

Cherokee County Soil Conservation District



ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1950



DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS:

C. C. Martin, Cherokee, Iowa

L. C. Bengtson, Cherokee, Iowa

J. F. Ralston, Washta, Iowa

INTRODUCTION

The conservation of soil and water is not a job that you can finish all at once; it is something that you must continue to do. It is a way of farming. And the experiences of thousands of farmers show that conservation farming is profitable.

If you get started right, conservation farming is not difficult. If you know what your land is capable of doing, have a good conservation plan, and start applying your conservation practices in the right way, you will find that conservation farming is just a good way of farming. It is a natural way; you work with nature, not against her. Of course you will run into some problems while practicing conservation farming; but you will be able to solve most of them if you know your land, know your plan, and have built your conservation structures right. And you can get technical help from your soil conservation district on any conservation problems that you are unable to solve yourself.

We, the commissioners of the Cherokee District, urge all of you to make full use of the facilities and technical help now available to Cherokee County farmers through our Soil Conservation District. We urge you to join the ranks of those who are farming the conservation way.

District Cooperators

At the close of 1950, 288 farmers were cooperating with the District in applying complete farm conservation plans on their land (a total of 57,020 acres). The distribution of these cooperators, by townships, is shown below:

CHEROKEE COUNTY

Marcus Township	2
Liberty Township	8
Cedar Township	9
Spring Township	16
Amherst Township	12
Sheridan Township	10
Cherokee Township	19
Afton Township	13
Tilden Township	17
Rock Township	21
Pilot Township	28
Pitcher Township	20
Grand Meadow Township	30
Willow Township	34
Silver Township	43
Diamond Township	6

Soil Conservation Service

The Soil Conservation Service has continued to provide the District with the technical help necessary to give on-site assistance in planning and applying farm conservation plans.

During 1950, the Soil Conservation Service provided the following full-time technical assistance to the Cherokee County Soil Conservation District:

1 Planning Technician (Harvey Lindberg)	12 months
1 Planning Technician (Mervin Danielson)	12 months
1 Conservation Aid (Glen Craft)	12 months
1 Conservation Aid (Glen Berglund)	11 months

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 1951, the Soil Conservation Service will continue to make available to the District the services of the above named technicians.

Progress Made by the District in Securing Establishment of Soil Conservation Practice

Item	Unit	In 1949	In 1950	To Date
1. Farmers developing complete conservation plans	No.	60	60	288
2. Practices established by farmers with complete conservation plans:				
a. Contouring of row crops	Acres	5,028	6,165	26,800
b. Headlands seeded	Acres	111	156	781
c. Contour field divisions established	Rods	13,077	21,608	65,183
d. Waterways seeded	Miles	15	24	93
e. Terraces constructed	Miles	15	11	69
f. Diversions constructed	Ln.Ft.	1,056	950	7,688
g. Waterways tiled	Ln.Ft.	3,800	2,125	15,075
3. Other farmers received assistance in establishing the following practices in 1950:				
a. Contouring of row crops	Acres		1,817	
b. Contour field divisions established	Rods		1,460	

In addition to the above, 2 wildlife areas were planted in co-operation with the Little Sioux Rod & Gun Club and the Marcus Sportsmen's Club (on the Glen Curtis farm and the Mrs. Lulu Miller farm). N. L. Stiles and James Fee planted borders of multi-flora rose on their farms.

Roy Little seeded reed canary grass on some floodland of his along the Little Sioux River during 1950 (seed was furnished by the Soil Conservation Service nursery) and obtained an excellent stand.

The amount of work done on improving permanent pastures, liming and fertilizing is on the increase.

Other activities of the technicians assigned to the District by the Soil Conservation Service are as follows:

1. Adult Night Schools

Information on soil conservation was presented at the agriculture classes at Cherokee and Quimby.

2. High Schools

Presented soil conservation information and arranged field tours for Aurelia, Cherokee, and Grand Meadow high schools.

3. Civic Organizations

Programs on soil conservation were presented at the Cherokee Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs. A field tour was arranged for the Marcus Rotary Club.

4. Radio

Two fifteen minute programs were presented over the Storm Lake Radio station. Participants were the Cherokee District Commissioners (C. C. Martin, L. C. Bengtson), County Extension Director A. R. Griffith and Farm Planner Harvey R. Lindberg.

5. Newspapers

News pertaining to District activities was turned over to newspapers on a weekly basis. In addition, feature articles were printed on the following Cherokee District cooperators: Robert Rawson, Bert Lundell, Ralph and Floyd Rupp, Joe Fell, Elmo Peterson and Ford Ralston.

6. Churches

A program on soil conservation was presented at the Methodist Church at Washta, Iowa.

7. Groups and Watersheds

Meetings were held in small groups and small watersheds to explain the soil conservation and flood control program.

Little Sioux Flood Control Program

The District is continuing to guide its conservation activities so as to facilitate the flood control program authorized in the Little Sioux Watershed. In the Cherokee district this means working primarily with groups in small watersheds for the purpose of planning and applying soil and water conservation practices and, when this phase of the program is well underway, working with the same small watersheds in arranging for the installation of recommended flood control measures.

District progress, to date, in the development of small watersheds is as follows:

1. Mortenson Watershed (in Pilot and Silver townships)—

Over 70% of the watershed cooperating with the District in applying soil conservation practices on their farms. The recommended gully and flood control structures in this watershed were completed during 1950. All earth fills, borrow pits and sloped areas have been seeded. The farm pond created by one of the flood control structures was stocked with fish, by the State Conservation Commission, in October of 1950.

2. Martin Watershed (in Spring township)—

Over 70% of the watershed cooperating with the District in applying soil conservation practices on their farms. The recommended gully and flood control structures in this watershed were completed during 1950. In this watershed the two gully control structures were located so as to serve as road culverts as well as gully control structures. This was made possible by the cooperation and help of Cherokee County through its Board of Supervisors.

3. Simonsen Watershed (in Rock and Willow townships)—

Over 70% of the watershed cooperating with the District in applying soil conservation practices on their farms. The land-owners have given their approval on the recommended gully and flood control structures in this watershed and the construction contract has been let. Construction work in this watershed will start in the spring of 1951 and is scheduled for completion during 1951.

4. Fee Watershed (in Willow township)—

Over 70% of the watershed cooperating with the District in applying soil conservation practices on their farms. The land-owners have signified their approval of the recommended gully and flood control structures by signing the necessary agreements. The Little Sioux Works Committee has given the watershed a construction priority and it will be the next watershed in the Cherokee district in which a construction contract will be let.

5. Clark-Little Watershed (in Pilot and Silver townships)—

Over 70% of the watershed cooperating with the District in

applying soil conservation practices on their farms. The Little Sioux Works Committee has given this watershed a construction priority and detailed surveys are now being completed. Construction agreements will be completed for this watershed during the winter (1950-1951).

6. Robeson Watershed (Grand Meadow township)—

Over 70% of the watershed cooperating with the District in applying soil conservation practices on their farms. The Little Sioux Works Committee has authorized a preliminary survey in this watershed to determine flood and gully control recommendations. This survey is now being made.

7. Interest in the flood control program has been expressed by some of the farmers in several other watersheds. In order to obtain consideration for flood control work at least 70% of the acres in a watershed must be applying recommended soil conservation practices on the land; the percentage of cooperators with the District in applying farm soil conservation plans and the amount of recommended soil conservation practices being used are the factors used by the District Commissioners in determining the order in which watersheds are recommended to the Little Sioux Works Committee for survey and construction priorities. The same factors are used by the Works Committee in allocating the above mentioned survey and construction priorities. Some of the watersheds in which interest has been expressed are:

Coonley Creek (located in Cherokee, Afton and Pilot townships), 4-Mile Creek (located in Silver and Willow townships), Stratton Creek (located in Silver and Willow townships), a fork of Ashton Creek (located in Silver township and Ida County), Perry Creek (located in Sheridan, Rock and Pilot townships), Ralston neighborhood (located in Grand Meadow township), Johns neighborhood (located in Silver township).

Of these watersheds, Coonley Creek and 4-Mile Creek are the farthest along in the application of soil conservation practices and are the closest to having the necessary cooperation to be eligible for consideration for flood control assistance.

Extension Service

The Extension Service has provided an Assistant Extension Director (for Soil Conservation) in Cherokee County. He also serves as Secretary to the District Commissioners.

During 1950, 101 meetings were held to discuss crop production and soil conservation (total attendance was 7,310). These included 25 demonstrations and 76 meetings of explanation of principles or schools of instruction. 18 of the 76 were soil sampling training schools.

Three 4-H meetings were held on District cooperator's farms to impress on club members the value of conservation practices.

The nine townships in the county that hold regular township Farm Bureau meetings made provision for at least one discussion on soil conservation.

The work of the Extension Service has been directed mainly at developing an understanding of a good land use program.

Some time was devoted to utilization of forages. A better understanding of the value of good quality forage is essential to securing adequate rotations. Several farmers have experimented with legume-grass silage stored above ground in "piles" instead of in silos. So far, results have been good. It is recommended that more research be directed toward use of legume-grass silage.

Use of good seed and production of seed have been emphasized as one of the contributing factors in obtaining satisfactory stands and reducing the weed problem commonly associated with contouring.

Approximately 900 soil samples were submitted from the county to the State Soil Testing Laboratory. Most of these were taken by P.M.A. Committeemen. This joint program of the P.M.A. and the Extension Service has been valuable to all concerned but it has one weakness. It is too difficult to get enough personnel in the townships to fulfill requests for sampling. Perhaps a partial solution to this problem is to teach more farmers to take their own samples.

In order to bring about a more complete understanding of using commercial fertilizers, three fertilizer clinics were held in the county. Everyone who had submitted samples was invited and was urged to bring their neighbors even though they had not sent in samples.

Two experimental plots were established this fall in co-operation with Extension personnel on the central staff. One is located on Primghar soil type and is designed to measure the amount of lime needed. Soil tests were taken which indicated a lime require of about three tons. Applications of four and one-half, three, and one and one-half tons were made and replicated.

As a whole the work in the county is well started in the field of soil conservation. More extensive work is needed in the way of presenting methods and practices of soil conservation to farmers,

and follow-up work is as important as the indoctrination. As an average all of the farmers are interested in soil conservation in varying degrees.

More work should be conducted with the children and young people in the way of short courses as part of their school work. Plans are being made to try an experimental class in science at the Junior High School in the spring of 1951 with four to six weeks being devoted to soil conservation work with trained professional men in charge of the classes.

It is recommended that more of these classes and adult classes with more demonstrations and clinics be held to further disseminate information.

State Soil Conservation Committee

By legislative act, the State of Iowa had made some state funds available to soil conservation districts on a need basis. This money, to be used to promote soil conservation work in districts, is expended by the District Commissioners under regulations administered by the State Soil Conservation Committee.

For the fiscal year ending June 30, 1951, the Cherokee District was allotted \$730.00 on the basis of the budget it submitted last spring.

This money is being used to pay District Commissioners expenses (mileage), stamps, letterheads and envelopes, material for exhibits and window displays, tours, printing and mailing annual report to cooperators, treasurer's bond, pay a part time typist and for needed equipment.

The District is in the process of working up a set of soil conservation slides (made possible by state funds). This is a valuable contribution to the educational program as such a collection of slides are very useful in meetings and local pictures are much more effective (they point up local accomplishments).

Change of Commissioners

The term of Commissioner James R. Fee expired in the spring of 1950. He did not choose to be a candidate for re-election.

At the election, held in June, 1950, J. F. Ralston was elected to serve as the new commissioner, replacing James R. Fee.

We wish to take this opportunity to thank Jim Fee for the six years of service he gave the Cherokee District.

Little Sioux Chapter of Friends of the Land

Through the efforts of this organization, Dr. Albrecht of the University of Missouri was secured to speak at both Marcus and Cherokee, Iowa (on soil fertility).

Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. Soil Conservation Contest

The Cherokee commissioners participated in this program during 1950, and plan on participating in 1951.

Sioux City Program for Permanent Agriculture

The Cherokee District participated in this program during 1950. County winners for Cherokee were Joe Fell, Elmo Peterson, Ford Ralston and Floyd and Ralph Rupp.

Pilot Rock Plowing Match

The above named association again sponsored a two day event featuring soil conservation. It was held in August, 1950, on the Emil Lundsgaard farm on the north edge of Cherokee. In addition to the terrace building and contour plowing contests, there were fertilizer demonstrations, shaping and seeding waterway demonstrations. Governor Beardsley gave an excellent talk on soil conservation. District Commissioner Bengtson served as President of the 1950 event.

Report of the Treasurer **Cherokee County Soil Conservation District**

DECEMBER 31, 1950

GENERAL FUND

Cash Balance on January 1, 1950	\$ 335.75	
Paid Out During 1950 (for expenses and supplies)		\$ 82.97
Received from State Soil Conservation Committee	18.39	
Balance on Hand December 31, 1950		271.17
	<u>\$ 354.14</u>	<u>\$ 354.14</u>

MAINTENANCE FUND

Cash Balance on Jan. 1, 1950	\$1,187.50	
Paid In by Landowners in Simonsen and Fee Watersheds	1,820.00	
Balance on Hand Dec. 31, 1950		\$3,007.50
	<u>\$3,007.50</u>	<u>\$3,007.50</u>

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