farmers who are interested in carrying out planned soil and water conservation programs.

The District's flood control program is divided into two phases, namely:

1. the treatment of farm lands to reduce erosion and runoff at the source (by means of rotations, contouring, terracing, sod waterways, headlands, etc.),
2. installing of structures and other measures to control major gullies and reduce peak flows.

District progress, to date, in the installation of conservation practices on small watersheds is as follows:

1. Martin Watershed (in Spring township) — All gully control installations completed and work approved by the District. Over 70% of the watershed cooperating with the District in applying soil and water conservation practices.
2. Mortenson Watershed (in Pilot and Silver townships) — All gully control installations completed and work approved by the District. Over 70% of the watershed cooperating with the District in applying soil and water conservation practices.
3. Simonsen Watershed (in Rock and Willow townships) — All construction work on gully control structures is completed; a little dirt work and the seeding and sodding remain to be done before the work is accepted by the District. Over 70% of the watershed cooperating with the District in applying soil and water conservation practices.
4. Fee Watershed (in Willow township) — This watershed has been given a construction priority and will be the next watershed in Cherokee County in which gully control installations will be constructed (by contract). Over 70% of the watershed cooperating with the District in applying soil and water conservation practices.
5. Clark-Little Watershed (in Pilot and Silver townships) — This watershed has been given a construction priority and follows the Fee watershed on the construction list. Over 70% of the watershed is cooperating with the District in applying soil and water conservation practices.
6. Robeson Watershed (Grand Meadow township) — This watershed has been given a survey priority by the Little Sioux Works Committee. The preliminary survey has been completed and the surveys are now being analyzed to determine what gully control installations are needed. When this is completed the landowners (if they wish to accept the recommendations) can request a construction priority through the local District Commissioners. Over 70% of the watershed is cooperating with the District in the establishment of soil and water conservation measures on the land.
7. Other small watersheds, in which interest in the flood control program has been expressed by many of the landowners, and their present status are as follows:
 - a. Coonley Creek Watershed — This watershed includes about 5600 acres in Cherokee, Afton and Pilot townships. At present over 60% of the watershed is cooperating with the District in applying soil and water conservation measures on their land.
 - b. Johns neighborhood — This watershed includes about 2200 acres in Silver township. At present over 60% of the watershed is cooperating with the District in applying soil and water conservation measures on their land.
 - c. Ashley Creek (fork) Watershed — This watershed includes land in both Cherokee and Ida Counties. About 1650 acres of the watershed lie in Cherokee County and a slightly larger acreage in Ida County. Over 70% of the farmers on the Cherokee County side (Silver township) of the area are cooperating with the District in applying soil and water conservation measures on their land.
 - d. 4-Mile Creek Watershed — This watershed includes about 5600 acres in Silver and Wilplow townships. Over 60% of the watershed is cooperating with the District in applying soil and water conservation programs on their land.
 - e. Stratton Creek Watershed — This watershed includes about 3400 acres in Silver and Willow townships. About 45% of the watershed is now cooperating with the District in applying soil and water conservation practices on their land.

f. Perry Creek Watershed — This watershed includes about 11,500 acres in Sheridan, Rock and Pilot townships. At present, over 40% of the watershed is cooperating with the District in applying soil and water conservation practices on the land.

When well over 70% of a watershed is cooperating with the District in applying soil and water conservation programs and the majority of the recommended practices have been applied, the District Commissioners will recommend to the Little Sioux Works Committee that a watershed be given survey and construction priorities for the installation of needed gully control measures. This is done upon application of the landowners and after an inspection of the watershed to determine if the above requirements have been met.

Interest has been expressed in several other areas; however this report lists only those in which over 40% of the area now has conservation practices in effect.

Report of the Treasurer Cherokee County Soil Conservation District

DECEMBER 31, 1951

GENERAL FUND

Cash Balance (January 1, 1951)	\$ 271.17	
Paid out during 1951 for expenses and supplies		\$ 64.02
Received from State Soil Conservation Committee	58.03	
Balance on Hand (December 31, 1951)		265.18
	\$ 329.20	\$ 329.20

MAINTENAINCE FUND

Balance on Hand (January 1, 1951)	\$3,007.50	
Paid out for recording easements and contracts		\$ 50.20
Balance on Hand (December 31, 1951)		2,957.50
	\$3,007.50	\$3,007.50

STATE SOIL CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

The State of Iowa continued to make state funds available to Soil Conservation Districts during 1951 on a need basis. This money is expended by the District Commissioners under the supervision of the State Soil Conservation Committee.

Present members of the State Soil Conservation Committee are: Wm. Darbyshire of Rockwell City, James Foster of Albia, Chris Jensen of Audubon, Kenneth Wagner of West Liberty and J. F. Ingels of Maynard.

For the fiscal year ending June 30, 1952, the Cherokee District was allotted \$1,261.88 on the basis of the budget it submitted last spring.

This money is used to pay Commissioners expenses, for office supplies, printing, rental of meeting halls, material and equipment for demonstrations, film and the employment of clerical help.

This appropriation made possible the development of a set of color slides showing conservation work done by Cherokee County farmers; this has proven a valuable aid in the District educational program and is in demand by both our Soil Conservation Service Technicians and Extension Service personnel for use at meetings in the county. This set is being added to.

PILOT ROCK PLOWING MATCH

The above named association again sponsored a 4-H Livestock show and soil conservation field day. It was held in August, 1951. Events included were a terrace building contest and junior and senior contour plowing contests. It was held on the Whitfield Adamson farm in Pilot Township. President Howard Hill of the Iowa farm Bureau Federation headed the speaking program. The commissioners and technicians assigned to the District assisted in staging this event.

Sioux City Program for Permanent Agriculture

The Cherokee District again participated in this program in 1951. County winners (Cherokee) were Clifford Streed and George Mundy of Quimby, Arnold Berglund of Pierson and Leo Brady of Marcus.

Coordination of Agricultural Agencies in Cherokee County

To facilitate the desire of the U. S. Department of Agriculture to locate all USDA personnel having county responsibilities in a single office, the Cherokee County Farm Bureau is constructing a new building adjacent to their present building. This building is designed to house the Extension Service, the Soil Conservation Service and the Production and Marketing Administration. It is anticipated that this building will be completed in January, 1952; and the above named agencies will be moved in by February 1st, 1952. The District's headquarters will be in the Soil Conservation Service office.

To further coordinate the work of the different agricultural agencies, the Secretary of Agriculture directed the County PMA Committee to arrange a meeting with the local Soil Conservation Service technician and the Forest Service official (if any) for the purpose of reviewing the current program and developing recommendations for the 1952 program. He further directed that the governing body of the Soil Conservation District, the county agent for the county, and the county supervisor of the Farmers Home Administration be invited to participate in these meetings. The County PMA Committee was also directed to obtain recommendations from township PMA Committeemen and representatives of other State and Federal agencies where possible. Following this meeting, the County PMA Committee and the local Soil Conservation Service technician, working with the commissioners of the Cherokee District, formulated the county recommendations and forwarded them to the State PMA Committee.

The Secretary of Agriculture assigned to the Soil Conservation Service certain technical responsibilities in connection with the Agricultural Conservation Program under PMA. In addition to the development of certain phases of the Annual ACP Handbooks, these responsibilities include technical work needed in helping ACP participants carry out certain permanent type practices that may be contained in State and County handbooks. Such technical work, as set forth in the 1952 ACP National Bulletin, is considered to include the following types of on-the-farm technical work:

- (1) A finding by the SCS that the permanent type soil conservation work contemplated is needed and practical on the farm,

- (2) Necessary site selection, or other preliminary work, and lay-out of practices,
- (3) Necessary supervision of installation,
- (4) Certification of performance (or application of the practice to the land.

Permanent type practices include level terraces, graded terraces, contouring intertilled crops, contour strip cropping, and waterways and terrace outlets, open farm drainage ditches, tile drainage, diversion terraces, dams and reservoirs for livestock water, dams for erosion control.

This will mean a bigger work load for the technicians assigned (by the Soil Conservation Service) to the Cherokee County District.

THE JOB AHEAD

The basic objective of soil conservation activities in Cherokee County is the use of each acre of agricultural land within its capabilities and the treatment of each acre according to its needs for protection and improvement.

If this objective is to be attained, a conservation plan must be developed for every farm in the county. There are 1716 farms in the county. High priority must be given to obtaining soil surveys and providing farmers with the information necessary to develop sound conservation plans.

Every effort must be made to get the basic conservation practices on the land as rapidly as possible. A crop rotation that will maintain organic matter and fertility is the backbone of a sound conservation plan. It follows that primary attention should be given to an effort to bring about a better balance between row crops and meadow crops on Cherokee County farmland. There are about 276,000 acres of cropland in the county. Last year about 136,000 acres were in row crops and 36,000 acres in meadow crops. The goal is to bring these two more nearly in equal balance.

Of the 276,000 acres of cropland in the county, approximately 193,000 acres have a slope of 3% or more (primarily gently rolling land). Secondary priority should be given to a campaign to get all of this 193,000 acres contoured with sod waterways. Roughly 60,000 acres of this cropland should be terraced and a greater effort must be made to secure widespread use of terraces.

Next, much of the approximately 80,000 acres of permanent pasture in the county needs better care or improvement. Proper attention must be given to encouraging more extensive use of pasture improving practices.

A soil management program that encourages soil testing and proper use of lime and fertilizer must also be pushed. It is estimated that 75% of our cropland needs from 1½ to 2 tons of lime per acre. In the past 10 years about 50% of it has been limed. About 75% of our cropland needs phosphate fertilizer (tremendous increases in the use of phosphate fertilizer have been noted in the last few years).

Drainage and gully control, where needed, must also come in for attention in completing the soil conservation program.

C. C. MARTIN, Chairman.

