

Conservation Tillage On The Rise

By Doug Cling

More and more acres in the corn belt are being

converted to conservation tillage methods every year.

A recent survey indicated that more than 60 percent of

Iowa farmland is being prepared by methods other than mold board plowing.

Six of the most popular conservation tillage systems are based on: 1) chisel plow, 2) heavy tandem disc, 3) offset disc, 4) no-till slot planter, 5) till-planter and 6) "side-winder," or strip tilling. No-till and till-plant systems leave the most residue on the surface (100 percent and 80 percent respectively) while the others leave in the area of 50-75 percent on the surface.

However, since most of those are primary operations frequently the amount of surface residue is greatly reduced by secondary tillage operations prior to planting. When speaking of conservation tillage thoughts usually go first to saving the soil. Although not the only thing conserved, it is probably the most important. Without soil we have nothing. Although it is hard to imagine, many of the desert areas of the Middle East are thought to have

once been very fertile lands many years ago in Biblical times. Other important savings are found in areas of moisture, labor, machinery investment, and high priced fuel.

However, in spite of all those plus factors many myths about these modern farming methods offer old-fashioned farmers various excuses not to use them. One of the first is that they don't yield as well as conventional methods. Several university studies have failed to indicate such a trend. In fact two of the farmers who have topped the 300 b.p.a. mark use conservation tillage methods. James Corkle of Nebraska uses a Buffalo till-planter and Herman Warsaw of McLean county, Illinois, who produced 338 b.p.a. in 1975 uses a chisel plow. The field that produced that record yield had been in corn for 14 years of conservation tillage and had produced over 200 b.p.a. since 1971.

Or how about Dekalb County Illinois farmer Ken Rehn. In Dekalb County, where 97½ percent of the land is classified as prime farmland by soil conservation service standards, the general attitude is that they don't need conservation tillage. However Rehn, who raises 1,000 acres of corn finds that his no-till corn generally yields 11-14 percent higher than his conventional corn. Many times farmers are more worried about yield than profit. Even if the yields weren't as good, because of all of the savings in other areas, no-till could still be

just as profitable even at 10-15 bushel per acre less.

The chisel plow has been widely used in this area on bean stubble for several years. Only in the last few years has its widespread use on corn ground begun to catch on. Warsaw, who has used this method for 16 years, has seen the organic matter content of his soil raise to as high as 5.2 percent on a farm that was badly eroded and abused when he originally bought it.

Many farmers are still skeptical about adapting their farming operation to one or a combination of these methods. However, the facts show it, the trend is starting, the first domino has been knocked over starting a chain reaction throughout the corn belt towards total conservation tillage.

Plan to attend the conservation tillage day at Southeastern Community College in Burlington Wednesday, January 24. Visit with farmers who have used it, manufacturers who sell the machines and a question and answer period with a panel of farmers. Sessions at 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. or attend all day.



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Soil Conservation Short Course At ISU

The 34th annual short course for soil conservation district commissioners will be January 16-17 in Scheman Continuing Education Building at Iowa State University.

Min Amemiya, extension agronomist, said registration is at 8 a.m. The first day's program begins at 10. Topics during the two days include crop production outlook, corn borers, marketing alternatives, ethanol production, prime land, Resources Conservation Act, conservation tillage, and economics of soil conservation.

Iowa State University staff and soil conservation officials and commissioners

will participate. The banquet is at 6 p.m. Tuesday in the Sun Room of Memorial Union. Charles Black, ISU agronomist and Charles F. Curtiss, distinguished professor in agriculture, will

S. E. Iowa Farm News, Thursday, January 11, 1978 -- Page 19 speak on "Agriculture in the Service, USDA, State Public Arena."

ISU offers the program with the State Soil Conservation Committee, Iowa Department of Soil Conservation, Soil Conservation

Department of Agriculture, Iowa Association of Soil Conservation District Commissioners and the Sioux City Chamber of Commerce.

Energy, time savings rate high for no-till

By **BOB SOGARD**

Hawk Eye Farm Editor

NORTHFIELD — There are several impressive things about the no-tillage cornfields examined by some 50 farmers and conservationists in the north part of Des Moines county last week, but energy savings heads that list. And time savings would be a close second.

John Wagenbach, Burlington Rt. 2, and Horace Sutton, with a demonstration field north of Burlington on US 61, both reported fuel consumption at five gallons per acre for conventional row cropping and half a gallon per acre for no-till fields.

Doug Cling, who farms east of this settlement and five miles northeast of Mediapolis, didn't figure his fuel but he and the others devoted one hour per acre to conventional plantings, but only 15 minutes an acre for no-till. His fields were in corn two consecutive years, as were Wagenbach's.

Cling said he sees a \$30 to \$40 per acre saving on the 110 acres in no-till, and uses his 70-horsepower tractor rather than his 110-horsepower vehicle.

Jim Howell, vocational agriculture teacher at Mediapolis high school, sent two of his students on the tour last Thursday to measure one-thousandths of an acre, weigh the corn, measure the moisture and compute prospective yields.

Corn in the FFA plot in Mediapolis, in its second year of no-till, had 31% to 34% moisture, populations of 15,000 to 22,000 and indicated yields of 150 to 153 bushels per acre.

Wagenbach, who planted no-till on May 27 because a 50-acre field was too wet, has two types of soil in the field. One was described by district con-



Mat of alfalfa protects soil in the Horace Sutton demonstration corn plots north of Burlington.

servationist Howard Bright as a sandy type but the biggest share is "gumbo" — bottomland farmers say must be fall-plowed. It is rated as about an 85-bushel per acre corn-producer.

It apparently has 103 bushels in prospect.

Cling's field, planted May 25, has a population of 21,000 plants per acre on a planting rate of 23,900. It has an estimated yield of 153 bushels per acre of full-season corn.

Operating cost for conventional tillage corn, Cling figured, was \$17.30 per

acre, compared with \$6 for no-till, just spraying and planting. Herbicide costs were \$10.96 per acre for conventional cropping and \$16.22 for no-till. The latter included one pint of Paraquat, three pounds of Bladex and one pound of Aatrex.

Weed control looked good in the area visited by the tour group, prior to a hog roast at the Cling place.

Wagenbach figured higher herbicide costs, \$20 per acre conventional and \$29 for no-till, and operating costs totaling \$24.90 for regular cropping vs. \$9.80 for no-till. That's \$44.90 against no-till cost of \$38.80. These figures don't include land charges and seed cost which are the same.

Cleanest fields may be Sutton's. The two fields, totaling 40 acres, were planted in standing alfalfa with full-season varieties at a population of 22,300, on June 9 and 10. There appeared to be little attrition. The herbicide "recipe" was Paraquat, 3.6 pints; X-77 spreader, 1 pint; Aatrex 4L, 5 pints; 2-4-D amine, 0.8-pint; Lasso, 5 pints, and water.

The operating costs, conventional vs. no-till, were \$21.10 per acre and \$9.80.

Bright said Cling is considering buying a no-till planter; if he does, Cling may do some custom planting for farmers who want to experiment with small acreages of no-till planting.

Jim Ranum, Louisa district conservationist, said there are four farmers in his county using no-till and he expects several more next year. "There's a lot of interest, but most of them didn't want to wait their turn for a no-till planter because wet conditions made planting so late," he said.

Environmental Learning Center For S.E. Iowans?

Geode Wonderland RC & D is working with a group of citizens who believe that this area of the state needs a center where people of all ages can learn to appreciate the natural environment in a recreational setting - one which will be open for use throughout the year. It will be a "Living Textbook" where teachers and students can relate to the environment in a variety of learning experiences.

A steering committee composed of people from different backgrounds and occupations has met and discussed the needs and potentials for such a center. An opinionnaire is included in this issue for the public at large.

Development of the center will proceed at the rate that interest grows and manifests itself in action by individuals and groups. Anyone having an intense interest in seeing such a center for this area will find the steering committee receptive and pleasant to work with.

A PUBLIC ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITIES CENTER IS:

A. A "Living Textbook" - a place where teachers and students can relate to the environment in learning experiences.

B. A place where the public can learn to appreciate the works of nature in a recreational setting.

C. A natural area set aside and protected from commercial or private development to be dedicated to environmental appreciation and enjoyment.

D. A setting where groups from the educational, industrial, business, government, and public sectors may convene in an enjoyable, recreational environment.

OPINIONNAIRE

1. I WILL SUPPORT A PROJECT TO DEVELOP AN ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITIES CENTER

- a. Taking time to act on a sub-committee
- b. Soliciting local support of the project
- c. Financial assistance

2. I WOULD USE SUCH A CENTER IF IT WERE LOCATED:

- a. Within a two-hour drive of my home
- b. Within a one-hour drive of my home
- c. Within a half-hour drive of my home

(Check one or more)

3. MY PARTICULAR INTEREST IN THIS PROJECT IS:

NAME _____ PHONE _____

(Business)

ADDRESS _____

(Home)

_____ Zip _____

Please return to P. O. Box 208, West Burlington, Iowa 52655

Southwest Iowa Farm News, Mediapolis, 11-2-78

New Employee AT At SCS Office

Oren Champ, conservation technician with the Des Moines county soil conservation service, will be retiring as of January 1 after eight years with the county office, said district soil conservationist Howard Bright. Replacing him will be Bill Baugh, to begin his job as conservation technician with Des Moines county on December 3.

Baugh has been with the Louisa county SCS office for two years, and previously served at West Union in Fayette county, Northwood in Worth county, and Ottumwa, where he began with the SCS in 1965.

He and his wife Marian now reside in Wapello and have three children - a daughter Shannon, seven, and twins Gerald and

Geneva, 11.

Baugh said he will be involved in working with area farmers to lay out terracing, ponds, erosion control structures, and recommending practices, as well as designing and drafting.

Elect Commissioners

Doug Cling, Mediapolis, and Sam Jennison, rural Burlington, were elected as soil conservation district commissioners in the general election November 7. They will serve six-year terms, replacing Dwight Stucker and Clyde Scherer.

The other three commissioners on the five-member board are Ray Pilling, Joe Beckman, and Rex Troute.

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Southeast Iowa Farm News, 12-7-78

New Era, 11-30-78

Farmers Fight Soil Erosion

Since October 1, several landowners in Des Moines county are fighting off soil erosion. The Clarence Reid, Arlene Hale, Cora Miller, and Ruth Ogg farms just southwest of Yarmouth have whipped erosion on 103 acres of land by building tile outlet terraces. Working together in this project, they are saving 412 tons of topsoil per year or 7,848 bushels of topsoil per year.

Other landowners are combatting erosion with terraces and sediment and water control basins. The Mildred Blakeway farm will save 140 tons of topsoil on 10 acres of cropland.

Phil Lotz will be saving 105 tons of topsoil on seven acres by using sediment and water control basins and seeding the entire field to grass.

Each year Mark and Andy Brader will prevent 58 tons of topsoil from reaching Flint River from 12 acres of their land by using sediment and water control structures.

Earl Massner cuts soil losses from a 13 acre field by 144 tons each year. He built 3,400 feet of tile outlet terraces this year.

Each year Roger Krieger will have stopped 21 tons of topsoil from entering and polluting Spring Creek. He built 1,400 feet of tile outlet terraces this year.

Marvin Lange continues to halt erosion on his farm by building terraces and using minimum tillage. The 5,550 feet of terraces that he built this year will save 80 tons of topsoil each year from 40 acres of land.

Dwight Stucker, chairman of the Des Moines County Soil Conservation District, stops 23 tons of topsoil from leaving three acres of steep hillsides on his farm near Prairie Grove having built sediment and water control basins.

Henry Huiskamp has built two ponds for road crossings and erosion control on his farm just west of Mediapolis.

Clarence Reid, Arlene Hale, Cora Miller, Ruth Ogg, Mark and Andy Brader, Marvin Lange, and Dwight Stucker received a total of \$20,609 cost share funds from ASCS.

Mildred Blakeway, Phil Lotz, Earl Massner, and Roger Krieger received a total of \$8,134 cost share funds from the state of Iowa.

New Era, Mediapolis, 11-16-78

Farmers Install Soil-Saving Terraces

With the crops out, farmers are now thinking about soil conservation measures - and several area farmers are now installing terraces and building ponds, said Howard Bright, district soil conservationist.

Breder Bros., Mediapolis, have built 1950 feet of sediment and water control structures, reducing their top soil loss by 58 tons per year on 12 acres, according to Bright.

Earl Massner, Rt. 1 Mediapolis, has installed 3900 feet of terraces, said Bright, saving 144 tons of topsoil per year in an 11½ acre field.

Long-term agreements are now being worked on by Ken Wehage and Eric Massner, both of Rt. 2 Mediapolis, for constructing terraces.

Other projects include grass waterway drainage tiles on the Dennis Massner farm, Rt. 2 Mediapolis, and two ponds to

control gully erosion on the Henry Huiskamp farm, rural Morning Sun.

Bright said they are "just starting" to halt soil erosion in Des Moines county, but pointed out they are already "saving tons of soil loss per year."

an additional 1.3 billion tons of soil before "acceptable" levels of loss can be reached. He declared that nearly 42 percent of the 335 million acres of cropland harvested in 1975 were not receiving adequate treatment for soil erosion control.

The SCS study found, though, that it is technically feasible for the U.S. to produce the food and fiber necessary to meet projected demands for the year 2000 and still reduce annual soil losses from water action to three tons per acre.

Adding to the bleakness of the current situation, the SCS reported that more than 1.4 million acres of land were damaged by wind erosion in the Great Plains during the last two months of 1977. That represents more than a 25 percent increase compared to the same period in 1976. The Southern Plains states, especially Texas, were hardest hit, accounting for 83 percent of the damaged acreage. Texas reported damage to 920,000 acres, compared to 111,600 acres in the same period in the previous year. More than 90 percent of the land damaged was cropland.

The SCS attributed the increased wind damages primarily to conditions

associated with the plant residues. The recent prolonged drought, such as spate of cold, wet weather across most of the nation lack of soil moisture, poor plant growth and inadequate indicated, however, that the

drought cycle is coming to an end. If so, soil erosion from wind could drop dramatically in 1978.

New Era, 12-7-78

SOIL EROSION

Keeping topsoil in place ranks high as a resource concern among Iowans, according to results of public opinion meetings and surveys by the state's 100 soil conservation districts. Other top-ranking issues include water quality, concern about how the land is used, and concern about the land's ability to continue to produce food.

"Each district held a public meeting and tried in other ways to get people's views on resource issues," said Charles McLaughlin, a Hancock county farmer and president of the Iowa Association of Soil Conservation District Commissioners. In total, more than 8,000 people were involved.

The soil districts, USDA's Soil Conservation Service, the Iowa Department of Soil Conservation and other government units are now looking at the results. They'll use them to develop resource programs at county, state and federal levels.

It is all being done as part of the Resources Conservation Act of 1977 which calls for a detailed study of the condition of soil and water resources every five years. The act also requires that a comprehensive resource program be developed every five years. The act also requires that a comprehensive resource program be developed every five years. Part of the requirement is that the program be responsive to public concerns.

"We ask people to tell us if they had a major concern about 19 different resource issues," said SCS state conservationist William Brune. "Now soil conservation districts are using local public opinion to help determine

which problems they should put a priority on."

Statewide, other issues people were most concerned about included government ability to deal with resource problems, prime farmland, water supplies, rural development for irrigation, and degradation of wetlands.

Southeast Iowa Farm News, 12-7-78

Losing Ground

Soil is being washed away on the nation's cropland at an alarmingly high average rate of nine tons per acre per year—nearly twice the rate considered acceptable by soil conservationists.

That information, released recently by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, was included in the Soil

Conservation Service's (SCS) new study of erosion and sedimentation, made as part of the agency's involvement in the still-incomplete 1975 National Water Assessment of the U.S. Water Resources Council.

The SCS examined water-caused soil erosion across the U.S. It found that average annual erosion ranges from a high of 23 tons of soil per acre in the Lower Mississippi region to a low of one ton per acre in California.

When data for the study were collected in 1975, the nation's soil losses on croplands totaled a staggering 2.8 billion tons! In the absence of soil conservation treatment, losses that year would have reached 3.8 billion tons. Dr. M. Rupert Cutler, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture said, however, that conservation practices need broader application to save



Pasture program

A pasture management and renovation meeting will be held at 2 p.m. Friday in the Geode Wonderland RC&D office in the Machinists building on US 34 east of Middletown.

District conservationist Howard Bright said the meeting is open to all farmers and those interested in learning

more about pasture management.

The subjects will be eradication of multiflora rose in pastures, renovating a pasture by using an interseeder, organizing an active committee, and goals and objectives for the coming year in pasture management.

Sponsors are the Des Moines county soil conservation district and Geode Wonderland RC&D.

RC&D Group Plans Conservation Day

Plans for a Conservation Tillage and Pasture Improvement Conference sponsored by Geode Wonderland Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Area were announced recently by chairman Maurice Krebill of Donnellson.

"This is the third year we have sponsored this event," Krebill said. "The conference will take place at the Southeastern Community College on January 24, 1979."

Featured speaker of the conservation day will be Ernest Behn, farmer and conservationist from Boone county. Behn has used conservation tillage for about 15 years and is a noted speaker on the subject. Soil conservation agronomist Ernie Hintz of Des Moines will bring those in attendance the latest tillage information.

Keith Williams, farmer and banker from Decatur county, will relate experience in pasture renovation and management. His farm was an award winning entry in the Iowa Chapter contest, of the Soil Conservation Society of America in 1978.

On the program to explain the importance of conservation practices in the clean water (P.L. 208) program, will be Larry Vance, executive director of the Iowa Department of Soil Conservation.

An exhibit area showing the latest machinery, equipment, and materials for conservation farming will be a part of the show.

Five hundred or more farmers from the RC&D area are expected at this year's event, Krebill concluded.

It's Only Natural...by George

Native Iowa Grasses Help Birds

Native grass prairies are making a comeback in southern Iowa as pastures for cattle, according to a Wildlife Management institute report. The U.S. Soil Conservation Service says that songbirds, game birds, cattle, farmers and wildlife enthusiasts may all be winners if recent interest in native prairie grasses continues.

In the last six years, the SCS reports, farmers have seeded more than 4,000 acres to native "warm season" grasses that produce excellent pasture for cattle during summer months. A recent study shows that the plantings also produce an environment that dramatically increases the nesting successes of both game and songbirds.

The SCS reported in its SOIL CONSERVATION magazine that ringnecked pheasants built a third more nests in switchgrass, one of the native grasses being studied, than in an alfalfa and orchardgrass pasture. And the number of successful nests were high, thereby producing more chicks. Biologists located 38 nests on 138 acres of switchgrass and estimated that nearly half the nest were successful, which is definitely on the good side. The successful nests averaged one per 8½ acres of switchgrass.

The wildlife biologists located only 11 nests on 66 acres of the "cool season" pasture of alfalfa and orchardgrass. Furthermore, all of those nests were destroyed during normal hay mowing in the spring and eight of the 11 hens were destroyed during normal hay mowing in the spring and eight of the 11 hens were killed.

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The key to success for wildlife, the study in-

level management that farmers use to maintain native grasses such as switchgrass, indiangrass and big bluestem. That includes not grazing until early July and not grazing closer than eight inches to the ground. The planned grazing assures that the pastures are not being grazed during the heavy nesting periods of May and June, and that cover is left for the following winter and spring.

In contrast "cool season" pastures with such grasses as brome, orchard, and bluegrass reach their peak production during the spring and fall and are grazed or mowed during the nesting season. By rotating cattle between the two pasture types, farmers use each when growth and forage quality are at their peak and simultaneously provide adequate cover for wildlife. Those results indicate that as more native grasses are planted, both livestock and wildlife benefit.

CERTIFIED WILD- FLOWERS PRODUCED.....

Cerified varieties of native wildflowers are being released after 10 years of cooperative tests by the U.S. Soil Conservation Service (SCS), the Kansas and Nebraska State Agricultural Experiment Stations and the Nebraska Department of Roads.

The plants, according to the SCS, control erosion, are beautiful, and provide wildlife food and cover. The newly domesticated wildflowers include purple prairie clover, pitcher sage and thickspike gayfeather. Authorities expect the

plants to be used initially to beautify and stabilize road right-of-ways.

The SCS's Plant Materials Center at Manhattan, Kansas produced and distributed foundation seed to selected seed growers in the fall of 1976, and limited amounts became available to the public in the fall of 1978. Assuming a good growing season, together with some improved methods of propagation which are now being employed, additional quantities, in somewhat larger proportions, will again be available in the fall of this year.

DID YOU KNOW?

Common garden snails have 14,175 teeth located in their tongue in 135 rows, with each row containing 105 teeth.

BOOZY BIRDS....

Nipping too much on "high spirits" is definitely an international problem, and it seems that humans aren't the only ones involved. Take, for example, what recently happened in Sweden.

Swedish residents along the southern portion of the country have witnessed an inordinate number of intoxicated waxwings this

winter. According to local ornithologists and eyewitnesses, the berry-loving birds have apparently over-indulged in their favorite food - the rowenberry.

Because the berries were in the process of fermenting, the waxwings became "high" after consuming large quantities of the fruit.

Observers report that the inebriated birds were found sitting in the middle of roadways, flying erratically and dive-bombing wind-press charges against the drunk and disorderly birds.

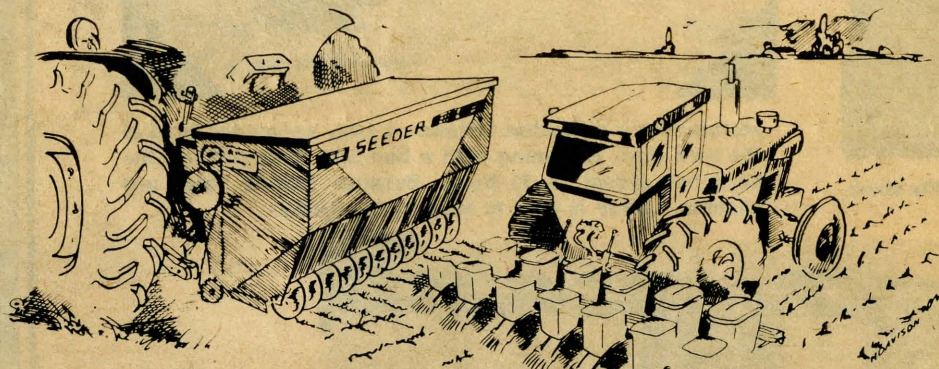
shields.

Officials do not plan to

Boy Struck by car

Eight year old Eric Smith sustained minor injuries Thursday, Jan. 4 when he darted between two cars and was struck by a third. Eric is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Lamar Smith, 418 Broadway. He was treated for ankle and rib injuries at Burlington Medical Center. The accident occurred 3:34 p.m. Driver of the car was James Riley, 19, of Ramsey.

CONSERVATION TILLAGE



PASTURE CONFERENCE

AGRI-SPORTS ARENA

Southeastern Community College

Gear Avenue - West Burlington

JANUARY 24

Doors Open 9:00 A.M.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

"More Profit from Less Tillage" - Ernie Behn

"Pastures Can Pay" - John Heintz

"Tillage Methods & Chemicals" - Ernie Hintz

"208 and Tillage" - Larry Vance

FARMER PANEL DISCUSSION

Tickets \$3⁰⁰

Information can be obtained from

Soil Conservation Districts and County Extension

Offices in Louisa, Henry, Lee and Des Moines Counties.

Southeast Iowa Farm News, 1-11-79

Annual Tillage Conference And Pasture Renovation Day

Southeast Iowa
Farm News
1-11-79

The Third Annual Conference on Conservation Tillage and Pasture Improvement will be held from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., January 24, 1979, in the Agri-Sports Arena of Southeastern

Community college in West Burlington. Co-sponsoring the 1979 event will be Geode Wonderland Resource Conservation and Development Area (RC&D) and the soil conservation

districts in Des Moines, Henry, Lee and Louisa counties.

Featured speaker of the tillage day will be Ernest Behn, of Boone, a well known speaker and a farmer with fifteen years experience in conservation tillage methods. Behn will be assisted by SCS agronomist Ernie Hintz of Des Moines and a panel of four southeast Iowa farmers with tillage experience.

Also featured on this year's program will be John Heintz, managing partner in one of Iowa's largest ranches near Kellerton. Heintz will present a program of interest to farmers with pasture problems, an agricultural area of high interest to conservation districts.

Larry Vance, newly appointed director of the Iowa Department of Soil Conservation will be on hand to explain how tillage methods and pasture improvement fit into the Federal 208 - Clean Water Program in Iowa.

Luncheon will be served to those in attendance. Doors open at 9:00 a.m. Cost of the event is three dollars at the door.

New Era, Mediapolis, 1-11-79 Elect SCD Officers For 1979

Ray Pilling, Mediapolis, was elected chairman of the SCD board and Joseph Beckman, Sperry, was elected vice-chairman at the organizational meeting of the SCD commissioners January 4.

New commissioners for the Des Moines county soil conservation district are Sam Jennison, Rt. 3 Burlington, and Douglas Cling, Mediapolis. Rex Troute, Rt. 1 Burlington, remains as a commissioner.

Appointed to offices were - Harold Linder, secretary; Horace Sutton, Jr., treasurer; Susan Baldwin, assistant commissioner; and Barbara Bonnett, assistant commissioner.

The SCD group meets the fourth Wednesday of each month. There will not be another meeting in January, however.

At the February meeting, Bill McGill, state field representative of the state department of soil conservation, will address the group.

Tillage seminars

Two major conservation tillage conferences are scheduled in southeast Iowa next week.

First will be in the Agri-Sports Arena of Southeastern Community college, West Burlington, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Jan. 24. It will be both a tillage and pasture improvement meeting and will be sponsored by the Geode Wonderland Resource Conservation and Development Area, the SCS, soil conservation districts and Iowa State Extension service, Davenport area.

Participants will include John Heintz, Grand River, ranch manager in Decatur county and soil conservation district commissioner, speaking on Pastures Can Pay; Ernie Hintz, SCS agronomist, on Tillage Methods and Chemicals; Larry Vance, director, Iowa Dept. of Soil Conservation, on (Public Law) 208 and Tillage.

After lunch, Ernie Behn, Boone county farmer and former SCS employee, will speak on More Profit from Less Tillage and there will be a farmer panel discussion. Members will be Doug Cling, Mediapolis Rt. 2; Wayne Ertzinger, Rt. 1; Wayne Fredrick, Cedar county, and Noel Hoops, Muscatine.

Sam Jennison, Des Moines county SCD commissioner, will summarize the meeting.

Lunch and registration tickets will cost \$3. There will be exhibits of planters, chemicals, tillage equipment and interseeders.

The other conference will be held in the Ottumwa Coliseum Jan. 26, sponsored by Chariton Valley and Pathfinders RC&Dk. It also will include displays of minimum and no-till farm equipment.

There will be a farmer panel composed of Ed Klodt, Ottumwa; Gene Ferguson, Oskaloosa; Tom Krumholtz,

Fairfield, and Raymond Townsend, Bloomfield.

In addition to the panel, there will be four other speakers and information on fertilizers and pesticides. Tickets may be secured from area Soil Conservation Service offices.

Klodt does most of his tillage with a chisel plow. Ferguson has used a Bufalo-till planter since 1971 on 120 acres of cropland. This machine is available in a sweep or slot version, the sweep providing shallow tillage of a 14-inch strip and the slot version opens a narrow slit in the soil to allow planting.

Krumholtz has used no-till farming many years. Townsend has a mulch tiller as his primary tillage tool and works the ground with the mulch tiller in the fall when conditions permit.

Area conservation staffs have noted a rapid rise in recent years of interest concernign no-till planting. The system is recommended as a method of controlling soil erosion by water and wind with a resulting economic savings to the farmer through fewer trips over the cropland.

Conservation technician awarded

William Baugh, new Des Moines county soil conservation technician, has been awarded a Special Achievement award by the Soil Conservation Service.

"Through his efforts, the quantity of conservation practices applied doubled in the last year that he worked in Louisa county," said district conservationist Howard Bright.

"Most of Mr. Baugh's success is attributed to working with groups of farmers to solve a common erosion problem. He hopes that this approach is just as effective in working with landowners in Des Moines county. We feel lucky to get him in this county."

Baugh, 34, has been with the SCS nearly 14 years, the past two years with district conservationist Jim Ranum, at Wapello. He began his soil-saving ca-



William Baugh

all surface water is drained through an inlet and tile within 48 hours, time enough to prevent crop damage."

Grassed waterways are used where terraces may not be feasible, Baugh said. Other conservation practices such as farm ponds, erosion control structures and sediment and water control basins are widely used in the county. He suggests farmstead and feedlot windbreaks with a minimum of three rows of trees and shrubs on the north and west sides of buildings.

Bright said the soil commissioners have established a priority list in attacking erosion problems. High on the list are the Roscoe watershed on which Baugh will work and the Franklin Lake area, to which Bright has assigned himself.

S.O.S. (Save our soil)

By Doug Cling

One hundred years ago the State of Iowa had an average topsoil depth of 12-16 inches. But now that figure has fallen to only six to eight inches in many areas and some in the four to six inch range. SCS figures indicate that over 10 million acres of Iowa has lost more than half of its topsoil in the past 100 years. Most of the topsoil is gone on another one and a half million acres which are more severely eroded.

In the corn belt, losses averaged from 15 up to 100 tons per acre each year in a recent survey. At that rate we are losing an inch of topsoil every 12 years. With only six to eight inches left you can see the cause for alarm. Another point of view is that at an average loss rate of 13 tons per acre would convert to somewhere in the neighborhood of two bushels of soil lost for every bushel of corn produced.

I realize that some of these figures are pretty blunt and hard to visualize. I know I find it hard to believe losing a dump truckload of soil from every acre of land each year. Some people probably still don't believe it but, to them I ask, where did all the topsoil we used to have go and what are we going to do when the topsoil we have left is gone?

People get awfully upset when they wonder what it would be like if all of the oil and natural gas resources are ever depleted. Scientists and engineers are already experimenting with new methods of heating homes and trapping energy so, society gives a slight sigh of relief and depends on them to come up with a fool proof replacement before the day of reckoning comes.

But what would society do without a productive agriculture. I doubt if the most optimistic scientist could ever come up with a solar plant protein collector

to trap food from the sun's rays or a nuclear food fiber reactor to form billions of food particles. Man depends upon the soil for food and survival.

I will close with a quote taken from a recent article in the Des Moines Register, 1979 by New York Daily News.

Houston, Tex. - "The American Farmer's rush to produce more food is causing soil erosion at a rate not seen since the Depression an expert said here Thursday.

"We are losing one 120-acre farm a day down the mouth of the Mississippi River alone," said James McHale former secretary of agriculture for Pennsylvania, at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science here."

More and more farmers are turning to soil conservation methods every day. If we all do our part we can turn this problem around before it's too late.

Questions about No-till Farming? Write to me c/o the Farm News and I'll answer them or find an answer from a reliable source and publish them in future columns.

SCD Office Has Busy February

Several meetings are scheduled for February, announced Howard Bright, district soil conservationist for Des Moines county.

February 6 marks the date for the annual meeting of contractors and landowners, to be held at the Dodgeville Pub at 9 a.m. Reservations can be made by calling the county Soil Conservation District immediately.

Two no-till meetings are planned, part of the district's program to encourage no-till planting this spring. The SCD and Dennis Spitznogle will host a meeting at K&M Tractor and

New Era, 2-1-79

Implement Co., Mediapolis, February 22 at 7 p.m. Bob Jones, Ortho chemical representative, will be present to talk about no-till farming methods and use of the no-till planter.

A 1 p.m. meeting will be held at Agri-Power in Danville February 26. No-till farming methods, use of the planter, and spraying methods will be discussed.

SCD commissioners will meet at 7 p.m. February 28 at the SCD office, federal building, Burlington. With new commissioners on the board, new programs and activities are expected to be discussed.

New Era, 2-8-79

SCD Special Meeting Today

Des Moines county soil conservation district commissioners will be holding a special meeting at the SCS office, Federal Building, Burlington, this morning, February 8, at 10 a.m.

Conservation practices for the county farm property, located by the county care facility west of Burlington, will be discussed. Recommendations for conservation practices will be forwarded to the county board of supervisors.

Conservation practices, particularly no-till farming methods, will be discussed for the IAAP ground which is leased to farmers. Commissioners will discuss the possibility of requiring no-till farming on the IAAP land, said Howard Bright, district conservationist. The commissioners decision will be

given to the IAAP agronomist, who will review the recommendation and forward his opinion to the Corps of Engineers. If no-till is decided upon as a requirement, it can be written into the lease for 1980, said Bright.

The public is invited to attend.

Land to be leased

IAAP could become major no-till experiment

By **BOB SOGARD**
Farm Editor

Making bullets and grenades doesn't require all of the 19,000 acres in the

Iowa Army Ammunition Plant reservation.

Between the munitions buildings and on the perimeter are at least 7,000

acres of land, leased to farmers for farming and grazing.

Those 7,000 acres could be one big no-tillage experiment by 1984 if an

idea of the Des Moines county soil district commissioners is successful. And it will start with about one-fifth of the land NOT going under the plow next year, IAAP military authorities agree.

Executive officer Capt. Maurice Peterson said he, plant agronomist Winston Cooper and the commanding officer, Col. Donald Reinhard, all agree that securing approval of the plan shouldn't be difficult.

"We're kind of excited about it," he added. "After all, while we want our leaseholders to do well, we don't have to make a lot of money on this land."

"We're pretty confident we can sell this to Development and Readiness Command (DARCOM). We'll rewrite the tract management plans, submit them to Rock Island for approval and then to Omaha where the Corps of Engineers handles the actual bid lettings."

Leases are for five years; 1,100 to 1,600 acres are up for bids each year. Field development work, such as culverts and driveways, fertility programs and conservation projects are written into the tract plans prior to each letting. Peterson said the last terracing project on the schedule was completed last year.

The commissioners adopted a proposal last week, recommending that all leases on land at the plant specify no-till practices. This means that plows, disks and harrows would be "out." Specialized planters, sprayers, and pasture interseeders would be "in."

Sam Jennison, one of the commissioners, said that no-till cropping is the most promising way to save soil and moisture, especially since the Soil Conservation service only gets about \$16,000 per year to use for cost-sharing funds to help build terraces. The ACP program allocation, administered by the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS), is \$49,490 for 1979. It permits terrace construction and compares with \$59,900 allotted last year.

No-till should have a full-scale test, he said, and all that land at the IAAP would be an ideal place. Most tract

plans at the ordinance plant call for crop rotation, so corn can only be grown two or three out of five years.

But with no-till, it may be possible to go to continuous corn/soybeans which would make the leases more attractive to bidders. Usually, only four or five farmers are successful in bidding for the tracts.

"I will see Dean (Lee) Kolmer at Iowa State university the middle of March. If we could get ISU to do a real study of the operation, then we'd have something to go on," Jennison said. Kolmer is dean of the ISU college of agriculture.

Jennison has talked to Prof. H.L. Self, who's in charge of outlying farms for ISU and he said Self was enthused at the project's potential.

Bids on six cropland tracts totaling 1,087 acres and one 67-acre tract for grazing cattle will be opened at 1 p.m. Mar. 5, in the IAAP recreation hall. These will be five-year leases, expiring April 1, 1984 and will permit the practices used in the past.

Howard Bright, SCS district conservationist, will talk about no-till farming before the bid opening, to inform next year's potential bidders of the special techniques needed and the advantages.

Two of the commissioners, Joe Beckman and Doug Cling, have experience with no-till farming. So does Horace Sutton, long-time commission treasurer, who planted corn in two 20-acre fields north of Burlington, even though they had a hip-high stand of alfalfa.

The Sutton fields, planted June 10 and 11, were harvested late, but produced 143 bushels an acre, Bright said. Cling said he planted 84 acres "in the trash" of the 1977 crop and yields ranged from 100 to 150 bushels per acre. His father, Roger, planted about 40 acres in no-till.

Commissioner Rex Troute said he left a plot unplowed last fall and plans to experiment with some no-till corn this year. "I don't know how I can push conservation tillage if I don't do it myself," he said.

Also last week, agriculture and con-

vention committees of the Burlington Area Chamber of Commerce met with Bright and Jennison to consider the potential of the IAAP land use plan.

The committee members voted to support the no-till demonstration project, with the idea that "we need to get Iowa State university interested in this as a research program."

Also cited was the possibility of bringing the National Farm Progress Show here in 1983. The agricultural and agribusiness show was in Illinois last year, will be in Indiana next fall and will be in Iowa in 1980. It's slated for a Story county site and is sponsored by Wallace's Farmer.

The soil commissioners also supported an effort to convert the county farm to no-till. Beckman and Cling will meet with the county farm advisory committee and county supervisors and try to convince them to require the leaseholder to convert to no-till, starting in 1980.

The supervisors also will be asked to use \$20,000 in revenue sharing funds to start a project to eliminate roadside ditch sedimentation. The erosion control program would mean using a no-till planter, pasture interseeder and associated equipment to provide services for farmers who want to try no-till.

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The Hawk Eye, 2-19-79 No-till topic

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Urges No-Till

"If Spring Arrives"

By Doug Cling

With days on the calendar rolling by, farmers are getting anxious for the arrival of Spring. The melting snow and warming temperatures add to the anticipation.

The real sign that the planting season is just around the corner is the number of grower meetings sponsored by seed, fertilizer, chemical, and machinery dealers, pertaining to their respective categories in the crop production process. One such meeting was held at K & M Implement Co. recently, promoting the use of no-till farming operations.

Just three years ago, the first of these no-till meetings was held to see if there would be enough interest in trial plots for Ortho Chemical Company to sponsor a planter. Today no-till is still not used on a large scale in the county but, if we continue to follow the trend that has been established, Des Moines county could become one of the premier conservation farming counties in the state.

Last year, area farmers toured more than 300 acres of no-till corn fields and now, many of those same farmers are making arrangements to get into the no-till act on their own farms. It seems

very safe at this point to predict that last year's 300 acre no-till figure will easily double itself.

What's more, plans are in operation to convert the entire IAAP farm and holdings to no-till leases. The total conversion process would take five years, resulting in the neighborhood of 7,000 acres of no-till row-crops. While the land would be operated by individual farmers, it is also planned that Iowa State University could make extensive research of no-till practices at the site.

This would involve such things as numerous soil tests, records of rainfall and thermal units, yield tests, and overall efficiency as compared to old fashioned tillage methods.

Many farmers are still skeptical of no-till. While I've been in many a "coffee shop argument" over the subject, I can understand their thoughts, for only three years ago I was thinking along the same lines that they are.

That is why there are no-till meetings, that is why there are no-till tours, that is why I'm writing this article, and that is why the Soil Conservation Commission hopes to get involved with I. S. U. on reasearch.

Yes, you can read articles until your eyes hurt, and listen to crop scientists till your ears ring but, except for first-hand experience probably one of the best ways to find out about something is to talk with a good ol' farmer who's already done it.

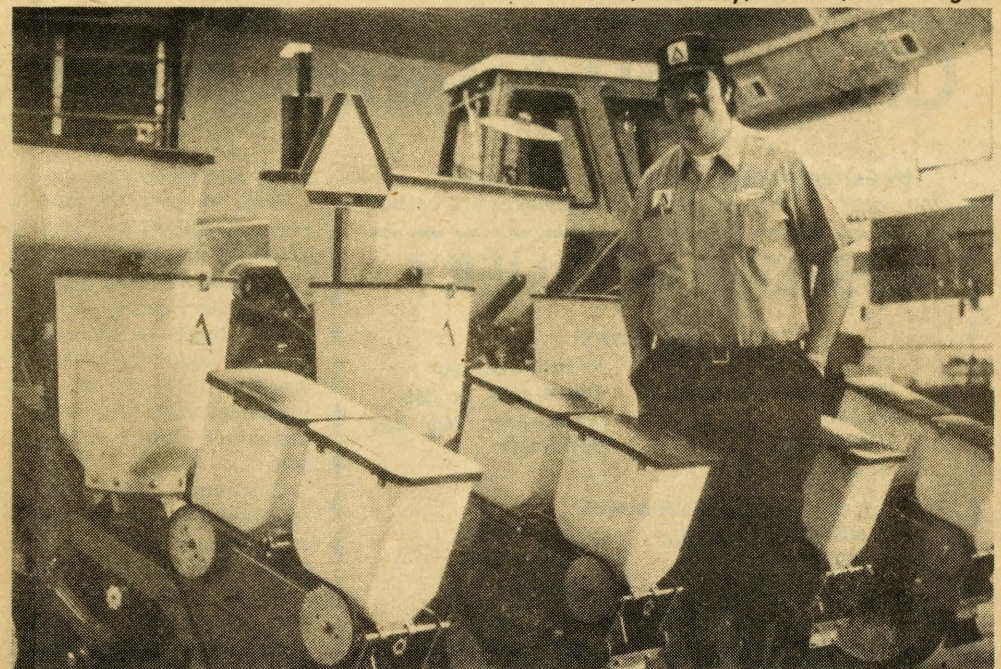
He won't use big words and he's not trying to make a buck selling something. If you didn't attend one of the area no-till meetings you

missed one such opportunity.

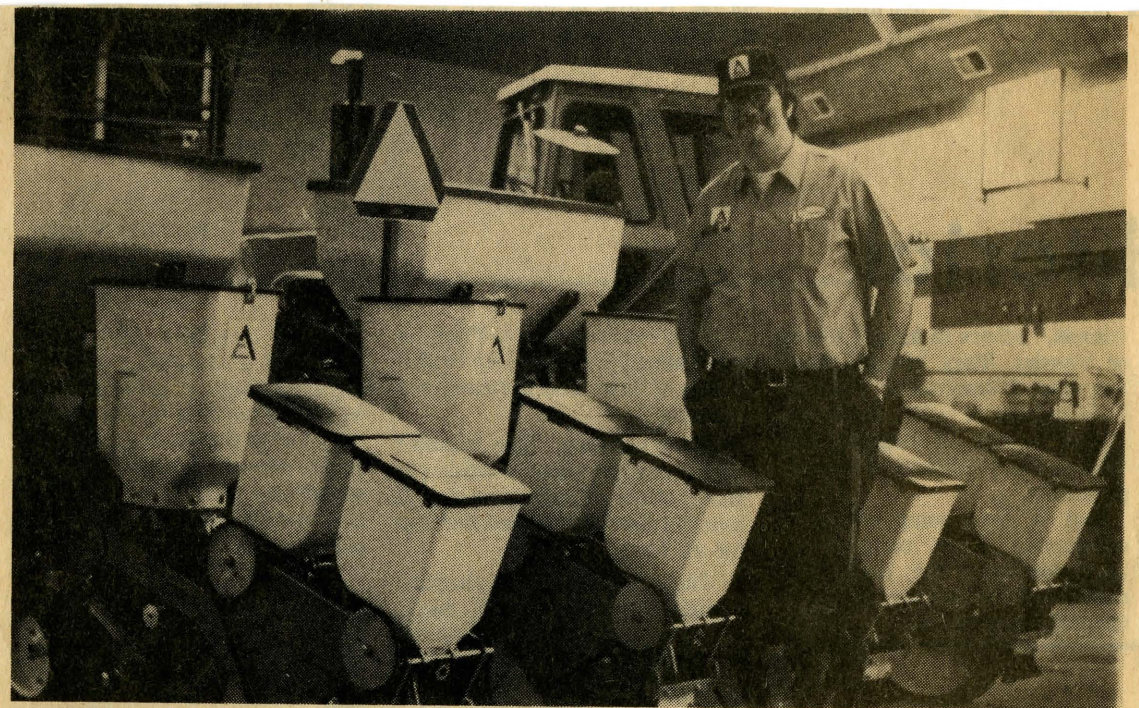
Wayne Frederick, long time no-till farmer from West Branch, gave a presentation on his farming operation. He told about both the good points and the bad, but then summed it all up with a few words that I'm sure stuck in some minds.

He didn't no-till because it's a fad, or because he thinks it's fun, or because he wants to make his neighbors talk; he does it because that's the way he gets his best yields and that's the way he makes the most money.

If you would be interested in trying some no-till, contact the Soil Conservation Service in Burlington. As of now it looks as if there will be two planters available for public use on 10 acres or one day at no charge, and two privately owned units for custom work.



Dennis Spitznogle, manager of K&M Implement in Mediapolis, inspects a no-till planter presented at a no-till meeting February 22 at K&M Implement.



Dennis Spitznogle, K & M Tractor and Implement, explained the operation of a no-till planter to farmers last Thursday night at a no-till informational meeting held at his business on Highway 61 in Mediapolis.

Large Interest In No-Till This Spring

If attendance at the no-till informational meeting at K & M Tractor and Implement is any indication, there is a strong interest in no-tillage farming in Des Moines county for this spring. About 40 farmers showed up for the meeting last Thursday night in Mediapolis, despite fog and adverse weather conditions.

Sam Jennison, Des Moines county soil conservation district commissioner, spoke on stopping soil erosion; and Wayne Frederick, Cedar county farmer, spoke on his own experiences in no-till farming.

Frederick told the group he raises 80 percent of his corn no-till and averaged 154 bushels per

acre yield for the past three years on one of his fields that has a 13 percent slope.

Bob Jones, Ortho chemical representative, explained no-till chemical application to the group, and Dennis Spitznogle, K&M owner, talked about the new AC no-till planter operation.

The New Era, 3-1-79

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Geode Sees Funding Problems

By Carter Newton

It looks as though Geode Wonderland RC & D may be in for some rough times ahead if the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has its way.

The federally funded agency serving Henry, Lee, Louisa, and Des Moines counties is slated for budget cuts if the United States Congress agrees with the USDA.

Last year, the federal government budgeted \$25 million for the 160 RC & D's across the nation. For fiscal year 1979-1980, \$2.9 million

has been budgeted.

According to Ralph Dewey, director of the RC & D serving this area, the proposed budget cuts have left him in a tough position.

"The intent of the administration is to phase this program out," he commented. He added that no one will actually know the fate of Geode Wonderland until October 1, 1979.

According to Dewey, his operation doesn't need a lot of federal funding. "Our goal is to help people help themselves," he added.

Geode Wonderland is

currently funded through the USDA. But, according to Dewey, USDA feels as though the money isn't being spent correctly.

Dewey stated that the RC & D concept was started 15 years ago to provide "certain types of natural resource and erosion and flood control projects in public areas." However, only 20 percent of allotted monies go into these programs.

The other 80 percent is spent for "associated measures" for other agencies. Also, two-thirds of

the RC & D money is spent on technical services while one-third is spent on cost sharing. "It doesn't look good that you spend twice as much to figure a project out than you spend on it," he added.

If Geode Wonderland's funding is cut, Dewey hopes that local governments will continue to fund the local office. He feels that the Geode Wonderland has made a positive impact on area residents.

Some of Geode Won-

(Continued on page 20)

New Era, 3-15-79

SCD Meeting

Wed., March 28

A meeting of the Des Moines county Soil Conservation District commissioners will be held at 7 p.m. Wednesday, March 28, in the SCS office on the second floor of the Federal Building, Burlington.

Iowa field representative Bill McGill is expected to speak to the commissioners, and Sam Jennison will give his report on the IAAP research farm project.

S. E. Iowa Farm News, Thursday, March 1, 1979 -- Page 23

Geode Wonderland RC&D Meeting Slated

The regular meeting of Geode Wonderland RC&D meeting. The Toolesboro Restoration plan will be held March 8, according to chairman Leland McCosh of Winfield. featured and budgets discussed.

Members of the county councils are asked to be on hand for the March 8 meeting. The meeting will be held at the RC&D Office, Machinists building east of Middletown.

New Era, 3-29-79

Bright Receives State SCS Awards

Howard Bright, district conservationist for Des Moines county, received two awards at a meeting last week at the Merle Hay Travelodge in Des Moines. The awards were presented at a Tuesday night banquet, March 20.

One award, said Bright, was for outstanding work performance, specifically in his efforts toward applying conservation tillage in Des Moines county.

The other award was for outstanding work load analysis, figuring a method of handling the work load he planned for the county.

Bill Bruney, state conservationist, presented the awards to Bright.

Sam Jennison, Des Moines county commissioner, spoke at

the banquet on the natural law of behavior and how it applies to "selling soil conservation to landowners," according to Bright. "It was a very positive talk," Bright said.

Conservation plan 'innovative'

By BOB SOGARD

It's ironic in a way that Howard Bright should be honored for his no-tillage plan when the Des Moines county soil conservationist has secured only a small percentage of cooperators. However, his program has received statewide recognition.

He was given a special achievement award for his work performance during fiscal 1978 when the Iowa Dept. of Soil Conservation met at Travel-Lodge in Des Moines last week. The recognition means a "quality grade" pay boost.

He also was given a certificate of appreciation for developing a workload analysis.

William Brune, state soil conservationist with the Soil Conservation Service, made the presentations and said the special achievement award was for "exceptional work performance . . . to promote conservation tillage in your district, the Geode Wonderland tillage show demonstration, and for conducting bus tours to encourage understanding of no-tillage programs."

Brune also cited Bright's leadership and inter-agency cooperation in completing the first RC&D measure here, the Flint Hills golf course structure that cured a heavily eroded gully.

Ralph Dewey, district conservationist here before Bright arrived three years ago, is executive director of Geode Wonderland RC&D.

One of Dewey's "prize pupils" was Debra Brus, now Harmsen, the first woman district conservationist in Iowa. She runs the Clinton county office at DeWitt, where she was assigned three years ago, after training here.

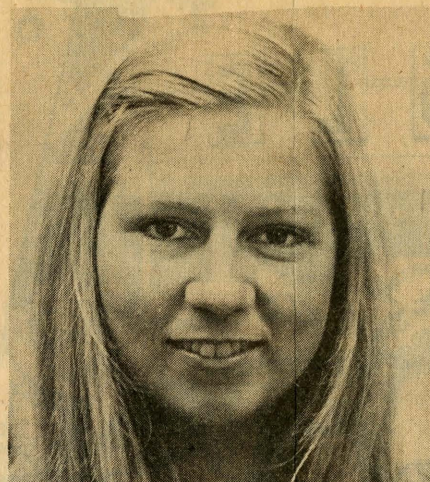


Howard Bright

Harmsen was given a special achievement award for securing 1½ times the goal of conservation tillage in her county last year. Goal was 5,000 acres and more than 7,250 acres were included in such practices as leaving corn stalks and other debris on the surface to catch moisture and prevent soil erosion.

She also was cited for the highest number of personal contacts on behalf of conservation practices of any county in the state. She and her conservation technician Gade 288 face-to-face contacts "out in the field" during fiscal 1978.

"We have a lot of no-till up here, too," she said. Harmsen is a 1975 agronomy graduate of Iowa State university and is a native of Blue Grass in Scott county. As an undergraduate



Debra Harmsen

student trainee, she worked with a soil survey crew out of DeWitt in 1974.

Bright said his talk to the convention last Tuesday dealt with an inventory of soil resources he and his staff made of Des Moines county.

"We determined the years left in which to save that soil resource," he said. "The longest on slopes were 180 years before the topsoil would be depleted, at the present rate of applying conservation practices. The shortest was 25 years, except in a few areas where the soil's already about gone."

Bright said most of the work being done here is the terracing system. "It's fine, but getting control of erosion at the present rate, it would take 400 years to complete," he said.

So Bright and the soil commissioners developed a plan to stop erosion within 25 years, using the presently

available money and staff. It entails adopting no-till as the prime means of control on sloping land, at the rate of 2,500 acres a year.

"We will continue to build terraces and structures, to cut down the length of slopes," Bright said, "but with no-till practices, we can space out the terraces which also will extend the money available."

Also on the program was Sam Jennison, Burlington, a new member of the Des Moines Soil Conservation district commissioners. He spoke on "the natural law of human behavior and the application of that law."

Jennison said the law is verifiable and states, "You are responsible for your own behavior. A positive attitude, a purpose in life and values like love, commiseration, integrity, freedom and justice will prove its applicability."

He said he met with state senators, including Forrest Schwengels of Fairfield, in an effort to secure funding for Iowa State university researchers to monitor the project at the Iowa Army Ammunition Plant.

Within five years, all 7,000 acres of cropland at the IAAP are expected to be leased to farmers who will follow no-tillage procedures. The project will be less valuable unless it is scientifically controlled, soil commissioners agree.

"We need funding for at least one research person at Southeastern Community college and two or more from Iowa State," Jennison said. IAAP authorities said five-year leases will be rewritten to require no-till, starting in 1980, and all of the land should be under such lease by 1984.

Hawk Eyeland

Sunday, April 1, 1979 Page 24

First detailed study since 1921

Soil survey nearly done

By BOB SOGARD

Des Moines county soon will have a Standard Soil Survey, after four years of work by survey party leader Melvin Brown and Bennie Clarks.

They have been joined by Richard Lensch, 28, who came here from Algona after working in Kossuth county for four years. Des Moines county has 408 square miles to map.

Lensch, a 1973 agronomy graduate of Iowa State university, is a native of Marion. He and his wife, Kathryn, moved to New London with their five-month-old daughter, Sarah.

"We have all of Yellow Spring township and eight sections of Franklin township to survey," Brown said. "That's 34,000 acres to go and 227,000 done."

They expect to map 400 to 600 acres each day, once the soil dries enough to permit probes. The group will move on to Louisa county in June, Brown estimated.

The work, started here in April 1975, was projected to cost \$175,000.

County supervisors contributed \$31,500, and the state matched the county's share. IAAP paid \$6,000, and the US Soil Conservation Service (SCS) is picking up the balance, expected to be well above the original projection.

The modern soil survey will benefit

farmers, the SCS and other government agencies. It will help communities, health departments, real estate developers and other commercial interests in making land use plans.

"A big help to the farmer will be the organic matter description of his soil," Brown said. "Many herbicides are sensitive to the amount of organic material in the soil."

"Also, if he wants to buy or rent some ground, he can find the produc-

continue to require engineering.

The difference in the knowledge obtained by Brown and his crew as compared with the last complete soil survey made in 1921 can be gauged by these figures:

Nearly 60 years ago there were 27 mapping units, or descriptions, for each 20 to 40 acres.

The new survey has 100 different mapping units — chopped down from more than 150 — to describe every five

office on the second floor of the federal building to check the survey findings.

There's a lot of work left to do before the survey results are printed and bound in a book. Before Brown came here, he did a survey in Benton county and he has continued writing that volume. It will be done soon, he added.

Within six months after Des Moines county is mapped, the survey group hopes to have about 100 copies of an interim report ready for distribution. The copies will be placed in public libraries, ASCS, SCS, extension office, courthouse and other central points so that they can be easily consulted.

There are eight soil associations in the county, Brown said. One, in the bottoms, will have three names but right now it's just 'Zook-blank-blank.' The blanks await the official naming.

The other associations: Kalona, Nodaway-Lawson-Landes, Nira-Otley-Mahaska, Mahaska-Taintor, Clinton-Lindley, Given-Hedrick-Ladoga, and Nodaway-Sparta.

This county has an especially interesting history of glacial erosion, Brown said. George Hallberg, research director of the Iowa Geological Survey, has helped detail glaciated soils.

The Nebraskan glacier was the first one, followed by the Kansan.

The Illinoian was next. It came in from the east, bringing a different silt and sand content, but it didn't cover the northwest part of the county.

The Yarmouth area is part of the terminal moraine and is mostly flat prairie with deep, black soil.

"We can find little black flecks of coal brought in by the glaciers," he said.

"Knowing the history and action of the glaciers helps us predict what we will map in a field and how we will map it," he added.

The Iowa Geological Survey flew infra-red photo missions June 3, 1975, and the crew here has found the prints very helpful. Healthy vegetation shows bright red but a cornfield with disease problems will appear a more pale red. Dark areas are wet and white are dry. The variations are valuable in mapping the soils.

The infra-red photos also show underground drains or watercourses which can't be spotted on the surface.

There are 17 counties with surveys underway, including Henry county

*You could be standing in mud
with sand blowing in your face.*

tivity expectable." This is expressed as the corn suitability ratio, a figure that indicates how many bushels of corn can be grown on a particular piece of ground, given high management methods.

The new soil maps will give some guidelines on whether filter beds and septic tanks will work, can give an idea of the water table level, what type of trees to plant for windbreaks and similar information. However, factory building or similar developments will

acres. The party has described 52 different soils, ranging from silty clay to loamy sand and from excessively drained to poorly drained.

"We have four new soil series, three in the bottomland north of Burlington and one in the upland," Brown said. They have proposed "Inton" as the name for the upland soil, a relative of Clinton found in the east part of the county north of Burlington.

The Mississippi river bottomlands have so many different soils in the same area — even the same field — that it was a challenge to map them. Brown said, "You could be standing in mud with sand blowing in your face."

The soil specialists will have probed every acre in the county by the time they are through, preparing detailed maps to disclose type and fertility of soil, slope and erodibility, engineering characteristics, permeability, water table level and many other features of the land.

They use aerial photos, including some infra-red pictures, and transfer information onto them. They plunge hand probes 48 inches into the soil, describe what they find and transfer the descriptions onto the photos along with slope data obtained with hand levels.

The slopes can change rather abruptly north of town, Brown said. They are classed by percent of slope with these brackets: Zero to 2, 2-5, 5-9, 9-14, 14-18, 18-25 and 25% and over.

People interested in buying land or developing it have come to the survey

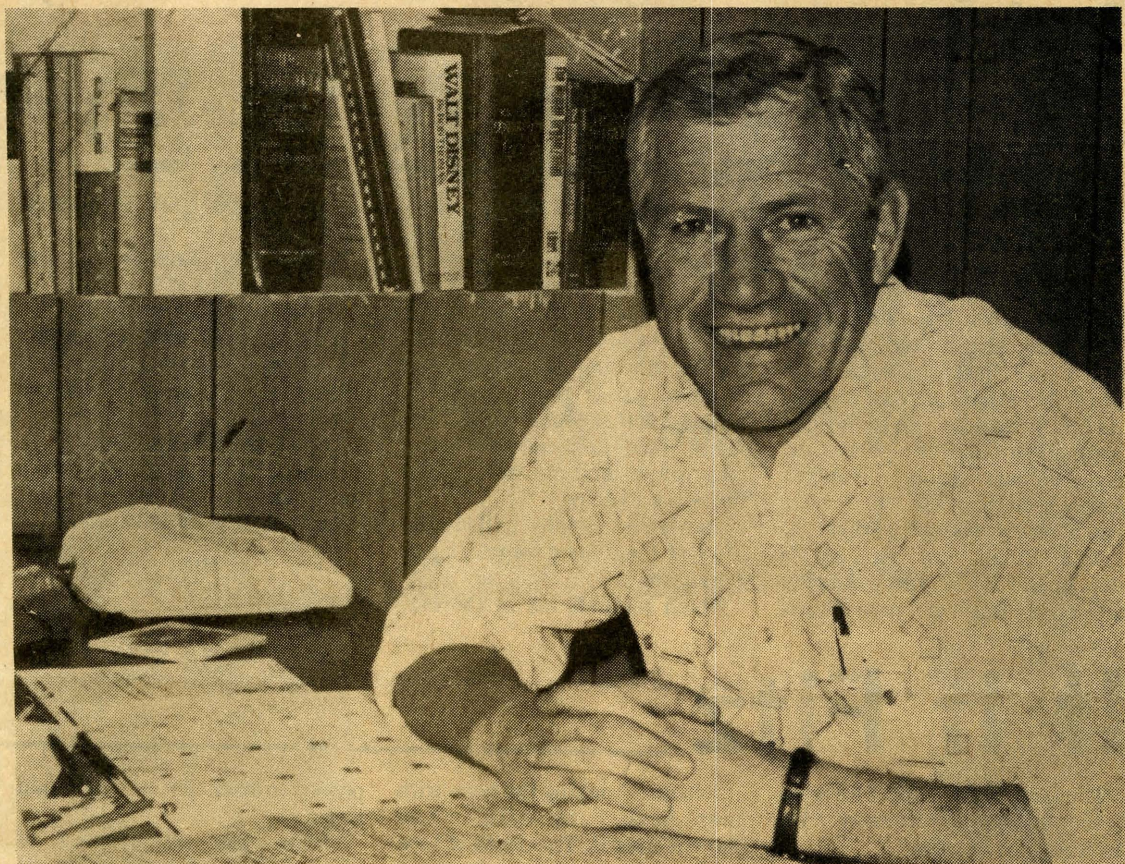


Standard Soil Survey party members look ahead to Louisa county where they will be working after completing Des Moines county in June. The Iowa river can be seen in the middle of the color photo examined by, Mel Brown, party chief, Dick Lensch and Bennie Clarks.

where Jim Seaholm has been at work for two years. Lee county is done. Louisa county will be started in a month or two. Muscatine likely will be started next year, Brown said.

All of Iowa's counties will have surveys underway or completed by 1987, if the present schedule holds. One of the last will be Scott, just signed up last year. "Jefferson, Tama and Allamakee

all want to be re-surveyed," he said. This work would include producing maps with greater detail than was used two decades ago when those counties were surveyed. All of the soil probing done a generation ago probably wouldn't have to be completed. But their plans indicate how valuable the previous survey was to those three counties.



Sam Jennison, Burlington businessman, writer, landowner, and speaker, is enthusiastic about the future of no-till farming in Iowa.

Jennison Sees No-till As The Answer

If Sam Jennison can get just a few more people as excited about no-till farming as he is, his prediction for a no-till farming future may come true. Jennison, president of Riley Bros. Inc., Burlington, said he "can see 90 percent of the land in Iowa treated in five years" through no-till farming methods.

Jennison attended his first county Soil Conservation District commissioners meeting in January as a newly elected director and has made more progress in the last three months than some people might have made in three years. His dream is to develop the IAAP 7,500-acre farmground to no-till demonstration plots. He has already received the go-ahead from IAAP officials to institute the changeover, which would take place with the granting of leases over the next five years. Iowa State university and Southeastern Community college have both expressed interest in participating in the no-till project. And Jennison is now trying to channel some funds through the state legislature for the IAAP project.

"There is little information available on no-till farming," said Jennison. Through the demonstration plots at IAAP, Jennison hopes to compile and distribute proof to farmers throughout Iowa and the entire nation that no-till farming is the answer for soil conservation.

"Iowa spent \$31 million in 1978 on soil conservation," said Jennison. "In Des Moines county we had \$16,000 to put the practices in." With that amount of money each year, it would take 400 years to treat all of the land in the county, he estimated. "But before that time, the land would all be worn out," Jennison stated.

"The government has spent \$400 million in the last 20 years in Iowa," he said, "and we can treat the land in five years." Jennison investigated no-till practices with the help of district conservationist Howard Bright. "No-till will work in Iowa," Jennison stated, "and it is working today. It cuts down soil erosion below the acceptable limits and the cost to taxpayers is zero."

"We have the potential of saving \$200 million in gasoline,"

added Jennison. "And we spend \$65,000 each year in the county to clean the silt out of ditches. The Corps of Engineers spent \$8 million to clean it out of the Mississippi in just our stretch of the river."

Jennison feels farmers can make more money by using no-till farming practices, also. "If it costs less, you make more profit," he said. Jennison hopes to prove, through the IAAP demonstration plots in normal farming conditions, that no-till farming works. "No-till is good, it's natural, it's the answer," summarized Jennison.

The problem he has to overcome now is the lack of knowledge and information about no-till farming. "We all fear what we don't know," he said. "But someone has to try anyway." Citing great accomplishments made in the past by United States citizens, Jennison said that "treating 99 percent of the land in Iowa is nothing."

"We are going to see this done. It's right, it's just, and it's possible," Jennison said enthusiastically. "Farmers are great folks. They will operate the best they can, and be interested enough to look at the new things that are possible."

And Jennison aims to see that farmers learn about no-till farming. "I'm not going to sit on this board and see \$400 million dollars spent on soil conservation," Jennison said. The no-till farming bandwagon which he is sure will continue to pick up support is one of his major objectives, and there's no doubt in his mind it will be achieved.

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Progress Underway For IAAP No-Till Plot

The wheels are rolling and gathering momentum for the IAAP no-till demonstration plot and research project, to begin next spring. A group of interested citizens met with the Iowa Energy Policy Council and the ag research department at Iowa State University recently. Howard Bright, district conservationist, said he and Sam Jennison, SCD commissioner, Arlyn Musselman and Lyle Pierce, SCC ag instructors, and Winston Cooper, IAAP agronomist, presented their program and its benefits to these people and asked for their cooperation.

To the natural resources council, Bright said they pointed out that 200 million gallons of fuel can be saved by changing to no-till farming, a significant fact when looking at a possible fuel shortage. They asked for the support of the Iowa Energy Policy Council, and possible assistance in measuring and forming research data on the amount of energy consumed in no-till farming.

In Ames, they met with J. P. Mahlstede, associate dean and associate director, agriculture and home economics experiment station, and about a dozen other field research men at ISU. Bright said they asked support of the demonstration project at IAAP for no-tillage farming, and also told them about their long-term expectations for a full-scale research project. Estimated cost of the research project would be \$2 million, said Bright.

Local officials are expecting \$100,000 through the Department of Soil Conservation over a two-year period to be used in the IAAP no-till project. Bright said they would know for sure by July

1, the beginning of the new fiscal year. This amount is not enough for a research project, but it is enough to train several people in no-till farming systems and monitoring of the operation, Bright said. SCC has agreed to participate in the project, and has committed part of Musselman's and Pierce's time to the project.

Musselman and Pierce will receive training through ISU, and ISU has also agreed to work with Cooper, Bright, and SCD commissioners in collecting data.

The county SCD commissioners will be in charge of the no-till project, said Bright, and also involved with the demonstration plot will be Jim Hodges, county extension service, and Gene Vincent, area agronomist.

Bright credited the county ASCS commissioners for deciding to cost-share no-till last year, showing they felt it was of importance to the farmer.

Demonstration Of No-Till Planting

A no-till tour, highlighting the no-till planting of the FFA-Doran plot on Northfield St. in Mediapolis, will be held Friday, May 11, at 7 p.m. one block south of the Mediapolis high school.

The FFA plot will be planted no-till for the third straight year. Doug Cling will be using his new AC planter for the demonstration.

Sponsoring the event are the Des Moines county soil con-

servation service and the Mediapolis FFA. The time was chosen to enable busy farmers a time when they might be able to break away from their spring work for a few minutes, said district conservationist Howard Bright.

Everyone interested in no-till farming is invited to attend the demonstration, and ask any questions they have on the subject.

Correction

(Mistakes of fact, omission of fact and errors in spelling of names will be corrected immediately when called to our attention.)

Rachel Thie, 2324 Gnahn, is age 70, not 82, as reported in the ambulance call Tuesday.

A no-till demonstration 7 p.m. Friday at a test plot near Mediapolis high school is being sponsored by the Des Moines county soil conservation commissioners and the Mediapolis FFA, not the ASCS as reported Tuesday.

A garage sale to benefit the YM-YW building fund drive will be 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Saturday at Wendy's restaurant, 115 S. Roosevelt. Time was incorrect in a report Tuesday, as were the spellings of the names of Terry Bundig and Vicki Ried.

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Install Terraces On Rolling Massner Farm

As part of a long-term agreement with the Soil Conservation Service, Eric Massner is installing 4,500 feet of terracing on his rural Mediapolis farm. Two will be grass back terraces, and the rest will be broad base, able to be farmed on both sides.

The grass back terraces are cheaper to construct, said William Baugh, soil conservation technician with the Des Moines county SCS office. Baugh prepared the blueprints for Massner's terracing. "The contractors check themselves," said Baugh, "then return the blueprint to the office signed." Baugh also makes periodic checks on the contractor's work, he added.

Chuck Allgood, Wapello, was building the terraces on the Massner farm last week, and Ken Springsteen, Morning Sun, did the tiling and inlets. There are nine inlets, six terraces, and four outlets in the most recent terracing project as part of Massner's long-term agreement.

In an LTA, a certain amount of cost-sharing is done each year over a period of years.

Some of the broad base terraces are fairly steep, and the SCS recommends no-tillage or conservation tillage on these terraces, Baugh said. A farmer may experience the problem of silt around the inlets, but this "can be overcome" by various methods, according to Baugh.

Ken Wehage, rural Mediapolis, is also installing terraces as part of LTA, built by Ken Moyer Construction. He has installed 1,300 feet this spring, three tile outlet terraces and four inlets. This is a small portion of the 12,000 feet in the planning, said Baugh. Both Wehage and Massner are cost-sharing through the local ASCS office.

Another project, cost-shared through the state Department of

Soil Conservation, is a group project underway by Evan Wilson and Richard Steffener, rural Mediapolis. Baugh said 10,000 feet will be installed this year, two broadbase and two grass back terraces. Mark Larson, who recently took over Lawrence Whipple Custom

Bulldozing, is building the terraces for this project.

All of the jobs were blueprinted through the county SCS office. Baugh said he encourages contractors to study the blueprints and check out notes on all the jobs before starting the project.



One of nine inlets on the Massner farm, this six foot metal pipe will drain two inches of runoff in 48 hours, or less, explained William Baugh.



Chuck Allgood's construction crew moves the topsoil from a stretch of land on the Eric Massner farm in preparation for constructing another terrace. The topsoil will be moved back to its original position after the fill has been added for the proper sloping of the terrace.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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S. E. Iowa Farm News, Thursday, June 7, 1979 -- Page 3



Checking the efficiency of the planter, Don Nelson finds everything in order. The seeds are exactly seven inches apart.

No till at IAAP

By Colleen Callahan

Does a guard keep watch over your corn fields? Don Nelson has one. Do you need a pass to get to your beans? Don does.

In addition to his farm in rural Danville, Nelson leases 3,000 acres at the Iowa Army Ammunition Plant, Middletown.

Under the direction of Winston Cooper, Plant Agronomist, IAAP leases out

8,000 acres of farmland on five year contracts. As each contract expires, a new stipulation will be in the lease. No-Till farming will be required in future contracts within the government installation.

Don has leased from IAAP for 25 years. This spring he's converting 400 acres to no-till planting . . . 200 of beans and 200 of corn.

Last fall Don applied phosphate and potash to the fields. Prior to planting this spring, he sprayed each acre with 52 gallons liquid nitrogen, 1½ pt. Paraquat (to burn down existing vegetation) and X-77 Spreader (1 qt. per 100 gal. liquid.)

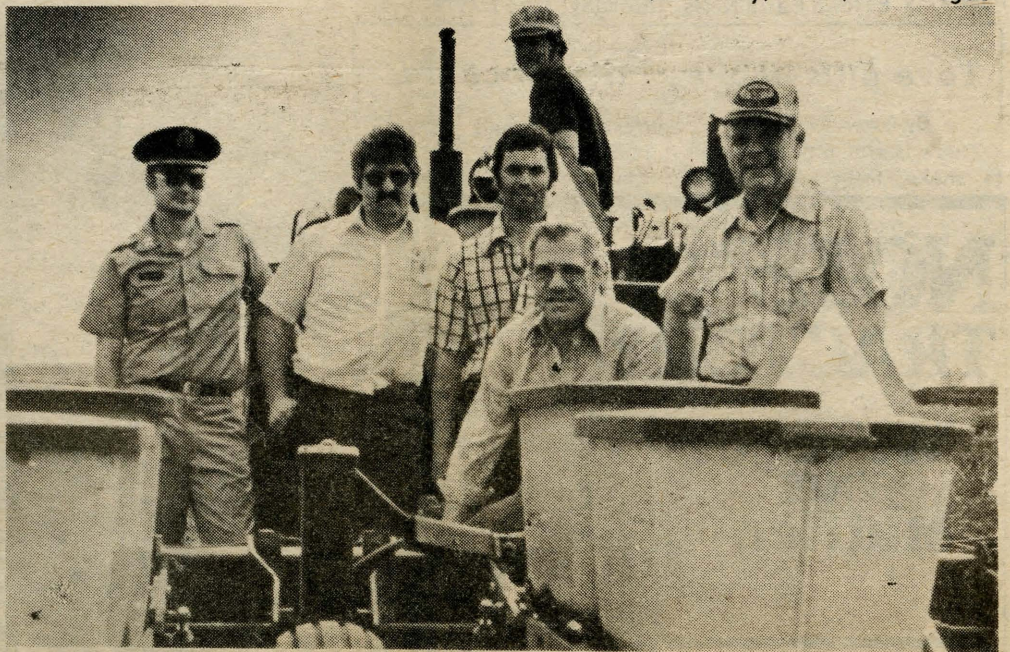
With a JD 7000, 4 row conservation planter, he planted Pioneer 3780 in the

end rows and Pioneer 3184 in the middle rows. A herbicide mixture of Bladex and Lasso will be applied later.

Though insect problems still exist with no-till planting, the extent is unknown. This will be one of the areas to be studied, according to Howard Bright, Des Moines County SCS office.

One of the important benefits of No-Till is the saving of fuel. Sam Jennison, Des Moines Co. District Soil Commissioner, points out that the conventional tillage requires approximately twice as many trips down the field as the No-Till method. With today's high prices and shortages, Sam views this advantage as one of the more important benefits of No Till.

For further information on no-till farming, contact your county SCS office.



On hand for the first no-till planting at IAAP are (left to right): Cpt. Maurie Petterson, Executive Officer; Dennis Maas, Des Moines Co. Farm Service; Howard Bright, SCS office; Don Savage (on tractor); Sam Jennison, Des Moines Co. District Soil Commissioner; and Don Nelson, Danville.

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The FFA plot will be planted no-till for the third straight year. Doug Cling will be using his new AC planter for the demonstration.

Sponsoring the event are the Des Moines county soil con-

servation service and the Mediapolis FFA. The time was chosen to enable busy farmers a time when they might be able to break away from their spring work for a few minutes, said district conservationist Howard Bright.

Everyone interested in no-till farming is invited to attend the demonstration, and ask any questions they have on the subject.

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Conduct Teachers Conservation Camp

The Iowa Teachers Conservation Camp dealing with environmental and conservation education is being held in Burlington June 11-29.

The three-week workshop provides elementary and secondary teachers with a study of local natural resources through practical learning in outdoor sessions. Teachers from all over Iowa and the surrounding areas may obtain three hours of credit for the classes.

The first week's sessions deal with ecological principles, the natural history of local plants, birds, and mammals, mineral and soil resources, and man's dependence upon his environment.

In the next week the teachers will be studying environmental management, including biological and physical resources, teaching on the school grounds, and socio-economic factors of resources management. In addition, they will be learning how to incorporate outdoor laboratories and nature trails into classroom activities.

The workshop will conclude with a study of rural and urban land use, political and legal aspects of environmental quality, environmental education curricula, and the development of projects and programs for the classroom.

The Iowa Teachers Conservation Camp has been offered at regional centers since 1973 to give participants experience with the conservation problems and teaching opportunities of their local areas. It is being sponsored by the University of Northern Iowa, the Departments of Public instruction and Soil Conservation, and the State Conservation Commission.

No-Till Tour Scheduled June 13

A no-till tour is scheduled for June 13 to view the progress of the no-till fields planted earlier this year. A bus will be used for the tour, and all interested persons are asked to meet at 1 p.m. at the high school in Mediapolis. The tour is a co-operative effort of the Soil Conservation Service and the Vocational Agriculture Department of Mediapolis high school.

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AgriBusiness

Sunday, June 10, 1979 Page 25

Ag Bag

By Bob Sogard

FIRST NO-TILL tour of the year in Des Moines county will be held Wednesday. The school bus will leave the Mediapolis school parking lot at 1 p.m. and return between 3 and 4 o'clock.

Howard Bright, SCS district conservationist, said these farms will be visited: Leonard Lane, Tom Eland, Eric Massner, Doug Cling, Roger Cling and Kenneth Wehage.

The next tour may visit some farms closer to Burlington, Bright said. He encouraged farmers who are interested to board the bus because details can be given between stops.

GEODE WONDERLAND RC&D folks don't find as much interest in conservation tillage as Howard does. At least, chairman Leland McCosh says, there's little impetus toward holding the Tillage Day promotion that had been

planned for July 5. It was to have been a four-county affair.

"Response from potential exhibitors has been almost nil, with most response being negative," he reports. "Soil conservation districts are planning individual no-till activities for their counties. We suggest that others who are interested in this measure contact your local districts," he advised.

The Winfield mayor also had a discouraging word for council members and committees who have tried to keep the RC&D unit functioning in the face of declining interest from the Carter administration.

He wrote, "Soil Conservation Service officials are planning to conduct a review of Geode Wonderland in early July, and it will be better to wait until after the review for a meeting. Future funding of RC&D is still very much up in the air with Congress."

When I talked with Bob Bergland in his office in April, I asked him about the RC&D program. It's a good program, he said, but 90% of the participation is local and the locals could just as well take over the remainder.

If Geode Wonderland is typical, though, a good part of the expense is salaries of coordinator Ralph Dewey and his staff. If they go, it would be a challenge for the council to maintain continuity.

It was once suggested that the Southeastern Iowa Regional Planning commission could help keep programs moving. Executive director Mike Dunn said the thrust of RC&D is rural and under the USDA, while regional planning is urban and under HEW.

I wonder if things haven't changed, though, although present director John Wiebler likely wouldn't be any more enthused than Dunn. The plan group is responsible for rural housing, as-

sisting with rural and small town sewer and water projects, and rural transportation. Maybe, in light of fiscal restraints, it's time to take another look at the direction both agencies are taking.

AG COMMITTEE of the Burlington Area Chamber of Commerce is assigned oversight of food and drink concessions for the Register's Annual Great Bike Ride Across Iowa (RAGBRAI) conclusion on Aug. 4.

Paul Marshall, chairman, said the responsibility relates only to the riverfront, around the Port of Burlington building and Memorial auditorium.

Committee members won't be serving hamburgers the way they put out pork chops at the annual Farm Barbecue. They will decide, mostly on the basis of earliest entries, what groups and organizations will have stands on the grass be-

side the river, between the two buildings.

Already in with requests are the Lions club, Optimists, Open Bible church and First United Church of Christ, Jaycees, and Boy Scout Troop 76.

Deadline for requests is July 1 and they may be directed to Paul at Carriage House, phone 753-1141. The committee will meet again July 2 to make the decisions and make sure that similar foods will bring like prices.

Concluding segment of the cross-state ride is shorter than usual; it's less than 30 miles from Wapello to Burlington. Some of the riders are expected here about 7 a.m. and practically all of them will arrive by 2:30 p.m. Some of the concessionaires may want to offer breakfast items.

It will be a busy day for the community. The county fair will be in full swing in West Burlington and the state AAU swim meet will be at Burlington high school.

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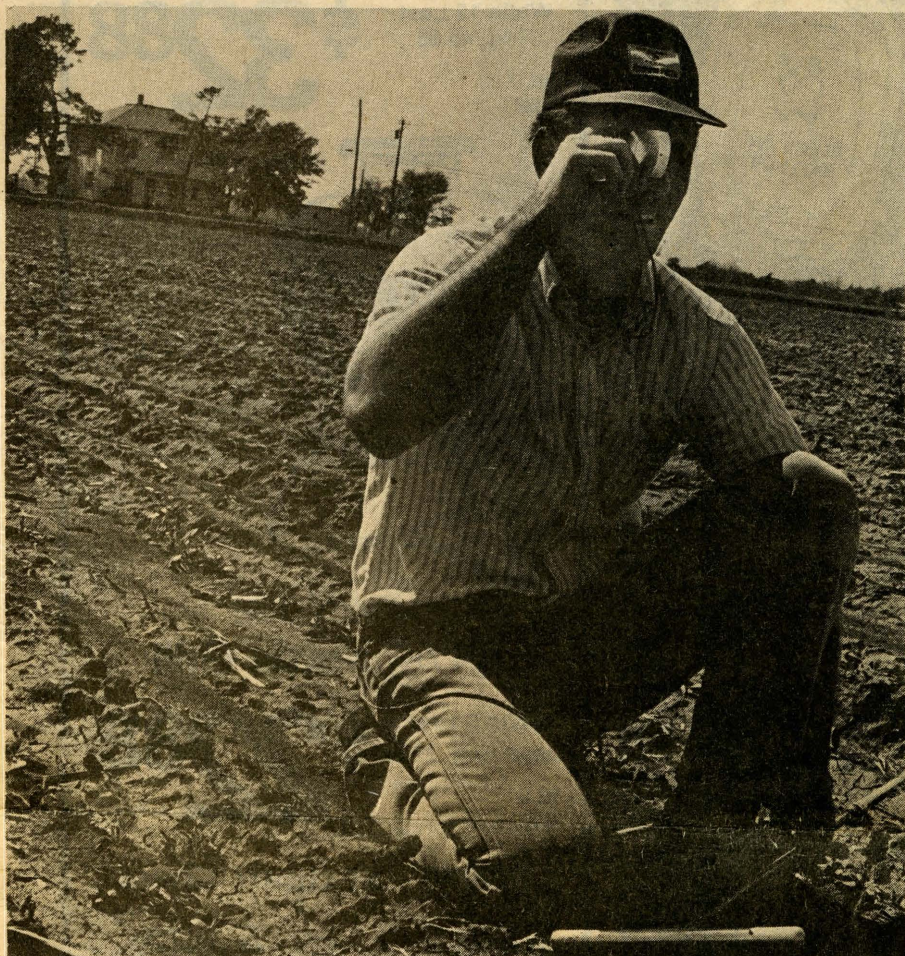
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4



Lay of the land

Dick Lensch samples the soil two miles north of Mediapolis in one of the last remaining acres to be described by the Des Moines county Standard Soil Survey party. Lensch uses a hand level to determine the field's slope after having completed a 48-inch-deep soil probe.

Des Moines county soil survey ending

By **BOB SOGARD**

Four years and two months after start of the Standard Soil Survey, a Last Acre ceremony will be held at 10 a.m. June 27 at the Ray Pilling farm two miles north of Mediapolis.

Pilling is chairman of the soil conservation district commission and a resident of Yellow Spring township. This is the last area of the county to be mapped by Melvin Brown, survey party chief, Bennie Clarks and Dick Lensch.

Every one of the 261,000 acres in Des Moines county will have been surveyed, principally by Clarks and Brown, in the four years since the first probe was made in Washington township in mid-April of 1975.

All three will start the Louisa county survey this month and the same officials are expected to take part in a First Acre observance there at 1:30 p.m. June 27.

Gaylord Elliott, Louisa county extension director, and Jim Ranum, district conservationist at Wapello, are planning the program. It will be held at Virginia Grove, Louisa County Conservation Board park and camping area near Morning Sun.

Both Des Moines and Louisa county projects are done cooperatively. The Soil Conservation Service has primary responsibility, but the county and state share in the work. The county supervisors commit funds, as does the Iowa Dept. of Soil Conservation, but state contributions also includes technical help from the university and the Iowa Geological Survey.

The soil survey in Des Moines county won't be printed and bound for two or three years, but an interim report will be distributed by the end of the year, Brown said. Copies will be distributed to such places as libraries, ASCS and SCS offices, extension office, courthouse and other community facilities.

In the meantime, farmers and other landowners may visit the SCS office

here to obtain information from the maps the survey party has completed.

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 Popcorn and Ma Goodness;
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 Mystery of Monk's Island;
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 World Beyond; Verdick
 Ghost Ship; Verdick
 On the Ledge; Verdick
 Chopper Bunch; Verdick
 Fight for Freedom; Verdick
 Firebug; Verdick
 The Monster who wouldn't
 Die; Verdick
 One Cool Sister; Verdick
 The Switch; Verdick
 Sky Dive; Verdick
 Gang on Wheels; Verdick
 Thunder in the West; Verdick

appraisers, banks and land credit
 agencies, oil and gas companies,
 public officials, and planning
 groups.

Local assistance in obtaining
 soils information is provided by
 the Soil Conservation District
 and the County Extension Office.
 The Des Moines county published
 soil survey report should be
 available in 1982.

County Completes Soil Survey

A four-year effort to inventory all of the soil types in Des Moines county will be officially concluded June 27 during a "Last Acre" ceremony at the Ray Pilling farm, two miles north and one-half mile west of Mediapolis.

State and federal soil conservationists will join city and county officials in the commemorative program marking a major update of the outmoded soil survey compiled in 1925.

The program will start at 10 a.m. and will include William Brune, State Conservationist, Soil Conservation Service and Ken Bruene, Field Representative, State Department of Soil Conservation both from Des Moines. Carroll Hobson, RR 1, Eldora, a member of the Iowa Soil Conservation Committee, Gerald Miller, Extension Agronomist, and William Oschwald, Asst. Dean Coop. Extension, Iowa State University, Ames, will represent cooperating agencies assisting the Des Moines county soil survey.

The field work started in April, 1975. The ceremony will mark the mapping of the final acre in Des Moines county following the four years of field work. The soil survey team, under the direction of Melvin Brown, the soil survey party leader, mapped all 261,248 acres of Des Moines county.

James C. Hodges, County Extension Director for Des Moines county said, "Des Moines county is the 64th county in Iowa to complete a modern soil survey. Seventeen counties are currently being surveyed and 18 counties have starting dates scheduled between now and 1982.

The completed Soil Survey has the potential for a large number of agricultural and non-agricultural uses, reports Gerald Miller, Extension Agronomist,

Iowa State University.

The completed soil survey is a comprehensive inventory of all of the soil resources of the county. The soil survey is based on the characteristics of the soils as they occur on the land. Since each soil type survey is not only an inventory of soil resources, but also includes ratings, limitations, and potentials for many uses for each soil type in the inventory.

The farmer can use the soil survey to obtain specific information for planning crop production systems. For example, the soil survey report is useful for planning herbicide application rates, irrigation rates, tillage systems, and soil testing programs. For each soil type in the soil inventory, information is presented for the range of organic matter, range of soil pH, the presence or absence of lime, the amount of sand, silt, and clay, and the available water holding capacity. The availability of phosphorus and potassium is also given. Also, farmers can use the soil survey to plan and develop a soil and water conservation plan.

Engineers, land developers, realtors, and home builders can find answers to the limitations and potentials of the soil. The soil survey report rates each soil type for road fill and highway location, for foundation suitability, for sources of topsoil, sand, and gravel, for septic tank disposal fields, and for sewage lagoons. Other information presented in the soil survey which is important for non-agricultural uses includes depth to water table, natural internal drainage of the soil, and potential of the soil to being flooded.

Other groups which use the soil survey report, include land

6-21-79 - New Era

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SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

INFORMATIONAL ACTIVITIES

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Where published

Date of issue

Sent by *Howard Bright*S. C. D. *Des Moines*Stationed at *Burlington*

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 (Other) ☐
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 Advertisement ☐

Farm fun: Ends and beginnings, acres and acres

MEDIAPOLIS — A two-county celebration will begin at 10 a.m. Tuesday on the Ray Pilling farm two miles north and a half-mile west of here when a Last Acre ceremony will be held for the Des Moines county soil survey.

The second half will begin at 1:30 p.m. at Virginia Grove northwest of Morning Sun, when the First Acre festivities will be observed for the Louisa county survey.

In between, participants will have lunch at Jack Hamilton's Clubhouse in Morning Sun and the Des Moines County Soil Conservation district commissioners will hold their June meeting.

The final acre to be mapped, among the 261,248 in Des Moines county, is on the Pilling

place in Yellow Spring township. Pilling will give the welcome as host farmer and chairman of the soil conservation district commissioners.

State and federal soil conservationists taking part in the Des Moines county observance will include William Brune, state conservationist, Soil Conservation Service; Ken Bruene, field representative, State Dept. of Soil Conservation, both of Des Moines; Carroll Hobson, Eldora rural, a member of the Iowa Soil Conservation committee; Gerald Miller, extension agronomist, and William Oswald, assistant dean, Iowa State university extension service.

Other participants will be Floyd Rowell, chairman of the county extension council; Dr. R.J. Cowles, administrator of the Des Moines

county health center; Gerald A. Miller, ISU extension agronomist; State Sen. Charles P. Miller; State Reps. Larry Kirkenslager, Clay Spear and Virgil Corey.

A letter from Sen. John Culver will be read and Peter Verstegen, administrative assistant to Rep. Jim Leach will represent the congressman.

The final acre will be mapped by Melvin Brown, party leader; Bennie Clarks and Richard A. Lensch, soil scientists. The introductions will be made by Don Traman, state extension advisory committee member.

Des Moines is the 64th county to complete a modern soil survey. There are 17 still being surveyed and 18 more have starting dates scheduled through 1982. The survey is a comprehensive inventory of all the soil resources of the county.

It includes fertility rating, slope, erodibility, potential uses and other characteristics of each type of soil identified.

Virginia Grove is a park maintained by the Louisa county conservation board. It is two miles north of Morning Sun on blacktop road X37, two miles west, then north half a mile to a road leading west past the park.

Gaylord Elliott, Louisa county extension director, will welcome the "second half" crowd that includes some of the officials from the morning program.

Brune and Bruene will be joined by Walger Hagen, Waterville, chairman of the state soil conservation committee; Dr. John Pesek, head of the ISU department of agronomy, and Dr. Min Amemiya, ISU extension agronomist, and

county health center; Gerald A. Miller, ISU extension agronomist; State Sen. Charles P. Miller; State Reps. Larry Kirkenslager, Clay Spear and Virgil Corey.

Also participating will be Jim Ranum, district conservationist; Junior Coon, Louisa county supervisors chairman; John Dykstra, Louisa county assessor; Eldon Weber, Fairfield, area conservationist, and Glen Kuiper, Dubuque, area extension director.

The \$150,000 Louisa county project is expected to take four years to complete. It will be financed by \$50,000 each from the county, state and federal governments. State-owned land in the county will be mapped, but that cost won't be shared by the county.

The survey will be the first for the county since 1918.

Monday

June 25, 1979

142nd Year — No. 296

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THE HAWK EYE

Burlington, Iowa

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Soil Survey Benefits Buyers

Now that the soil survey for Des Moines county is finished, Howard Bright of the Soil Conservation Commission urges the public to utilize the information recently gathered.

He cited prospective land owners as prime beneficiaries of the soil charts. Some of the conclusions which can now be drawn include locations most ideal for building, the suitability of soils for septic tanks, and the depth of bedrock and water tables, he explained.

Another organization to contact to find out the best place for digging wells is the Geological Survey office in Iowa City. This source can provide information on locations of wells in the area surrounding a building site. This is made possible by the study of well records, Bright said.

"We heartily encourage anyone thinking of buying land to check with us (the SCS) first," he concluded.

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 Editorial ☐
 Advertisement ☐
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FFA News

The Mediapolis Jr. Farmers held their June meeting at Brad Lanes.

Fourteen members answered roll call. In new business, we discussed our tour and campout. We will meet at the Wash-All at 8:30 a.m. on July 12. We will look at everyone's 4-H projects and then camp at Seven Ponds.

Brad Lane gave a talk and demonstration on no-till farming. Refreshments were served. Brad Lane, Reporter

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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SCS Completes County Soil Survey

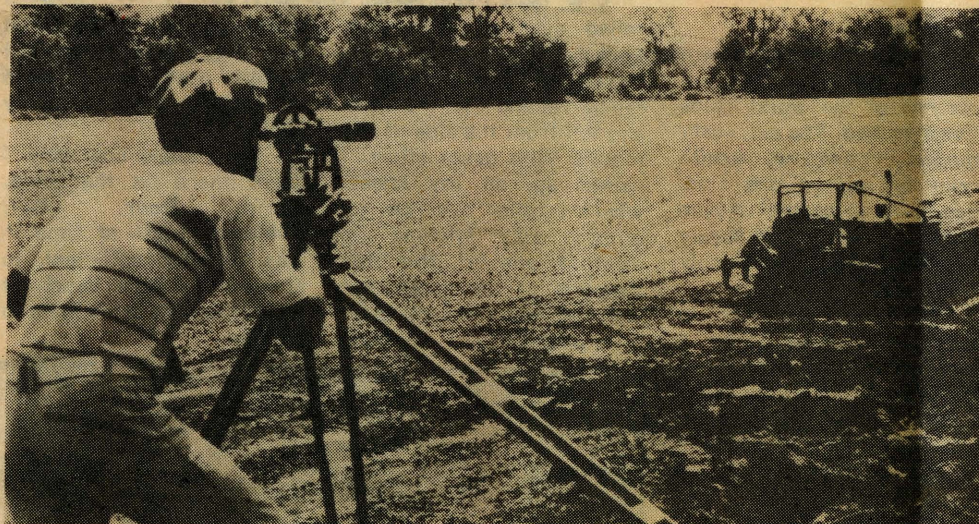
A last acre ceremony symbolizing the completion of the four year effort of the Des Moines County Soil Services Offices will be June 27 at Ray Pilling's farm located north of Mediapolis.

The Soil Survey has been a joint program to map and classify all the soil in Des Moines county. The survey will serve many purposes: tax assessment will be made easier with the actual determination of a farm's worth by the soil quality; also

good and bad building sites for roads, ponds and houses can be predicted as well as the ability to see future problems with drainage and erosion.

The soil survey will be published in a report within the next year. Many of the maps have already been completed and are available to the land owners at the SCS office.

A first acre ceremony will be held in Louisa county that same afternoon at 1 p.m.



William Baugh checks the slope of the newly constructed levee at the Johnson farm

Saving soil on Lois Johnson farm

By Carter Newton

It's been a busy three weeks at the Lois Johnson farm.

The crops are planted, but it's the soil conservation project that's kept things busy -- such as moving soil from one place to another and laying tile.

The farm, located northwest of Burlington along Flint creek is farmed by Fred Vantiger, Mt. Union.

The problem is that 60 acres of land drains water off onto six acres of bottoms land next to Flint creek. According to Howard Bright, soil conservation officer, this runoff causes sheet erosion.

Sheet erosion occurs when water collects soil particles as it flows over the land.

Bright stated that in this case erosion stripped the

bottoms area of somewhere between five to 10 tons of ground per acre in one year.

Upon some prodding from Vantiger, "pushing" as he called it, Johnson contacted the soil conservation service in Burlington for help. A meeting was arranged and preliminary plans made.

Bright commented that he staked the area out and Chuck Allgood of Wapello began moving dirt.

Water flowed through the bottoms area in two different directions requiring a long terrace and two tile systems leading to Flint creek.

According to Vantiger, the terrace and tile systems will enable him to farm the six acres of bottoms land. "It's always been too wet to farm," he stated.

Vantiger, who farms 220 acres of 'flatland' near Mt. Union, said he's glad to get the extra 'five or six' acres to farm. "I'm glad to see it get done, it wasn't doing anyone any good as it was."

"With the way we are taking up good farm land for roads or highways, something's got to replace the land," he continued. "Farmers must conserve too and keep up our end."

Vantiger also stated that farming the Johnson farm is much more challenging than his own 220 acres. The land is dotted with rolling hills.

Vantiger uses minimum tillage on most of the land to cut down on further land erosion. He believes though that farming is "eventually going" to no-till.

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 Editorial ☐
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SCS Completes County Soil Survey

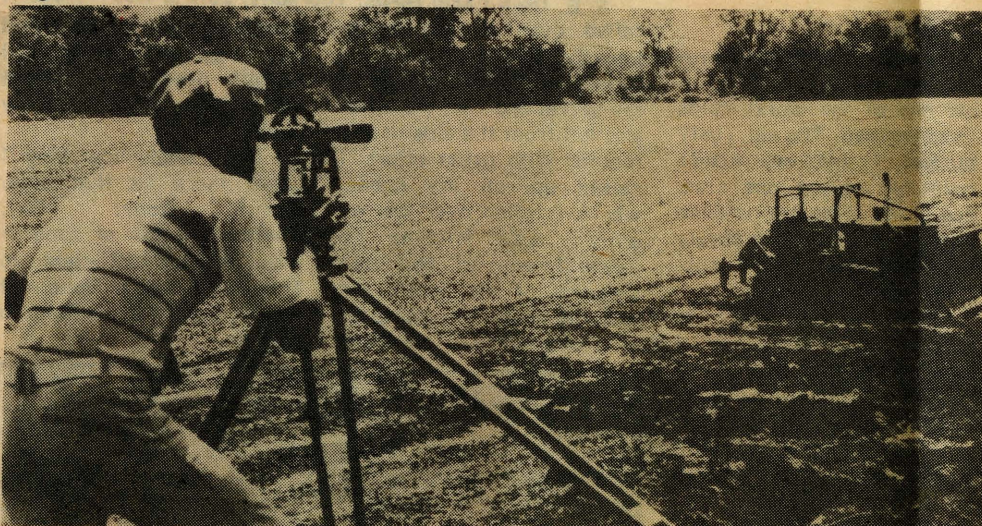
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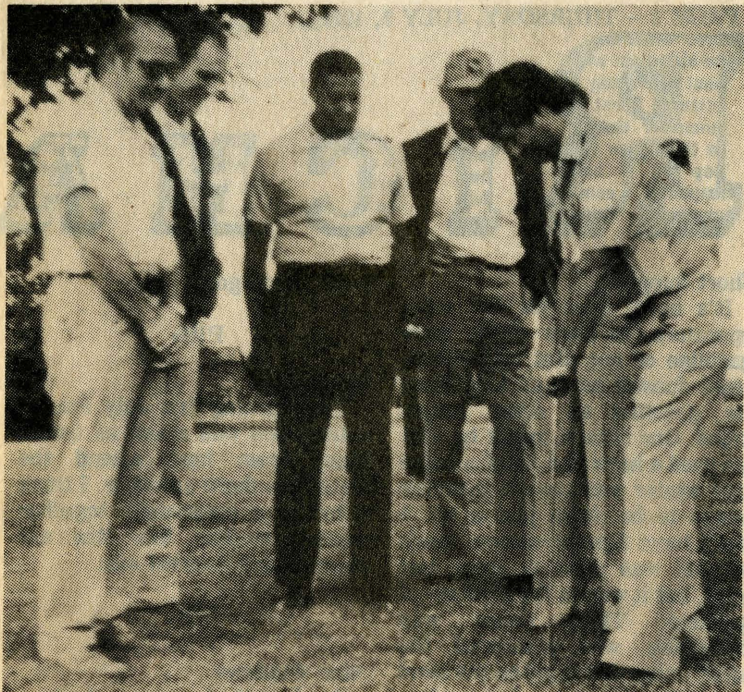
Editorial

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4

7-5-79

New Era



Representative of Iowa's 84th District Larry Kirkenslager assists in taking the final soil sample in the Des Moines county Soil Survey. Looking on are (from left to right): Melvin D. Brown, party leader, Dick Lensch, Bennie Clarks, both soil scientists, Virgil Corey, Representative from the 83rd District, and Rep. Clay Spear from the 85th District.

Complete Soil Survey At 'Last Acre Ceremony'

By Mary Beyerhelm

County and state soil conservationists and local farmers gathered at the Ray Pilling farm two miles north of Mediapolis to observe the completion of the Des Moines county soil survey on Wednesday morning, June 27.

The Last Acre Ceremony marked the end of eight years of petitioning, fund raising, researching, and field mapping. The County signed a letter of intent to enter into the cooperative survey in January, 1971. After gaining support and allocations from state and federal legislatures, the mapping work began in April, 1975.

Attending the ceremony were representatives from four cooperating agencies.

William J. Brune, state conservationist from the Soil Conservation Service in Des Moines, noted the importance of the survey's results to all citizens of Des Moines county.

"This soil inventory will help all of us, and particularly you here, to make the right decisions about the future," he said in his address to the group. "I plead with you to make good use of this."

Kenneth Bruene, from the State Department of Soil Conservation, Des Moines, compared several aspects of farm life today with those of 1927, the year of the last soil survey. Citing price and yield increases, as well as technological advances, Bruene stressed the need for the new survey.

Vice Chairman of the State Soil Conservation Committee, Carroll J. Hobson, emphasized the role of the farmer and his knowledge in the conservation of soil.

"The most important thing is what I do to the land, not simply the fact that I own it," he stated. "We must be able to put into practice both old and new soil saving techniques. This lack of energy that we're experiencing right now may be just the thing to instill in us the idea of conservation."

Representing the Iowa State University - Cooperative Extension Service in Ames, Dr. William R. Oschwald explained the survey as a three-phase process.

"The first phase is education and research," he said. "It must be determined that a survey is necessary. Secondly, the field work must be done. The third phase involves the availability of the survey information and the shift of responsibility from the professional soil scientists to you. You must put the survey to good use."

Floyd Rowell, R. James Cowles, and Gerald Miller each commented on the value of the survey and mentioned several ways in which the survey can be put to good use in Des Moines county.

As Chairman of the Des Moines County Extension Council, Rowell spoke about the agricultural uses of the survey. He cited several facts discovered through the survey and noted

that approximately 70 copies of the results are available to the county now. The final complete publication should be available in 1982 or 1983.

Cowles reflected his role as Administrator at the Des Moines County Health Center, noting that soil is a source of pure water, can take the waste of a farmstead, and, if used incorrectly, can spread disease. Thus, the Health Center makes use of the soil survey to determine appropriate installation sites for wells and sewage systems.

Extension Agronomist Miller, from Iowa State University, included the small farmer and country home-owner in the list of people to whom the survey is useful.

"By looking at information about soils, such as slope, floodplain areas, permeability, etc., we can determine where homes should be built and how certain services (e.g., mail, garbage, electricity, water) can be supplied," he said. Miller also issued a challenge to the community leaders to "start looking at the survey as a tool to guide you in planning the future."

Representatives of the government at both the state and federal level offered their congratulations on the survey completion and announced their support of the survey.

Among those present were Iowa Senator Charles P. Miller, and Representatives Larry Kirkenslager, Clay Spear, and Virgil Corey. Letters of greeting and congratulations from U. S. Senator John Culver and Rep. Roger Jepsen were read, and Peter Verstegen addressed the crowd on behalf of Rep. James Leach.

The ceremony ended with Melvin Brown, party leader, Bennie Clarks and Richard Lensch taking the final soil sample from the Pilling yard. Brown, Clarks, and Lensch are the three soil scientists who did the majority of the field work in the Des Moines county survey.

Des Moines is the 64th Iowa county to complete a modern soil survey. Seventeen counties are in the midst of the survey process, and 18 more have signed letters of intent. Starting dates for these counties range from 1979 to 1984.

One of those is Louisa county, which began its soil survey on the same day that Des Moines county marked the completion of its own survey. A First Acre ceremony was held at 1:30 p.m. at Virginia Grove, northwest of Morning Sun.

In his appreciation for the beauty of Iowa, Hobson summarized the importance of the survey.

"I never cross Iowa at this season of the year without being amazed at the lush beauty of the fields. And Des Moines county is as beautiful as any," he said. "The Indians were right when they called this land Iowa - Beautiful Land."

The soil survey and its effects on future conservation practices are all a part of the effort to keep Iowa beautiful.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

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Slate No-Till Tour July 19

In a continuing effort to show the benefits and methods of no-till farming, Howard Bright of the Soil Conservation Service has announced another no-till tour. The tour will be Thursday, July 19, at 1 p.m.

All interested persons are to meet at the Recreation Hall of the Iowa Army Ammunition Plant, Middletown. Fields to be studied contain no-till corn and beans, Bright stated.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

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Farmers inspect no-till beans on experimental acreage at IAAP

No-till farming needs weather's help

By BOB SOGARD

MIDDLETOWN — There's a pioneering effort being made out at the Iowa Army Ammunition Plant. The pioneer is Don Nelson, who used no-till planting on 600 acres of costly land he leases at the IAAP.

While the Danville farmer isn't risking his life on the Oregon Trail as did some of our forebears, he was cited here last week for his "courage and inventiveness."

The praise was by Sam Jennison, soil district commissioner, at a field day here. Jennison said Nelson was trying the process a year ahead of schedule.

Nearly 8,000 acres of ordnance plant crops and grazing land is leased by area farmers, about 3,000 acres of it by Nelson. Next year, some 1,500 acres will be up for lease and all of the row crops must be planted no-till.

The leaseholder also must agree to cooperate with, and furnish information to, researchers from Southeastern Community college and Iowa State university.

Jennison said there are two reasons for the experiment here.

One is to prove that no-till can equal

current production levels at no greater cost. The other is to demonstrate the extent of energy conservation. Only two or three passes over the field are needed, compared to perhaps seven or eight with conventional crop production methods.

Winston Cooper, IAAP land manager, said requirements of the leases will be available about Sept. 1. Bids on the tracts up for lease won't be sought until January and won't be opened until early March 1980.

Two years of a proposed five-year study of the economics of the no-till procedure have been financed with \$100,000 from the Iowa legislature.

State Rep. Clay Spear asked why that much is needed. (He didn't recall voting on this authorization.)

Jennison said the research work will be done by SCC and ISU will handle the administration of the research. "They think it's not enough," he added. "A similar project in central Iowa will cost \$1.5 million."

District conservationist Howard Bright said Iowa State will get \$30,000 each year and SCC \$20,000.

"No-till farming is the ultimate an-

swer to soil conservation," Bright said. "Des Moines county has 161,000 acres of cropland and 82,000 of those acres need treatment of some kind to save the soil. It would take 300 years to treat the land with structures at the present rate of funding.

"No-till could be put on overnight. If you do, 80% of the ground will be adequately treated."

Bright said the large-acreage demonstration project here will be watched throughout the nation. The lease agreements will require farmers to report fuel and equipment used, seed, chemicals and other inputs. They also must notify research workers before planting or harvesting and will report moisture levels of grain as required.

Meanwhile Arlyn Musselman and his SCC people will keep track of rainfall and other weather patterns, pest control and many other facts that can be applied to farming anywhere in the Midwest.

Nelson explained his use of no-tillage procedures.

He recalled how clean plowing was used to turn under corn stalks to beat the corn borer. "Then we started using

more and more chemicals and the EPA got after us. Now we leave the stalks on the ground and pour the chemicals to it. We're going to have to change," he added.

He had successes and failures this year with the no-till planting, but the soybeans that need rescue treatment because of weed pressure were planted May 30 in dry ground and the chemicals broke down because timely rains didn't come.

"There's corn I'm pleased with and beans I'm pleased with. Some corn and beans are terrible," he summed up. "Tom Parrott is going to be our salvation on one bean field," he stated.

Parrott has a recirculating sprayer that can use Roundup on weeds that are taller than soybean plants. A device catches the excess spray and returns it to the sprayer. If much spray gets on beans they will be killed and even a little will kill corn.

Approximately 80 farmers and other visitors toured seven fields and confirmed that no-till, like conventional planting, appears successful when weather conditions are favorable.

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State allocates millions for soil-saving sharing

The state of Iowa has appropriated \$5 million for the Iowa Dept. of Soil Conservation to use for cost-sharing practices in the 1979-80 program year, it was reported by Howard Bright, Des Moines county district conservationist.

Des Moines county received about \$18,000 for cost-sharing with landowners, allotted from \$3.8 million given to the 100 soil conservation districts in the state. The remaining funds will be used to cost share on complaints against landowners exceeding soil loss limits and in watersheds above publicly owned lakes.

A reserve is being maintained for

supplemental funds to districts and as incentive payments for conservation tillage.

Terracing, diversions, sediment and water control basins, pasture and hayland planting, critical area planting, field windbreaks, tree planting and grassed waterways all are conservation practices eligible for state cost sharing.

Cost-share rate is 50% of the expense of installation and materials. Bright said applications must be approved by district commissioners before work begins. His office is in room 230, Burlington federal building.

SCS-INF-74

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☐ (Other)

☐ Feature (SCS)

☐ (Other)

☐ Editorial

☐ Advertisement

☐ Cons. picture

Soil Survey Benefits Buyers

Now that the soil survey for Des Moines county is finished, Howard Bright of the Soil Conservation Commission urges the public to utilize the information recently gathered.

He cited prospective land owners as prime beneficiaries of the soil charts. Some of the conclusions which can now be drawn include locations most ideal for building, the suitability of soils for septic tanks, and the depth of bedrock and water tables, he explained.

Another organization to contact to find out the best place for digging wells is the Geological Survey office in Iowa City. This source can provide information on locations of wells in the area surrounding a building site. This is made possible by the study of well records, Bright said.

"We heartily encourage anyone thinking of buying land to check with us (the SCS) first," he concluded.

No till farming saves energy

MIDDLETOWN---Sam Jennison can never be accused of being a pessimist.

The district soil commissioner was asked during a tour last Thursday of no till corn and bean fields how the new method might take hold in Des Moines county.

"At the end of five years, I expect we should have 70 percent of the (crop) land in the county in no till. That is an obtainable objective," Jennison said.

But, he added, the method must be sold to farmers as giving adequate production with reduced energy costs.

Danville farmer Don Nelson, whose leased fields in the Iowa Army Ammunition Plant were on display, said after the tour that farmers won't rush to buy no till planters.

"Everyone always questions something new," he said.

If previous changes--such as replacing horses with tractors and using commercial fertilizer--are an indication, Nelson said, it will take a few years for no till to be accepted.

But if no till shows that it can save money, which is one of its claims, "it'll come on quicker than we expect it to," Nelson said.

Joining Jennison in urging no till was district conservationist Howard Bright, who told dozens of farmers, college officials, and others with farm interest that no till "saves more soil than any other conservation practice."

Of the 161,000 acres of cropland in the county, Bright said, half needs treatment, such as terraces and grassed waterways, to save soil.

At the present rate of installing those structures, Bright said, the work will be done in 300-400 years.

If the whole county went no till next year, he said that 80 percent of the acres would be "adequately treated."

Iowa State university and Southeastern Community college will cooperate the next 2 years in a no till research and demonstration project.

The legislature has appropriated \$30,000 a year to ISU and \$20,000 a year to SCC for administration for a total of \$100,000 over the 2 years, Bright said.

The IAAP will lease ap-

proximately 535 acres for the project. Farmers will have to keep detailed records to participate. It's expected that a sample lease will be available for inspection by Sept. 1, said IAAP land manager Winston Cooper.

Nelson, who had no experience with no till until this year, said he got both good fields and "some real terrible."

Data sheets were distributed, showing the corn and bean varieties and fertilizer and chemical application.

Nelson reported that he made only 2 trips across his corn and one trip over the beans. He had no detailed report on costs per acre, but said chemical cost "half again" as much as in conventional tillage.

He put in 605 acres in the IAAP to corn, beans, and popcorn; in addition, he planted a small amount by no till on his own land.

The experience proved that "we can make a seed bed right in front of a furrow opening and get seed to grow," Nelson said after the tour, "but we don't have 100 percent control of the weeds."

Part of the weed problem, he told farmers, was a partially plugged sprayer nozzle.

Planting can be done when it's dry enough to plow, he said, and it appeared that the ground didn't crust as bad as with conventional methods.

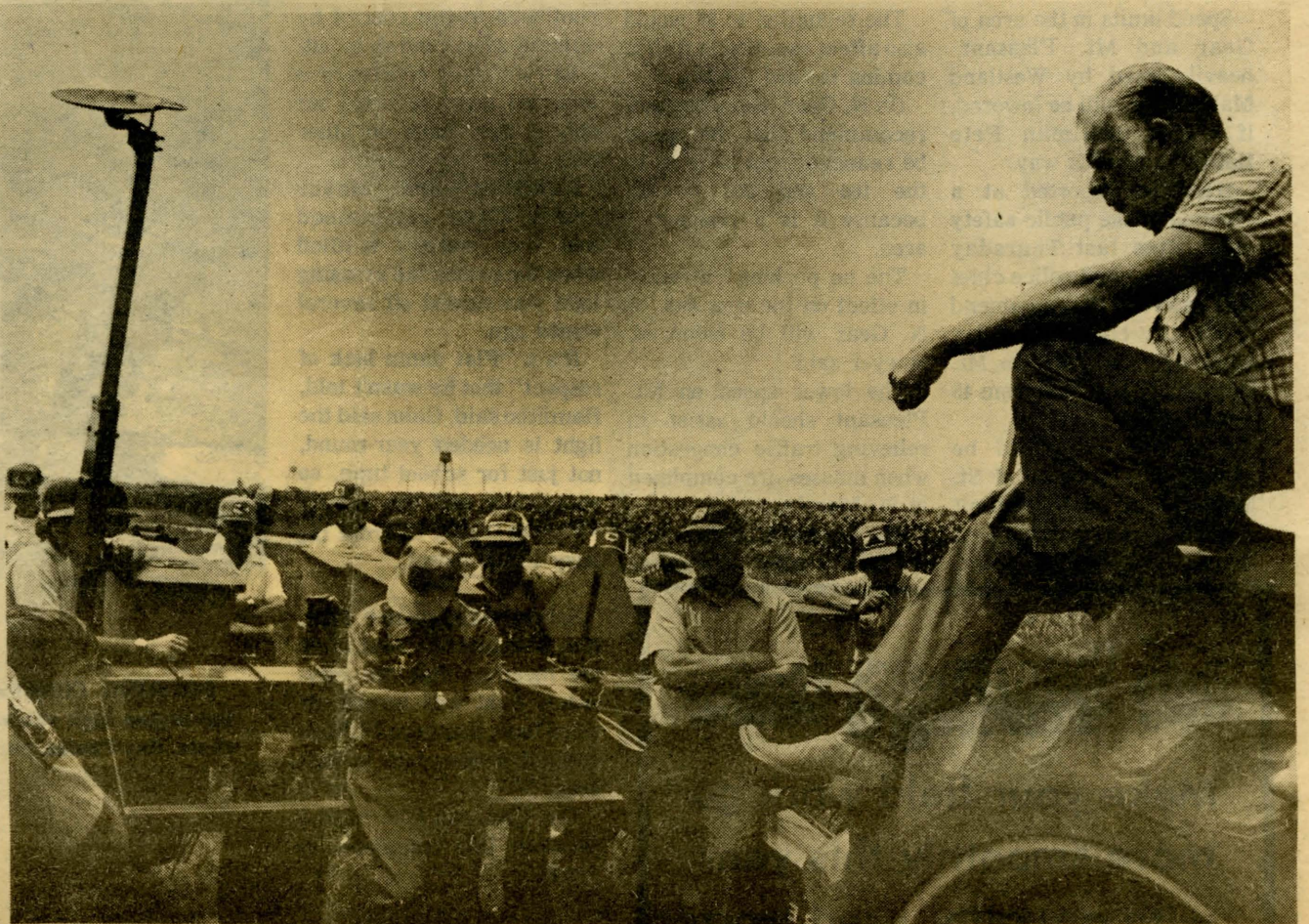
Nelson used a 4-row planter with furrows 36 inches apart. He recommended that farmers think first about getting weed control and good plant growth before worrying about reducing the row to 30 inches.

"A poor farmer will have poor crops" no matter the row width, he said.

Jennison dreams of converting the county into no till country, then spreading over Iowa and the US, he said, "and we will have OPEC on their knees."

In Iowa alone, Jennison said, no till could save 200 million gallons of gas and diesel, the equivalent of "a 5-week supply."

Nelson, who has farmed in the plant for 26 years, is more cautious. He acknowledged that "we are going to have to change, but it may not all be progress."



DON NELSON, left, discussed his experience with no till his bean and corn fields in the Iowa Army Ammunition Plant. farming this year with other farmers on a tour last week of Plant.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

DATE

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7-27-79

TO

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REMARKS

IAAP Tour
was impressive.

FROM

Eldon C. Weber

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

INFORMATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Name of paper *The Hawk Eye*Where published *Burlington*Date of issue *7-22-79*Sent by *Howard Bright*S. C. D. *Des Moines*Stationed at *Burlington*CLASSIFICATION: Weekly column ☐
Story (SCS) ☐
(Other) ☐
Feature (SCS) ☐

AgriBusiness

Ag Bag

Sunday, July 22, 1979 Page 6

By Bob Sogard
Soo-oo-ee-eeee!

Gerald Janssen, judged the second-best hog caller in Iowa at the state fair last year, is calling for entries in the first contest to be held at 8 p.m. Aug. 2, first day of the Des Moines county fair.

On the eve of the fair, at 8 p.m. Aug. 1, the fair board and coordinator Chris Nelson will sponsor the fair queen contest at the Agri-Sports Arena on the West Burlington campus of Southeastern Community college. The next day is for entries and start of the home economics judging. The 4-H dairy and goat judging will be at 2 p.m. and next on the program is hog calling, rolling pin throw and youth rooster crow.

"Ladies can enter the hog calling, too," Janssen said. There will be adult and youth divisions with ribbons for the first four places in each division. "Get some exercising for your lungs, then come on out to take part," he urged.

The rolling pin throw is for women and the rooster crowing for youngsters.

Also in with a reminder of fair activities is Ronnie Ertzinger, who directs the open home economics, crafts, hobby and flower shows.

"We've expanded the divisions to include photography and there are more ceramics categories," she said. Anyone

with a question may call her at 752-8097.

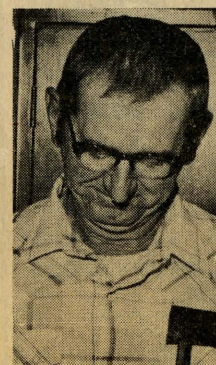
Grass clippings as chicken feed is a memory from my childhood and now there's a slick, scientific version in the works. Limited, but increasing, quantities of dehydrated bluegrass clippings are being offered in the form of pellets for livestock and poultry.

Larry Weber of Warren's Turf Nursery Inc. was a speaker at last week's meeting of the Des Moines county soil conservation district commissioners, held at the Holiday Inn. He told the group that Warren's is an international wholesaler of turf in the form of sod, mainly blue grass.

Sale of dried grass clippings, he said, is a byproduct of the turf business because grass in full growth is cut every four days. Expensive harvesting machines catch the clippings before they hit the ground and elevate them into hopper wagons. The grass is promptly hauled to a nearby dehydrator. It has 40% protein while succulent, but loses protein and other nutrients soon after cutting.

The A-34 BenSun variety has 27% crude protein when pelleted, Weber said, is rich in carotene and xanthophyll.

University of Illinois researchers said if the dried clippings are finely ground and small quantities mixed with corn and soybean meal, results are good for young chicks. The amino acid balance of the protein, they indicate, is "vastly



Scherer



Stucker

superior" to alfalfa meal. Birds receiving the clippings had better growth and skin color.

Weber said the feasibility of harvesting and pelleting the clippings is still being studied. Parks and interstate highway parkways are possible sources, he said, but they would have to be properly fertilized and mowed. Golf courses would be more likely because they are well-maintained.

His company gets about seven tons of pellets from each acre at \$100 a ton. That's \$700 per acre income, but it takes a lot of expensive equipment and manpower.

The turf grass man showed slides of thick bluegrass which could be used in pastures, by itself or mixed with other grasses. The A-34 is used on the grounds of Buckingham Palace and Hyde Park across the street in London, in Denver's Mile-High stadium and in Saudi Arabia. An oil-rich customer from Saudi Arabia paid \$11,000 per 1,000 square yards of turf to have sod airlifted there, he added.

Horace Sutton, commission treasurer, arranged for Weber's appearance.

Ray Pilling, district chairman, presented certificates of appreciation to Dwight Stucker, New London rural, and Clyde Sherer, Burlington Rt. 1, former commissioners and long-time cooperators.

Craig Maguria, operator of Seven Ponds north of Burlington, was host for an interesting evening of instruction and cookout last Tuesday.

About 85 persons, most of them farmers, were at the session to see how to curb algae that forms scum in ponds and rooted weeds. Craig and Bob Moorman, extension wildlife conservationist, agreed that the key to suc-

cessful treatment of farm ponds and lakes for algae and weed control is to do the job early. He used Aquathol-K and copper sulfate. A newer, more expensive version of the latter is Q-Trine plus. It doesn't precipitate out and remains in the water seven to 10 days, instead of one day.

He has gained good control of multi-flora rose, too. "Just use a mower on it," he said. "Mow it over and over again for a couple of years, then use a regular dandelion spray on it."

There's an interesting treatment he uses to eliminate the bother of thatches of grass at the base of trees. The product is Ramrod, and it's touchy stuff. It translocates through leaves, so it must be applied carefully. If used according to the label, it won't harm the tree, but it kills the grass at its base.

Moorman emphasized that label information must be followed precisely, for safety of people and livestock. Cattle must be kept away from pond water for a week after treatment with Aquathol-K, he warned. Also, there's a product called Aquazine for control of certain weeds, but water then can't be used for 12 months after treatment.

The 40 acres of water surface at the recreation area look clear and weed-free with the exception of one pond deliberately ringed with cattails. Catfish are raised in it.

There's one other means of pond

weed control that the Iowa Conservation commission says is excellent. Just buy the Oriental grass carp from private suppliers in Arkansas.

The last Moorman knew, the 10-inch fish cost \$6, and 10 fish are needed per surface acre of water. He said that, while the cost seems steep, the fish will give good grass control for four or five years. Annual treatment with chemicals would be considerably more expensive.

"These fish grow rapidly and they get up to 20 pounds," he said. "They are edible but as a type of minnow, they have fine bones. Also, at \$6 each, they are a fairly expensive catch."

Hodges said pond builders have learned that one secret of preventing weed growth is to provide steep banks. The Soil Conservation Service provides engineering services for farm ponds and the ASCS helps pay for construction.

Speaking of ponds, if the heavy rains that hit the north central part of the county July 3 caused damage to them, to terraces or other soil conservation structures, the ASCS needs to hear from the owner.

Deane Thornton, executive director, said the county committee must have the reports in order to determine if special funds should be requested to help farmers repair and restore the damaged structures. Phone or drop into the office right away, he suggested.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

INFORMATIONAL ACTIVITIES

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Sent by Howard Bright

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(Other)

Feature (SCS)

(Other)

Editorial

Advertisement

Soil savers have millions, need billions

BY BOB SOGARD

WASHINGTON — There's a \$6 billion job to do in the next generation if Iowa's soil is to be saved for the 21st century.

But at the present rate of spending, less than \$200 million in federal and state matching funds will have been offered Iowa landowners in the next 20 years.

The \$6 billion figure was estimated by conservation officials, assuming construction of terraces, diversion structures and other traditional permanent practices to keep the soil on the land.

Given these figures, the Iowa legislature's interim study committee on soil conservation met at the Washington county courthouse Monday to get the ideas of farmers and other landowners from southeast Iowa. It was the first of four meetings to be held around the state.

The committee's report to the legislature next January will call for more state spending on soil and water conservation programs, but study committee chairman Sen. Forrest Schwengels, R-Fairfield, said members first must set some priorities.

"We're losing ground, figuratively and literally," he said.

With the help of the state department of soil conservation, the joint agriculture and natural resources subcommittee will set goals through a 15-year plan for a systematic attack on soil loss and non-point source water pollution.

Most of the 20 farmers, drainage and soil district commissioners, and others who were heard Monday gave first priority to education on no-till cropping and conservation tillage.

Soil commissioner Sam Jennison, a Burlington businessman, said Des Moines county had 300 acres of no-till row crops last year and some 3,000 this year. "It's the best solution, utilizing the assets we have," Jennison said.

Jennison, a civil engineer and graduate of Iowa State university, has a 600-acre farm in northeast Iowa on which he said no-till is being practiced.

"Tile outlet terraces are designed for a 10-year life and we had \$16,000 cost share money last year. With the ASCS funds, there was still less than \$80,000 and to get the job done at that rate would take 400 years," he declared.

He said state institutions, including ISU, aren't providing basic research, with the exception of a \$100,000 no-till demonstration project that starts at the Iowa Army Ammunition Plant next year.

He thanked the committee members who were responsible for reporting out a bill last year to fund the program for two years.

Jennison noted that one of the IAAP cropland lessees didn't wait for the no-till program to begin. He referred to Don Nelson, who planted nearly 600 acres of corn and soybeans without tillage this year.

State soil conservation director Larry Vance said, "We feel that 60% of Iowa land could be brought to 'T-value' (where soil is built up as

Some methods—

(Continued on page 3)

Tuesday

September 11, 1979

143rd Year — No. 54

48 pages Four sections Price 15¢

THE HAWK EYE

Burlington, Iowa

Some methods offer 'lazy man's way of farming'

(Continued from Page One)

fast as it's lost) with just good management practices.

"A lot of the guys in the national plowing matches at Marshalltown said they haven't touched a moldboard plow at home in years," he said.

The 20-man subcommittee met at Des Moines Aug. 27. Co-chairman Rep. Wendell Pellett, R-Atlantic, said, "Over the past week, I've been trying to think if a tax incentive plan wouldn't take a lot of doing. I hope we can keep this on a voluntary basis, but in 40 years we haven't made a lot of progress."

Iowa has an average soil loss of 9.9 tons per acre each year, despite a conservancy law that prohibits of more than four or five tons, depending on the type of soil. With introduction of organic matter and proper management, most soils will remain stable with a loss of four tons or less.

Ideas before the interim group include an ag-land tax credit with eligibility tied to compliance

with soil loss limits. Another is to give a state income tax credit for conservation practices.

Other major discussion items on possible new motivations for soil conservation programs, in part garnered from local citizens:

- **Control** nonpoint pollution in identified high priority watersheds.

- **Enactment** of legislation (SF 501) to fine-tune conservancy districts and allow landowners to collectively fund portions of construction costs of conservation practices.

- **Cost-share** for conservation tillage.

- **Low-interest**, long-term loans for installing permanent soil conservation practices.

- **Maintain** a voluntary program but periodically evaluate mandatory conservation practices.

- **County levy** for conservation. Some counties, notably Henry, have contributed cost-share funds to supplement state and federal incentives.

- **Set-aside payments** for summer construction. The money would compensate farmers

who lost all or part of a crop in order to construct terraces or other conservation practices during the growing season.

Some representative comments included:

John Morris, Columbus Junction hog farmer, soil scientist and former extension director — Regulated practices are backward looking and self-defeating. Education and example are beginning to succeed. He does deep "ribbing" chisel plowing to provide water infiltration.

Don Johnson, Fairfield farmer and former state soil conservation committeeman — Iowa was the first state to pass a conservancy law and provide cost-share payments. Low-interest loans, with a 10-year payback to the state, would be effective in getting cooperation by neighbors in constructing practices.

Howard Bohr, Wellman farmer — Technical help is needed to get more mulch tillage and no-till practices. Also, low-interest loans and tax credit for those who bring their lands up to "T-value" make sense.

Vivian Creswick, Cantril, drainage district

member and Pathfinder RC&D chairman — Ag land tax credit as an incentive would be inappropriate. There's never enough allocated to pay it in full anyway. Also, income tax credit wouldn't help the young, debt-ridden farmer who doesn't pay income tax.

Mike Vincent, young Keota farmer — My no-till field will be one of the best I have and interest is high among the farmers in my area.

Herb Campbell, Washington farmer and legislator when the Soil Conservancy Act was passed in 1971 — As farms get larger, cost pressures grow. Chisel plowing and tile outlet terraces are truly remarkable in keeping the soil at home. It's a lazy man's way of farming.

Rex Troute, Burlington Rt. 1 farmer and soil commissioner — The "Iowa Till" proposal payment plan would be a radical change in operations and presents problems for tenant farmers. They would have to sign up for five years and agree to leave so much trash on the surface. We have 50 or 60 different kinds of soil in our county and I think there should be some flexibility to the plan.

Joe Beckman, Sperry, Des Moines county soil commissioner — I was on the state resource planning group (Land Preservation committee) and we did a big study. Why can't you guys pick up and go from there? (Schwengels said his committee will meet with the State Land Preservation committee before completing its report.)

Bob Greene, Columbus Junction hog farmer — A long-range planning council is needed, not handout programs. I spent \$5,000 of my own money on an experiment to make methane gas out of hog manure.

Jim Frier, Washington county extension director — It was tough to sell conservation in the Lake Darling watershed until 75% cost sharing was authorized. As ag land changes to younger hands, more conservation will be put on the land. As for Iowa State university not providing leadership in conservation tillage, when was the last time you gave more than a cost of living increase to ISU? The university extension service has one specialist in soil and water conservation. Extension service is limited in staff and facilities.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

INFORMATIONAL ACTIVITIES

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(Other)	☐
Feature (SCS)	☐
(Other)	☐
Editorial	☐
Advertisement	☐
Cons. picture	☐

Sept. 9-15 Soil Conservation Week

TIPS FOR SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION

State and federal cost sharing programs for soil and water conservation practices and structures vary from county to county. The dollar figures are important to your readers considering such an investment. Your local soil conservation service (SCS) office can give you figures for state benefits. Your Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) office can provide information about federal programs.

What soil conservation projects are now under way in your area? New parks? Dams? Terracing? Photographs and program details are easily obtained at your SCS office or county extension office.

What conservation projects are local service organizations tackling? Check with 4-H clubs about Conservation Resource Development projects. FFA chapters will be glad to bring you up to date on their Building Our American Communities program. What conservation projects are Boy Scouts, Campfire Girls and your local garden clubs working on?

Watershed development, farm

ponds, erosion control, and other projects are still included in federal programs. The county extension director or the ASCS office can tell you about availability of funds.

Most areas of Iowa have large watersheds in some stage of development. Check with the local SCS office for details and possible news about these projects.

Local farmers find that conservation farming saves them fuel, time and wear and tear on their equipment. Increased crop yields often result from conservation tillage. Your county extension director can provide you with farmer

examples in your community.

Check with conservation officers, the district forester, SCS office, and the county extension office to see what the volume of conservation work in your area was last year. What are the plans for the future? What major conservation problems are there yet to be solved in your area?

Your SCS office can provide names of youth entrants in the Soil and Water Conservation speech contest in your area along with the topic title and a brief biography of the entrant. Their speeches are often lively and require a minimum of editing to print.

Are there any new parks, public hunting areas, wildlife refuges or other recreation areas being built in your area? How about major improvements on old areas?

What classroom activities on conservation or environmental education are there in your schools? Often, teaching plans result from training teachers receive at extension workshops. School administrators can give you these teachers names.

News and photo sources - SCS Office, ASCS Office, Soil Conservation District Commissioners, County Conservation Board, County Extension Office, 4-H, FFA, Boy Scouts, Garden Club leaders, etc., District Forester, Iowa Conservation Commission, City Park and Recreation Boards.

Fine Iowa Meats Committee for the IPPA, says plans are well under way for five more promotions starting in Seattle, September 19-22; Dallas, September 26-29; Los Angeles, October 3-6; Denver, October 24-27; and Buffalo, November 7-10.

The "Fine Iowa Meats" program was developed in 1970 as an industry wide program of meat promotion to increase retail sales. This is done by creating a consumer awareness for the products of the nations number one meat producing state, Iowa. This industry wide promotional effort represents a unique marketing program from Iowa's meat industry.

Members of the IPPA travel at their own expense to these locations along with representative of the packing industry to assist the retailer in merchandising his pork products.

Through cooperation of the IPPA, packing industry, Iowa Development Commission and the local retailer it is possible to increase retail sales of pork products to these locations.

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Report From ASCS County Office

By Deane Thornton

Set-Aside Payments

Harriet Kennedy, even in spite of a recent fire at her farm home, will have completed nearly all set-aside payments by this date. They are made to those who participated in the 1979 feed grain program and set-aside an average equal to 20 percent of the corn planted.

If prices fall below \$2.20 per bushel for corn nationally from October through next February an additional payment would be made to both 10 to 20 percent participants. We all hope this doesn't happen as there is more profit in good corn prices!

ASCS Meeting

Last Thursday 27 out of a possible 33 Des Moines County ASC Community Committeemen joined others from ten other counties in a meeting at Washington, Ia. Not only was our attendance good, but so was the meeting. Mr. Fitzgerald, Administrator of ASCS gave the boys the background on why such meetings are held. Not only to bring them up to date but to get their thinking on various programs. For instance they were asked to express their views on 15 different areas involving our programs.

Others who conducted the program were our own Milton Distelhorst, Harland Johnson, and Sam Wise who are the Iowa ASC State Committeemen.

IAAP-No Till Tour

While our Administrator Mr. Fitzgerald and the ASC State Committee were in town, Don Jarvis and Joe Walljasper took them on a tour of the no-till planting in the IAAP. They were impressed on the extent of no-till planting both in the IAAP and the county. Leonard Lane and Doug Cling of Mediapolis were present and gave them some additional views on no-till in their area. Don Nelson of Danville and Howard Bright, SCS were our tour hosts who made it possible on short notice.

Gasohol

I had the opportunity to meet and visit with Jack Parsons of Wapello. Jack is one of the elected directors of the Iowa Corn Promotion Board. He is certainly an active board member promoting the various uses of corn beyond conventional usages. I intend to use some of the material he is going to provide in future articles especially on gasohol. He believes in its future, and so do I.

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X

Clings To Hold No-Till Field Day

Roger and Doug Cling will hold their second annual No-Till Field Day. Tours of various plots will be given along with harvesting demonstrations. There will be a pig roast afterwards. All interested persons should meet at the Mediapolis high school parking lot at 1 p.m. September 13.

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Terrace Demo

Des Moines County Soil Conservation District will be holding a tile outlet terrace demonstration on the Russell Seymour farm located in the northwest corner of the Geode-Danville blacktop, west of Middletown, two and one-half miles.

Demonstration will be held Wednesday, October 10, at 1 p.m. Work will be done by Frank Woodall Construction of New London. Rain date is October 15.

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Yield Contest

Mediapolis FFA Chapter is sponsoring a no-till yield contest. All entrants in the contest will be invited to an awards chili supper and meeting at Mediapolis high school.

Rules of the contest are: the area planted must be a minimum of one acre; no tillage can be used if not attached to the planter; yield check will be made and measurements will be taken by Mediapolis FFA or other interested persons.

First, second, and third place awards will be presented at the awards supper. Management information on winning plots will be published.

To enter, contact any FFA member or call the voc-ag FFA office. 394-3980.

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Weekly column ☐Story (SCS) ☐(Other) ☐Feature (SCS) ☐(Other) ☐Editorial ☐Advertisement ☐Cons. picture ☐Schedule Two No-Till
Tours In This Area

A no-till tour is scheduled for Friday, September 21, 10 a.m. - 12 noon, at the Don Mathews and B. K. Nealey and Sons farm.

Meet at the Mathews homestead, (two miles north of Danville on blacktop, then go one mile west and one and one-half miles north).

An informational program on no-till and minimum-till fertilization will be held at the Iowa Army Ammunition Plant recreation hall, Middletown, at 7 p.m., Tuesday, September 25. The speaker will be Dr. Charles A. Osmond, Director of Agronomy. All interested farmers are invited to attend.

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SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

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 (Other) ☐
 Editorial ☐
 Advertisement ☐
 Cons. picture ☐

Try it and you'll like it

DANVILLE---Many farmers will drive tractors across their corn field a half-dozen times during the course of a season.

Planting, fertilizing, applying chemicals, cultivating. Charles Nealey doesn't do that.

During a no till tour of the Burt Nealey and Sons and Don Mathews farms last Friday, Charles told about the time he spent on one corn plot.

"I was in the field once this year. I pulled in and planted and pulled back out," he told about 2-dozen farmers.

The Nealeys like no till, enough so that they will plant 4 times as much ground next year by no till than by conventional tillage, raising their acreage from 50 to 200.

Mathews planted 60 acres of corn in soybean stubble this year; he will increase

that next year.

"I was really happy with it," Mathews said after the tour. "It saves us a lot of fuel."

The system is simple, he pointed out, requiring planting and adding herbicide. But because of that, a farmer has got to be careful to do it correctly to get results.

District soil conservationist Howard Bright told the tour guests that the "good farmer" who uses conventional methods will do well with no till, "because you pay attention to what you are doing."

Farmer reaction to no till has shifted in the past 3 years, Bright reported.

It used to be, he said, that farmers would look at it and say, "Some people might be able to do it..but it is not going to change my farming."

Today, Bright said, "I don't see anybody laughing at it."

No till is promoted as a method to conserve soil, reducing likelihood of eroding that fertile commodity.

Farmers listen to that, Bright said, but probably more important is the effect no till has on their pocket-books.

"A lot of field work is recreation," Bright said, "but now it's got to be ex-

pensive recreation" with escalating fuel costs.

The Nealeys learned that no till saves soil.

About one sloping field, Charles said, "A guy would kid himself to plow it."

He planted corn in waist-high orchard grass, mostly to the dismay of his father, but the elder Nealey has

since changed his mind.

"I don't think any of (the soil) washed away," Burt said. "You still got the dirt there, that is the important point."

Farmers should try a few acres at first, Bright urged, without committing a total farm operation to no till.

There should be little yield loss, Burt said. "Even if you had to sacrifice a bushel or two, you keep the dirt out there."

For those who still had doubts, Charles simplified his approach with this comment: "You put your heart into it. It will work."

Neighbors laugh

DANVILLE---It's a good thing that the Burt Nealey family has a sense of humor.

Because Burt, Charles and Jim have taken a fair share of ribbing this year about their experimenting with no-till farming.

During a stop at one field north of here on a tour last week, Charles said that the field was planted when it was waist high in orchard grass.

Burt acknowledged that it looked less than impressive. Neighbor Bill Denney, he said, threatened to put up a sign: "This does not belong to me."

Later, when the field turned a reddish color, Burt said that Denney had another sign proposal: "No smoking."

At another field, Burt said that after corn was planted in corn stalks, Howard Waters called to ask if the Nealeys were still farming.

"I said that was no till," Burt related, "He said it looked like no crop."



EXPLAINING the benefits of no till farming on a tour north of Danville last

week were farmer Charles Nealey, left, and soil conservationist Howard Bright.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

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It's The Nature Of Things

With Harold Linder

He's got persimmon, pear, peach, plum, poke berries, mulberries, elderberries, gooseberries, and grapes - also wild grapes, crab apples, chestnuts, hic-cans (a hickory-pecan blend), walnuts, English walnuts, hazelnuts, pecans, and over 100 varieties of apple trees.

Of course this does not include growing flowers, garden vegetables, evergreens, honey bees, the catfish crop or some other forgotten to mention fruit or nut, or the flock of ducks, geese, and pigeons.

"I grow too much," said Mediapolis naturalist and landscaper - retired, Harold Linder. "I've given away bushels of fruit this year."

Linder is a naturalist, an avid grower-gardener who contends he went into landscaping professionally to support an expensive hobby-research effort in the field of growing plants.

In August he retired after about 20 years in the business to hopefully devote more of his time to completion of research and projects begun over the years in areas of tree crops, agri-silviculture, alternate food sources, and product improvements.

According to Linder, who is associated with Muscatine Island Plant Growers, Iowa Nut Growers, and Northern Nut Growers, food production as we now know it is likely to reach a dead end as crop production costs soar.

People in the Iowa bread-basket cannot realistically continue to produce enough food at a low enough cost to feed the other nations of the world, he surmises.

Countries and areas with different climates and soil need to become as productive as possible if world hunger is to be met in years to come. Some authorities, Linder included, think tree crops may be part of the answer.

Linder corresponds and cooperates with several researchers at Universities throughout the country, and corresponds with people all over the world, both personally and as part of the Nut Growers Associations.

Most of Linder's work has concentrated in collecting specimens and grafting, although he has worked on natural ways to spray and to stop plant disease as well, and other related areas as necessary.

This type of research is slow and methodic, and success or failure may not be evident for several years.

Presently Harold is working on a mulberry graft project in early stages. Mulberries grow freely in the wild but are difficult to maintain in graft and growing research, he said. In some countries mulberries are now a food product with possibilities of increased usage.

Two apple orchards also show

years of graft research including one tree with five varieties and another that includes a history of the Leopold family.

Fruit improvement research includes a goal of higher quality, larger fruit or nut meats, less waste, increased tree productivity, and resilience to different disease and climate. Nuts should be easily cracked.

Difficulty in fruit and nut production lies with a problem seen in the apple industry - plant a Jonathan apple seed, and you may or may not get a Jonathan apple tree.

Seeds do not run true to the parent plant. This is why grafting becomes essential. If you find a plant with superior fruit, it can be grafted onto non-superior trees which will insure more production.

These plants are also researched, grown, and studied, to hopefully evolve as a hybrid or new strain of plant that will thrive in various types of climate or improve the product in some other essential area.

Most of the food grown at the Linder farm goes not only for research, but feeds the family as well. Practically all the food eaten by Harold and his wife is homegrown, including honey from the bees. They are semi-vegetarians, he said, and only eat meat about once a week, staying closely to a natural diet.

One of the newer farm projects is growing catfish and bullheads to make maximum use of ponds added for irrigation purposes. Fish are fed and grown by Linder and harvested in the fall for the family freezer.

Although some folks consider Harold an "expert" in his field, he makes no claim to the title. Most of his education came from growing up on a farm and in the woods during the depression, and the rest from reading and research.

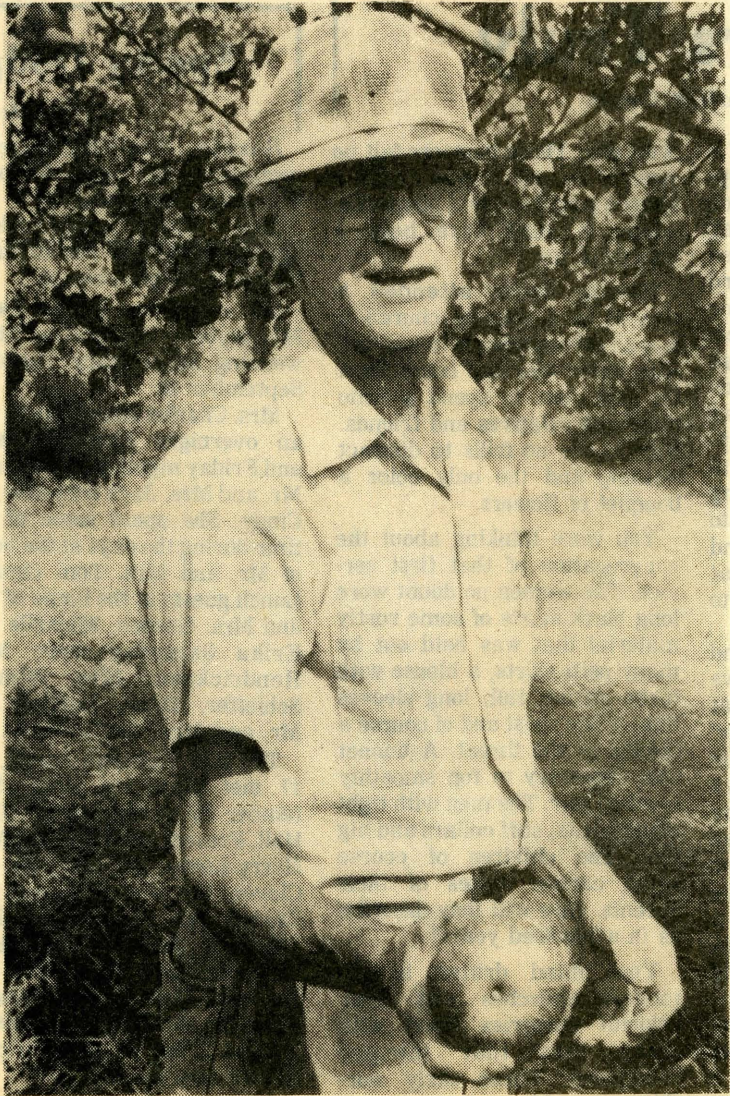
Linder has donated two very good books on tree crops and his area of research to the local library, and last year escorted a group of interested people on an educational nature hike through Luckenbill woods.

He enjoys sharing his knowledge. Next area nut growers meeting is October 6 at Perkins Park shelter house with a tree tour of Crapo Park to follow. Interested people are invited.

Correspondence from people and schools and learned men is stacking up; the trees are growing; the clock is ticking.

"I wish I could devote more time to my projects," the quiet naturalist said. "The trouble with my work is that I'll never live long enough to see it all completed," he commented wistfully, and walked on among the trees and shrubs and plants.

"My theory is that we are fighting nature all the time when we should be cooperating," Linder continued. "We should be cultivating instead of destroying . . ."



Harold Linder, fruit and nut grower and naturalist, explains just one of the 100 varieties of apples that he raises on a farm southwest of Mediapolis.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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1979 Sept. Oct. Issue of The Farrow

This kind of soil protection helps Duane Tupper attract conservation-conscious landowners.

SOIL-
SAVING
TENANTS

By John J. Reagan

**Pampering land
gives these renters
an edge
in the competition
for farmground**

Competition for rental land is getting tougher every year, but some farmers are finding that having a reputation for super soil management can give them a head start with prospective landlords. These renters admit that more bushels and fewer weeds are still uppermost in the minds of many landowners, but they're showing landlords how to save soil and have high yields at the same time.

Among tenants trading on their erosion-control expertise is Duane Tupper, Mazeppa, Minn. He has developed a sound no-till program to save soil on his own as well as leased land. After experimenting with no-till on his own 500-acre farm, he put together a system that he also uses on 500 acres he rents from four landowners.

No-till salesman. "I planted the first no-till acreage in a field in back of the house in case I had trouble with weeds, and I did take some lumps with weed control," Tupper says. "Experience helped me overcome the cultural problems, and I've developed a cropping system that now looks good from the road. The past couple of years we've had some real gully-washers. The lack of erosion in no-tilled fields gives them a real edge.

"I've turned out to be a dedicated no-till booster, and I'm growing better corn with no-till than I did with conventional tillage."

(continued)

SOIL-SAVING TENANTS

/continued



Gary Weinard aims to preserve resources for future landowners like his son Brian.

Greg Kruger (left) consults with district conservationist Steve Davis about land improvement on rented farms.



One of Tupper's neighbors, George Norman, watched Tupper work with no-till cropping for a couple of years, then asked Tupper to farm his 80-acre place when he retired last fall. Another neighbor, Pat Hall, also wants him to use the no-till system on his corn land.

"Even absentee landowners are getting a lot more soil-conservation conscious," Tupper says. "With land around here going for \$2,000 per acre, nobody wants to see his farm go down the river."

Tupper says he can produce corn via the no-till system for considerably less than he can with conventional tillage. Moreover, no-till crops generally use moisture more efficiently, whether the season is wet or dry. "Some of our soils are coarse and droughty, so we need to hang on to all the available water we

can," he adds. "Besides, with less tillage, the soil works around the seed better."

Soil saver. Soil improvement has become a major point in the leasing program of Greg Kruger, who rents 900 acres from 15 landowners near Lima, Ohio. "I put a lot of emphasis on land improvement," he says. "I usually tell a landlord that his land will wind up in better condition than when I started farming it, whether I farm it one year or ten."

"I'm in those fields a lot more than my landlords are, and I can tell right from the tractor seat where erosion is a problem or where better drainage would help. It's an approach that has improved my image as a renter, and it's one that I believe in myself."

Kruger says most of the people he leases land from are a generation or two away from the farm, or they hold down jobs in town, so they are often unaware of their land-improvement needs. Some problems can be corrected merely by changing the crop rotation or tillage system. When there's a need for major land improvements, he points them out to the landowner, then consults with Steve Davis, a Soil Conservation Service district conservationist.

"Steve and I do a lot of the legwork and paperwork," Kruger says. "We may even line up a contractor. Of course we consult with the landowner about any major dollar decisions."

"It takes extra time, but I enjoy planning drainage projects or waterways or even structures. And it is for a good cause—mine as well as the landlord's. I cash-rent most of the land, and I wind up with better crops. The landlord winds up with a better farm."

Steve Davis says tenants such as Kruger, who has received an "Outstanding Cooperator" award from the Allen County Soil and Water Conservation District, make it much easier to promote soil conservation among landlords.

Tailoring tillage. Gary Weinard, who is currently secretary of the Vermilion County Soil and Water Conservation District in Illinois, also gives soil improvement high priority in his leasing program. Weinard, who farms 550 acres near Hoopeston, Ill., says land in his area doesn't slope much, and soils often range from sandy to clay loam in the same field.

"Minimum tillage seems to be

the best system for these soil conditions," Weinard adds. "It reduces compaction and definitely increases the water-holding capacity of the soil, and those are bonuses for the tenant."

Weinard helps his father farm 240 acres, and he rents from landowners Carolyn Tweedy and Dorothy Duley. They meet early in the year to discuss cropping plans and tillage options.

"After a couple of years of experience we all agreed that reducing tillage doesn't reduce yields, and it usually means more profit all the way around," Weinard says. "So now I simply decide which tillage system is best for a particular field."

Weinard fall-chisels most of the land, although he mold-boards sod and some cornstalk ground that's level. He is considering seeding a cover crop of rye-grass to hold down winter erosion, and he drills most of his 200 acres of soybeans, partly to reduce erosion but also to get more beans per acre. It's a flexible program that keeps soil in place and structurally sound, and it also results in good yields. Weinard says his corn averages 135 to 140 bushels per acre; soybeans average 45 bushels.

Tenants in other areas also are using good reputations as soil savers to lure landowners, and more farm-management firms are considering conservation know-how to be highly desirable knowledge among tenants. The reason, they say, is that more and more landowners are realizing that crops are a renewable resource, but their land is not.

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Tile outlet demo at Middletown

By **BOB SOGARD**

A tile outlet terrace demonstration sponsored by the Des Moines county soil conservation district will be held at 1 p.m. Wednesday on the Russell and John Seymour farm 2½ miles west of Middletown.

The field is on the northwest corner of the Geode and Danville blacktops. Tile and riser pipes have been installed by Russ Williams, Danville, and he will be on hand to explain his part of the job.

Frank E. Woodall, New London, will do the terrace construction and he's scheduled to have his equipment in action.

William Baugh, conservation technician, said, "This will show how terraces going around the hill can keep several tons of topsoil (per acre) from getting around the outlets. There will be other features of interest."

Refreshments will be served.

The owners will share about half of the \$5,828 estimated cost for the job with the federal government.

Baugh has been active of late, selling farmers to the west and north of the Seymours on the 75% cost share on projects in the Geode Lake watershed. The state participates in funding of projects in selected watersheds above state-owned lakes.

These include terraces, waterways, erosion control structures expected to cost \$105,021, of which the state will pay \$78,766.13. The landowners, practices recently approved, estimated cost and state share:

Keith B. Renner — 1,175-foot waterway, \$4,470 and \$3,352.50. Also, 100 feet of sediment and water control, \$800 and \$600.

Alvin Dockendorff — Erosion control structure, \$5,000 and \$3,750.

Carl and Steve Shumaker — 1,600 feet of waterway, \$6,244 and \$4,683.

Robert Oetken — 8,000 feet of terraces, \$12,720 and \$9,540.

Homer Jones — 5,900 feet of terraces, \$10,850 and \$8,137.50.

Robert A. Wagner — Erosion control structure, \$4,550 and \$3,412.

Henry Dockendorff — 6,500 feet of terraces, \$13,000 and \$9,750.

Mrs. L.B. Cady — 1,600 feet of terraces, \$2,770 and \$2,077.50.

Walter Moehn — 1,300 feet of terraces, \$2,570 and \$1,927.50.

William Grinstead — 4,000 feet of terraces, \$10,470 and \$7,852.50.

Herb H. Grinstead — 6,000 feet of terraces, \$13,550 and \$10,162.50.

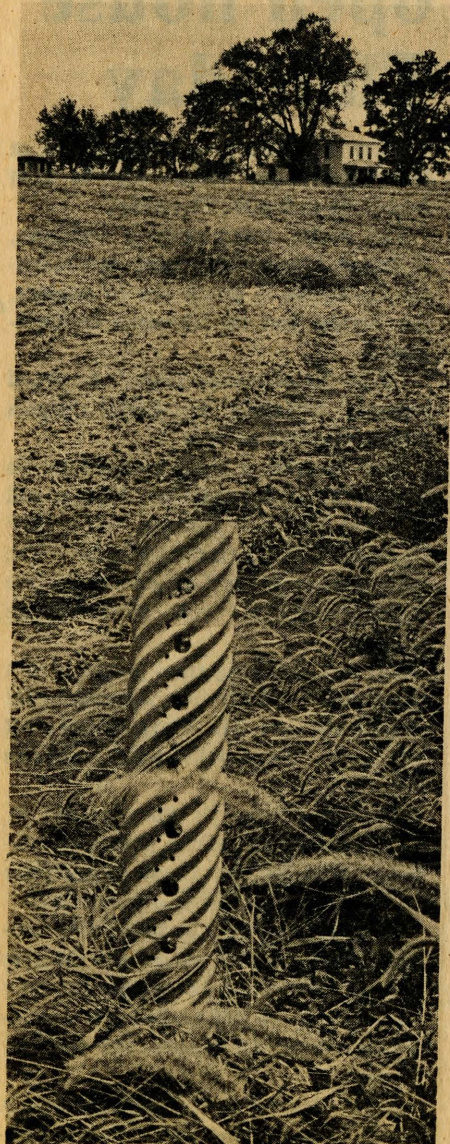
Roger Parrott — 8,100 feet of terraces, \$17,352.50 and \$13,014.38. Also, 900-foot waterway, \$675 and \$506.25.

Specialized and general-interest programs and meetings continue to be offered to Hawk Eyeland farmers and

firewood (stump and solar), energy plantations, use of native lumber and forestry equipment demonstrations.

Advanced registrations aren't required, but Dowling asked those planning to attend to call his office in Donnellson, 835-5116, the Henry county office at Mt. Pleasant, 385-8126, or Des Moines county office at Burlington, 754-7556.

A workshop on harvesting firewood also will be held from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. Oct. 17 at the Saulsbury Recreation Area in Muscatine county. It will be repeated from 6 to 8 p.m. for those who work afternoons. Extension director Eugene Mathern said advanced registration isn't required.



CURVE OF FIELD between two outlet tile risers on the Russell and John Seymour farm south of Danville indicates the direction terraces will take.

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X

New Era, 10-19-78

RC&D Council

Meets Tonight

A presentation on a new proposal for development of a wetland area in Ft. Madison will be made at the regular meeting of the Geode Wonderland RC&D council tonight, October 19, at 8 p.m.

This type of measure should be of great interest to soil conservation districts as a way to broaden their county-wide programs.

A brief presentation on some facet of RC&D is planned for each remaining meeting in fiscal 1979.

Pathfinders to Fairfield

By BOB SOGARD

MIDDLETOWN — Geode Wonderland Resource, Conservation and Development (RC&D) headquarters will move to Fairfield.

Eldon Weber, area conservationist with the Soil Conservation Service made the announcement Thursday night at a meeting of the executive council. Weber told the council a timetable hasn't been established for the move, but that the six-county Pathfinders RC&D, recently authorized for federal funding, will be coordinated from the same office.

Combining the two offices will save approximately \$40,000 per year, said Geode Wonderland coordinator Ralph Dewey.

Geode Wonderland has operated from offices in the Machinists building east of here for the past 3½ years with Dewey as its first and only coordinator. It serves Des Moines, Henry, Lee and Louisa counties.

Dewey has been assigned to help de-

velop a plan design, a pattern for future handling of proposals to be considered by the Pathfinder council. He said this part of the organization will be completed by the first of next year. Meantime, Pathfinder project affairs committee members are developing a list of priorities.

A coordinator and an assistant will be appointed to serve the two areas, Weber said.

Dewey noted that travel distances for council members of both RC&D units will be similar, but the Des Moines county council will have to find another place to meet.

The Geode Wonderland council approved startup of a measure to hire a CETA assistant for each of the county SCS offices, to help with the heavier loads in designing and carrying out conservation measures. In Des Moines county, planning of Lake Geode watershed projects are pressing technicians,

district conservationist Howard Bright reported.

The CETA assistants also will work with extension directors in programs such as eradication of multiflora rose.

Barbara Leigh, Centerville, is working with Chariton Valley, Geode Wonderland and Pathfinder RC&D staffs to obtain grants and other federal help for priority projects.

Weber said the RC&D program is designed to help local people help themselves in rural development projects. It is directed toward natural resources, but human resources are considered most important, the area conservationist stated.

Pathfinders includes Davis, Jefferson, Keokuk, Mahaska, Van Buren and Wapello counties. It has existed without funding the past three years while officers attempted to gain recognition and funds from the US Dept. of Agriculture.

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Views On Land Use Sought

Your opinions are being sought on land use and conservation through 17 National Agricultural Land Study workshops to be conducted throughout the nation in coming months.

Iowans are invited to participate in one of those workshops to be held November 7 through 9 at Dubuque in the Hoffman House and Midway Motor Lodge. All land users are invited to provide opinion -- not just the agricultural sector.

There will be just one presentation to the group to provide an overview of agricultural land concerns. The rest of the workshop will allow participants to discuss their views on issues, concerns, what needs to be done, who should handle problems and techniques and policies that have worked.

With a broad perspective being sought, real estate people, builders, developers, environmentalists, recreationists, consumer groups, users of natural resources, government representatives and business men are urged to attend.

The Dubuque workshop is part of a national agricultural lands study initiated by the Council on Environmental Quality and the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Nine other federal agencies are participating in the studies.

Persons interested in attending can obtain additional details and registration materials from Ronald C. Powers, director, North Central Regional Center for Rural Development, 108 Curtiss Hall, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011.

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Held Terrace Demonstration

A terrace demonstration was held at the Russell Seymour residence, two and one-half miles west of Middletown off the Geode blacktop on Wednesday, October 10. Only a few people attended.

Purpose of the demonstration was to show how terraces going around a hill save topsoil.

Anyone interested in viewing the terraces is welcome to do so.

Work has been continuing on the Geode watershed. The Geode Watershed is a 75 percent cost share program working on erosion control processes, mainly, contour terracing. Recently contour terracing has been completed on the following farms: Roger Parrott - 8,100 ft., Larry Cady - 1,600 ft., Herb Grinstead - 3,400 ft.

Preparation for terracing involves 15-20 man hours, spent on drawing blueprints, surveying and designing. Special attention is given to distinguishing between types of slopes. A one to five percent slope requires a broad base terrace and SCS officials strongly encourage grassed back terracing for a five to ten percent slope.

Farmers who have fields that didn't get terraced this fall are directed to seed the fields down next spring so terracing can be completed next summer.

Contact Howard Bright, district conservationist, or William Baugh, conservation technician, for further information.

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No-till skirmish leads to truce at IAAP

By Bob Sogard

A cutback in no-till requirements of Iowa Army Ammunition Plant farmland leases resulted in an hot exchange of fire between the Army and civilians here Wednesday.

Eventually, however, a cease-fire led to a truce and ultimately to an understanding for a possible environmental study as well as production monitoring.

The Army was represented by Col. Edward Snow, commander of the IAAP, and the civilians by the Des Moines county soil district commissioners.

Earlier this year, the soil commissioners apparently reached an agreement with then-commander Col. Donald Reinhard to require leaseholders to use no-tillage practices on all 1,887 acres of land coming up for lease in March.

Eventually, it was hoped to prohibit conventional moldboard plowing of all row cropland. Between 7,000 and 8,000 acres would constitute a major experiment in conservation tillage or no-till cropping.

The soil commissioners pointed out that traditional soil-saving methods aren't keeping up with erosion of intensively cropped land, so no-till offers a means of saving soil and moisture. Also, energy and money savings are made as less power for tractors and fewer trips across the field are required.

But Snow claimed that the only understanding on paper is a state-funded project to be carried out at the IAAP by Iowa State university and Southeastern Community college, with cooperation of IAAP agronomy department, the leaseholders and the soil district.

There are two tracts, totaling 500 acres, which will be involved in the study. The legislature appropriated \$100,000 for a two-year study. The effort originated with the Des Moines county soil commissioners, represented by district conservationist Howard Bright and commissioner Sam Jennison. It was supported by Lee Kolmer, ISU dean of agriculture, and Hawk Eyeland legislators.

Snow said, "I encourage no-till to any farmer out there, but at this point I can't force it down their throats. There are a number of questions that must be answered first.

"One is the question of chemical buildup in the soil or runoff. There are nine EPA monitoring stations out there. We have enough chemicals out there and it's my neck if we don't keep them under control," the colonel added.

Doug Cling, Mediapolis farmer whose entire acreage is under no-till, and Jennison both stated that there is less runoff and pesticides buildup with no-tillage practices, so that knocks out one of the commander's concerns.

Another concern, Snow said, is that the biggest leaseholder at the plant, Don Nelson, plowed up all 600 acres of IAAP land which he voluntarily planted no-till this year. He had attempted to talk to Nelson about his reasons, but hadn't reached him yet, Snow added.

This move was new to the commissioners and concerned them, too.

Finally, Snow said he would require no-till practices on one additional tract, if he could get the Environmental Protection Agency to finance a study of that tract, using only pollution control comparisons.

Plant land use director Winston Cooper, who trained in the SCS office here, said he hoped to have the proposed leases out soon after the first of the year. However, they may be delayed somewhat under an agreement by the commander and the commissioners.

One aspect of the agreement is the possible EPA study. Another is that Snow agreed to accompany Jennison to ISU the third week in January to review their concerns with Dean Kolmer and his staff.

Dr. Walt Lovely, ISU agronomist who heads up the study at the IAAP, will be here Jan. 8 to consult with SCC and IAAP representatives.

Bob and Larry Beck, Danville farmers

who also rent large acreages at the IAAP, were on hand to discuss a sewage treatment lagoon odor problem with the commissioners. They were asked their reaction to no-till leases at the plant.

Bob Beck said he would have to get new equipment if the Beck Brothers bid on such tracts. They would bid accordingly. Larry said he could see some advantages and both agreed that they would prefer to experiment on government land rather than their own.

There were 37 no-till projects totaling 3,000 acres in Des Moines county this year, Bright said, and all but Nelson's 600 acres and some at SCC were on private land.

Outstanding yields included the 179 bushels per acre of Doug Cling in the no-till yield contest conducted by the Mediapolis FFA chapter.

Second place winner was John Wagenbach with a yield of 169 bpa and third place went to Doug's father, Rogerf, with a 165-bushel yield.

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IAAP leases controversial

By Bob Sogard

Don Nelson said he isn't giving up on no-till cropping, despite the fact that he plowed up the corn ground at the IAAP that he planted "in the trash" last May.

"I think with the energy and economy situation the way it is, we've got to keep trying these new practices," said Nelson, largest renter of ordnance plant land. "Also, we have to consider this from a conservation standpoint.

"It worked very well this year and I will do more next year. I felt obligated to try it, so I'd be prepared," he added. Nelson referred to the word he had from IAAP military authorities that all leases offered in the winter of 1980 would require the renters to use no-till practices.

Lt. Col. Donald Reinhard, commanding officer, agreed to the conservation measure at the request of the Des Moines county soil conservation district commissioners. Reinhard's successor, Lt. Col. Ed Snow, met with the commissioners last week and backed away from "shoving it down the throats" of potential renters.

He stated that his stance was not a turnaround from the previous understanding. Snow declared that Reinhard never agreed to go 100% no-till, but only to cooperate with Iowa State university and Southeastern Community college in a two-year, \$100,000 study financed by the legislature.

There are two tracts involved and of the 500 acres, about three-fourths will be no-till and the remainder a mix of conservation and conventional tillage.

Snow also agreed to pull back one more tract for no-till experimentation, provided the Environmental Protection Agency will monitor it.

He said his cautious approach arose because he understood that more chemicals are used with no-till practices and he didn't want to face a federal suit if one of the nine EPA monitoring stations at the plant were triggered.

Doug Cling, soil commissioner and farmer whose entire corn crop was planted no-till, said he's had high yields and no chemical problems in the three years he's used the procedure.

Furthermore, no more herbicides and insecticides are needed than with conventional practices, he added. The lone exception is Paraquat, a dessicant that breaks down when it reaches the soil.

The IAAP commander said he wanted to talk to Nelson and find why the Danville farmer plowed his no-till corn ground.

Nelson conceded that he has reservations.



IAAP chief under fire

Lt. Col. Ed Snow, far left, defended his cautious approach to land lease requirements at a soil district commissioners meeting. Others, clockwise, are Howard Bright, district conservationist; Dorothy Davis,

clerk, and commissioners Doug Cling, Rex Troute, chairman Ray Pilling, Sam Jennison, Harold Linder and Joe Beckman, the latter two with backs to camera.

"I have just a little hesitancy to say it will work every year in every field. The corn ground planted no-till seemed abnormally dry, so I plowed it up to make more of a sponge when we do get moisture," he said in a phone interview.

Nelson bought a no-till planter this year. He planted 600 acres to soybeans and corn directly into the debris from the 1978 crop.

"It's too bad we can't have continuity," he declared. "It was agreed between the conservation people and the IAAP that future leases would require no-till planting. The legislature appropriated \$100,000 or \$120,000 for the research project.

"I favor being innovative and when you are using state funds I think they are obligated to go ahead. I'm personally disappointed that it's not an on-going program.

"I plowed some corn ground but not the soybean ground and I'm planning to use no-till in the bean fields," Nelson added. He said he was pleased with the yields where he used no-till.

His new planter was dropping nearly 30,000 kernels of seed corn per acre, higher than he wanted, so he cut back. "That was a mistake, because this was a high-population year and the 30,000 population ground produced more than 200 bushels per acre," he said.

The practice requires only two or three trips across the field to plant, fertilize, treat and harvest a crop. But conventional tillage may require five to seven trips, so fuel savings are bound to result from no-tillage cropping.

Cling said he uses his small tractor for field work, while his large tractor with the air-conditioned cab sits in the barnyard and is used only to grind feed.

A panel drawn from the 10 participants in a no-till yield contest

sponsored by the Mediapolis FFA chapter discussed their experiences at a recent awards night chili supper.

Cling, who won the contest with a 179-bushel yield, and John Wagen-

bach, second at 169, were joined by Jeff DeFosse and Leonard Lane. Other contestants were Roger Cling, father of the winner, Tom Eland, Hartzell Hillyard, James Howell, Eric Massner and Charles Nelson.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

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IAAP schedules lease of land for agricultural use

There will be 1,550 acres of agricultural cropland, 337 acres of hay ground and 655 acres of grazing ground in the Iowa Army Ammunition Plant area up for lease bids at 1:30 p.m. Feb. 28 in the recreation building, No. 500-116.

Three of the tracts, totaling 558 acres, will be part of a no-till experiment which Iowa State university, Southeastern Community college, and the leaseholders will conduct.

Minimum tillage, no-till and clean till will alternate in two of the tracts, 229 acres and 249 acres. These two are part of a two-year, \$100,000 study of zero tillage authorized by the Iowa legislature last year.

In addition, an 80-acre tract slated for no-till is scheduled to provide a check on pollution or chemical buildup in the soil.

Lt. Col. Edward Snow explained earlier that conservation tillage,

crop rotation and no-tillage planting will encouraged and in some cases required in the federal reservation. All of leases are for five years and all will prohibit fall plowing.

There are approximately 7,500 acres of ground leased by farmers in the 19,300-acre IAAP area.

Arlyn Musselman, agricultural sequence coordinator at SCC, said tracts 1 and 9 leases will require that the farmer furnish seed, fertilizer and all field operations. He and a graduate assistant will handpick subplots in the no-till plots, conduct soil tests, corn leaf sampling, moisture checks and fuel usage in the subplots.

The individual tract management plans are available for review by prospective bidders in the plant land manager's office at the IAAP, weekdays between 8:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., except holidays.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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Cons. picture

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COL. EDWARD SNOW, Iowa Army Ammunition Plant commanding officer, explains IAAP land conservation and cropping program.

No-till planting at IAAP slated

There are 7,500 acres of crop and pastureland in the Iowa Army Ammunition Plant reservation and they are all slated for full conservation treatment according to the leases to be offered the next five years.

Col. Edward Snow, IAAP commanding officer, said the 1980 crop and pastureland leases at the IAAP will include provision for 500 acres of experimental no-tillage planting on two tracts. These tracts will be planted according to lease limitations by the farmer who wins the bidding at the mid-March letting.

The fields will be monitored by Iowa State university and Southeastern Community college. A full-time Iowa State employee, a post-graduate resident of this area, will be hired to work on the project this summer.

SCC will receive \$20,000 each of the next two years, and ISU will have \$30,000 annually under a \$100,000 appropriation from the Iowa legislature for no-till a study.

There will be another 80 acres set aside for no-tillage and this, Col. Snow hopes, will become a strictly environmental test area. Snow said some disagreements with the Des Moines county soil commissioners have been ironed out.

The commissioners had understood that all leases would require no-till planting. There are about 1,887 acres of crop and pastureland coming up for bid in March and the colonel said he had some reservations about the possibility of environmental hazards because of chemicals used in no-till operations.

"All of the leases will prohibit fall plowing," Snow said. "Crop rotation also is required, except on the experimental tracts.

"With the SCS people, we are

moving toward no-till," he added. "The leases will provide that if we or the farmer find an emergency condition caused by chemical failure or whatever, tillage would be used where needed.

"All farm acreage in the IAAP is under conservation — we're keenly aware of conservation and anti-pollution here.

Pollution analysis is an on-going process here — it costs a lot of money, but we stay on top of things. For instance, the water going out of the plant is cleaner than that coming into the plant," Snow said.

Proposed leases and bid invitations will be mailed to farmers early this month.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

INFORMATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Name of paper *The Hawk Eye*
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Supervisors' cash may boost Franklin lake

By Tom Raithel

The Franklin township lake eventually may be more than a good discussion.

Des Moines county supervisors said Thursday they may pump \$30,000 into an associated erosion control project to get it going.

Before the lake can be built, officials agree, erosion of land outside the park must be headed off. As a start in this project, the \$30,000 would be used to develop a topographic map of the area.

This money would be given, however, only if the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) would also back the project, and supervisors and district conservationist Howard Bright are planning to meet with ASCS officials within the week.

Bright and the district soil commissioners told the supervisors at Thursday's regular meeting the lake, which would be built by damming a river in Big Hollow recrea-

tion park 12 miles northwest of Burlington, was a high priority of the county conservtion board.

Bright said that the project, which has been talked about for about 15 years, was now being given new seriousness by the soil conservation district as well. "We've paid only lip service to it in the past, but now it's a high priority," Bright said.

Supervisor Bob Christensen said he'd "been led to believe over the last couple of years the project is virtually impossible. But I can't think of anything I'd rather get done in the next 10 years," Christensen added.

"I think we're darn fools if we stick our heads in the sand and not do this," supervisor Dick Lewis said.

Bright said the overall soil and water erosion control project would cost about \$792,480. Federal and state funds, however, could pay for a large part of the project if the su-

pervisors expressed a commitment to it.

Bright said he was asking supervisors for \$30,000 in federal revenue-sharing funds for the map, which will show land contours of the entire recreation area and the park watershed.

Bright said the average amount of topsoil lost per year in the area was more than five tons per acre. "Any land being farmed with over 2% slope is losing over five tons per acre," he emphasized.

The project, however, would link tile outlet terraces with "no till" cropping, where the crop is planted and harvested in untilled ground.

Supervisors said they thought it would be hard for Bright to convince local farmers. But Bright said that once the project got underway, he would ask some farmers in the area to set aside 40 acres for zero tillage.

He said he thought they would switch to "no till" after they saw it

increased their profits.

Bright said he hoped that about \$50,000 in federal funds would be available from ASCS this year for the project.

The topographic map, Bright said, will help the county as well as farmers in the watershed. The county can eliminate a bridge because of a a programmed erosion control structure, he added, and "flatland farmers" can see which way water on their land goes. The farmers can tie into a tile system that's part of the overall erosion control measure.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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Supports Iowa Soil 2000

State Rep. Larry Kirkenslager (R-Burlington) has called for the adoption of a \$4 million "Iowa Soil 2000" program sponsored by the Iowa Dept. of Soil Conservation.

Kirkenslager said the program, if accepted by the full House and Senate, would pave the way to a state soil conservation program.

He called for the measure in the joint natural resources appropriation subcommittee, which voted to spend \$4 million on the project.

"We have exercised a great deal of fiscal restraint so far in these proceedings," said Kirkenslager, "and that is fine.

"But in the face of soil losses averaging twice what can be naturally replaced, there is an urgent need for

greater soil conservation measures."

The Kirkenslager amendment added \$3.1 million in funds to the \$5 million already appropriated for soil conservation programs in 1979.

Most of the additional money will fund cost-share projects, which help farmers pay for such conservation projects as terraces, farm ponds, tilling and other soil conservation measures. Another \$800,000 will be used to computerize the state's soil and erosion data, and \$140,000 for seven new field employees and field support in the Dept. of Soil Conservation.

The five-year goal of the program is to give every farmer detailed information about avoiding soil erosion on his land.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

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The HAWK EYE Sunday, February 24, 1980

Soil saving ideas requested

By Bob Sogard

In a major effort to find new ways to halt soil erosion and other resource problems, the US Department of Agriculture has proposed seven methods of attack for public review.

The public of Des Moines county is invited to two meetings this week where property owners as well as all taxpayers can express their reactions to the ideas.

The first will be at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, at the extension office, 900 Osborn, a joint meeting of the extension council and the Resource Conservation and Development board. Extension director James C. Hodges said the public is urged to attend and participate.

Howard Bright, district soil conservationist, and Deane Thornton, ASCS executive director, will pre-

sent a slide-tape program on the seven resource areas concerning soil and water.

The second meeting will be at Jack Hamilton's Clubhouse, Morning Sun, at 11 a.m. Thursday, held in conjunction with the Des Moines County Soil Conservation district annual meeting with contractors.

Thornton commented, "We have been losing the battle in these seven areas: Soil erosion, water quality, water supply and conservation, fish and wildlife habitat, upland flood damage, energy conservation, and related natural resources.

"The USDA has proposed seven conservation strategies for public consideration. People are being asked to help decide which of the seven 'alternative strategies' or combinations of them, should become the nation's future soil and water conservation program."

Bright emphasized, "They (USDA policy makers) are serious about this. By telling us what's most important, farm programs will be re-directed."

Ideas can be submitted by letter or by filling out a one-page form.

Comments may be submitted at either meeting, or sent directly to RCA Response Analysis Center, PO Box 888, Athens, Ga. 30603. Forms will be available at extension, SCS and ASCS offices, in addition to the planned meetings. Deadline for comments is Mar. 28.

The Resource Conservation Act (RCA) requires the agriculture department to develop a national program for conservation of soil, water and related natural resources. The areas, and proposed activities to accomplish the objectives are:

Soil resource quantity and quality: Reduce soil erosion on farm land, retain prime and unique farmland, maintain soil quality, and improve condition of rangeland.

Water quality: Reduce levels of toxic pollutants and dissolved solids, minimize pollution from nutrients and organic wastes, reduce sediment.

Water supply and conservation: Increase the efficiency of water use in agriculture, and increase agricultural water supplies.

Fish and wildlife habitat: Reduce loss of wetlands, increase instream water flow, improve upland wildlife habitat.

Upstream flood damages: Reduce upstream flood damages, develop new technology to reduce damages, and prevent loss of wetlands and prime ag land.

Energy conservation production: Reduce energy use in agriculture, increase energy production on ag land.

Related natural resources: Increase use of organic wastes, reduce downstream flood losses and sediment from construction sites, and reduce loss of prime and unique farmland to urban uses.

Strategies include the controversial "cross-compliance" plan under which farmers and ranchers would be required to solve conservation problems in order to receive assistance under certain federal farm programs. Secretary Bob Bergland indicated earlier this month during Illinois visits that this is likely under terms of the feed grains set-aside program to be announced by Mar. 1.

Six other proposed strategies:

Redirect present programs. The USDA would continue its 34 existing conservation programs, but would redirect funds and personnel toward new national objectives for conservation.

Regional resource projects. USDA programs would be directed toward urgent and chronic regional resource problems of national importance. Project plans would be the basis for federal assistance.

State leadership. State governments would develop their own conservation programs. After approval by USDA, states could receive grants to ensure achievement of national conservation objectives.

Regulation. Local, state and national regulations would be coupled with financial and technical assistance to solve conservation problems according to USDA standards.

Conservation performance bonus. Bonus benefits would be paid to farmers and ranchers who voluntarily solve conservation problems on their land. Bonuses could take the form of higher support payments, cost sharing, or favorable interest rates on loans.

Natural resource contracts. Farmers would receive annual payments for reducing erosion, conserving water and applying other conservation measures.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

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The Morning Sun News-Herald-Thursday, March 6, 1980-Page 4

Soil Commissioners meet in Morning Sun

Des Moines County Soil Commissioners invited representatives of the ASCS and area earth moving concerns for a meeting of minds on the continuing issue of soil conservation. The meeting was held at Jack Hamilton's Clubhouse on Thursday, February 28. There were 54 in attendance, including seven earth moving contractors and two tiling contractors.

Stan Simmons of Fairfield was the morning speaker. He is area engineering technician and handles 17 counties. He outlined conservation practices on an area level, informing the group as to what the different counties are doing.

Simmons explained a new type of terrace. The

proposed new design terrace will have a steep front and back to reduce the cost. Instead of making the terraces to fit the big equipment used today, the new terraces cost about \$1.50 a foot, and are designed for the equipment to go around the terrace inlets instead of between them. Locally, Talmage Mehaffy and Evan B. Wilson have some steep terraces installed on their farms in 1979.

Simmons said there is a new emphasis on blueprinting of terraces as they are laid out. This takes more time and exactness on the part of the technician, but he said, "If anyone says they don't have time to make blueprints, they need to take time." He also said, "We

don't lay out a job without the farmer's belief in the design. It's the farmer who has to work with it."

When opinions were called for, both the contractors and the farmers seemed to be favorable to the new style steep front and back terraces, and enthusiastic about the blueprinting.

Following the noon meal, Dean Thornton spoke, representing the ASCS. He showed a film which addressed problems and proposed objectives in developing a national program for the conservation of soil, water, and related natural resources. The proposal is by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the major area concerning the Iowa farmer is soil resource quantity and

quality, with objectives to reduce soil erosion on agricultural land, to retain prime and unique farmland, to maintain soil quality and to improve the condition of rangeland.

Thornton distributed folders describing objectives of the proposed Resources Conservation Act, as well as recommendation sheets to be sent to a response center which has been set up at Athens, Ga., for the evaluation of comments and opinions. The address is USDA Response Analysis Center, P.O. Box 888, Athens, Ga. 30603. He said up to this time conservation work has been mostly voluntary, but now the time has come for the individual, the federal, and the state, to work together.

He said, "The question is, 'Who is going to be the controlling factor? State or Federal government? Now is the opportunity to let your voice be heard: thousands of letters will have an impact. Don't growl - respond!'"

Thornton pointed out that approximately \$190 million is budgeted for agricultural conservation on a national basis - but this is the same amount which was offered ten or fifteen years ago, and the allocated funds have not

kept pace with the present needs.

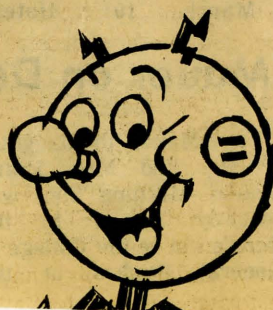
He said about one-third of the land area of the U.S. is federal land, mostly in the west, with uses such as industry and recreation. The non-federal land is mostly in farms, industrial uses, and mines, with an estimated 3,000,000 acres a year being taken for other uses than farming. The proposed soil and water resources conservation act would seek to solve some of these land problems.

William Baugh, Burlington, conservation technician, has the job of getting the terraces designed and blueprinted. He acted as coordinator for this meeting of landowners and contractors, and said he wanted them to know the kind of year it has been - a good year. Not necessarily in the quantity of work done, but in the quality of work. He explained quality to mean the type of terraces built: the modified contour terraces that were installed instead of the ones that just run up and down the hill. He said, "This kind take longer to farm, and more thought, but it is the real heart of soil conservation, and it reduces the amount of silt around the

inlets."

Howard Bright, Burlington District Conservationist, and Ray W. Pilling, chairman of the District Soil Commissioners, expressed their satisfaction in such a meeting of groups interested in conservation, and said, "We need to work together in soil conservation." Then they presented recognition certificates to men who have contributed significantly to conservation practices in terracing and water and sediment control basins.

Paul Beckman 1600 feet, Andy & Mark Breder 1500 feet, Mrs. L.B. Cady-Larry Cady 1600 feet, Arthur Corman 4000 feet-contour, Henry Dockendorff 6500 feet-contour, Herb H. Grinstead 6000 feet, William Grinstead 6000 feet-angled, Homer Jones 8000 feet-contour, Robert Jones 5700 feet-contour, Eric Massner 4300 feet, Talmage Mehaffy 4700 feet-steep & Broadbase, Craig Murguia 2900 feet, Robert Oetken 8000 feet, Roger & Tom Parrott 8300 feet-contour, John & Russell Seymour 3750 feet-contour, Richard Steffener 1500 feet, Arthur Strawhacker 2800 feet, Kenneth Wehage 1000 feet, Evan B. Wilson 6400 feet-Steep



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Care facility tops the list

By Tom Raithel

Des Moines county supervisors today gave capital expenditures top billing as they allocated \$251,500 of federal revenue-sharing funds for fiscal year 1980-81.

Approved were capital obligations of \$200,000, which could be spent for repairs on the Des Moines county care facility, the courthouse and other buildings; \$30,000 to the county soil conservation service for a topographical map of the Big Hollow recreation area; \$8,052 to the Steamboat Senior Citizens center; and \$2,500 to Retired Senior Volunteer Program (R.S.V.P.).

Denied were requests for \$34,794 to microfilm records in the county recorder's office; \$10,000 for the Burlington Art Guild; \$5,296 to the 4-H program; \$2,000 for a West Burlington fire department mobile radio; and a last minute request for \$30,000 from clerks in the courthouse for salary increases.

County auditor Myranell Dock-

endorff told supervisors at the start of the meeting that they had \$281,000 of non-obligated revenue-sharing funds for 1980-81. Supervisor Bob Christensen — who has challenged her reports before — said he thought the estimate was conservative.

Christensen proposed that \$100,000 to \$150,000 be set aside for a contingency fund that could pay for additional work to the care facility. He said that because architect Carl Blum's estimate was far below the bids the board received on the project, the \$300,000 of 1979-80 revenue-sharing funds approved for care facility renovation in a Dec. 18 referendum would cover only the basics.

Christensen added that the board could legally spend up to \$250,000 in revenue-sharing funds next year without a public hearing or a referendum.

He said that the total amount of

revenue sharing funds allocated over the last several years to the care facility was not too large (\$241,000) compared to allocations for courthouse renovation (\$714,000), Hope Haven (\$147,000) and other recipients.

Supervisor Merle Kelly recommended that revenue-sharing funds also be set aside for repair of courthouse and care facility roofs.

The board then approved a total of \$200,000 for capital improvements.

The \$30,000 Big Hollow recreation area map would help to help establish soil conservation practices and build Franklin lake.

The board also said that at least one-third of the 29 farmers in the area must intend to practice appropriate conservation methods before the money will be spent.

Funds from the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) are also expected for that project.

Soil conservation chief Berg learns of area's topsoil woes

By Bob Sogard

When Norm Berg came back to his native city Monday, he talked 'shop much of the day.

But first he went to see Emily Schach, 1039 S. Garfield, an old friend who has kept in touch with the chief of the US Soil Conservation service since his promotion to that post last September.

"She's a walking history book," declared Berg as he walked across a field at the IAAP Monday afternoon.

His mother, Mrs. Alf Berg, once worked at the ordnance plant — but rather than munitions-making, Berg was there Monday for an education from soil scientists, educators and farmers involved in a large no-tillage cropping experiment on leased IAAP farmland.

DISTRICT conservationist Howard Bright led a briefing at the SCS office before the IAAP tour. He showed the resource inventory map of Des Moines county and told why

the emphasis of district commissioners is on no-till.

Des Moines county has 260,000 acres, of which 165,000 are being actively cropped, Bright told his leader. Some 80,000 acres are losing more than five tons of topsoil every year, "unacceptable" because topsoil can only be replaced at a 3- to 4-ton rate.

27,000 acres are losing soil at a rate of 15 tons annually, Bright said — two bushels of soil for every bushel of corn it produces.

"We've taken these figures, along with the amount of topsoil remaining and the money we get to cost-share tile outlet terrace building," Bright said. "At the present rate, the average of 12 inches of topsoil we have will be gone on some hills within 25 years, and from the remaining land within 180 years."

TERRACES ARE expensive; fewer than 100,000 feet are being constructed yearly in Des Moines county, at a cost of \$118,000 to federal

and state agencies. If the soil loss is to be controlled within 25 years, 650,000 feet should be built annually, Bright said.

Eldon Weber, area conservationist, told Berg that in his 17-county area, every district conservationist is "aggressively promoting" no-till cropping.

He said resource inventories show that at present rates of erosion of the 3.7 million acres in cropland, 36% will lose their topsoil in 20-50 years, and 41% in 50-100 years. The

current rate of terrace building is 1.9 million feet, treating 8,200 acres, while it should be four times that.

His people estimate 30,000 acres is in no-till and 2.4 million acres in some form of conservation tillage this year.

Reduced tillage will save five million gallons of fuel and 12 million

No-till—

(Continued on page 3)



Norm Berg, chief of the Soil Conservation service, left, discusses an experiment at IAAP with Arlyn Musselman of Southeastern Community college, center, and Doug Cling, Mediapolis farmer who plants all of his corn without tillage.

No-till 'fabulous,' SCS chief hears

(Continued from Page One)

tons of soil each year in 17 area counties, he reported.

SOIL COMMISSIONER Doug Cling has all of his land in no-till, some of which produced 180 bushels per acre last year, Cling said.

Berg said he was impressed by the initiative shown here by Bright, commissioners and the farmers, and advised simply: "Go to it!"

Don Nelson, Danville farmer who leased IAAP ground being planted no-till, said he first read about the practice 17 years ago, when Jones county farmers were experimenting with a Buffalo planter.

"I did some reading on it, but I didn't think it would be so good on this black ground and I kind of set that aside," he told Berg and other officials assembled at the IAAP. Then the soil district push paid off with a \$100,000 legislative appropriation to study no-till at the plant this year.

"I got a new planter and tried some no-till last year, 300 acres of corn and 300 acres of soybeans," he explained. "I saw some economics in it."

"THE RESULTS were fabulous. Of course, everything worked last year. I figure that some of the no-till corn planted 30,000 seeds to the acre made over 200 bushels per acre," Nelson stated.

The experiment at the IAAP is

supervised by Iowa State university with help from Arlyn Musselman, ag programs coordinator at Southeastern Community college.

Musselman said production, weed control, soil moisture and fuel savings are to be studied.

Berg said he will be sending his top officials throughout the country to spend a week with district conservationists, to get a feel of what is actually being done through SCS offices.

Berg, forum close tribute

A public forum featuring the US Soil Conservation service chief tonight at 7:30 concludes this month's tribute to native son naturalist Aldo Leopold.

Norman Berg, Burlington native, will be one of three panelists to discuss *The Land: How Do We Use it?* in First United Methodist church meeting hall, Fifth and Washington.

Earlier reports that the forum would be at First United Presbyterian were in error.

Also on the panel will be Jay Anderson, Indianola, chief of research and interpretation for Living History farm, Des Moines, and Elaine Baxter, former Burlington councilwoman now specializing in legislation and intergovernment relations with the US Dept. of Housing and Urban Development.

5/14/81

MEDIAPOLIS NEW ERA

Bright said 109 different information items are being recorded. They include such things as soil type, whether the land is prime farmland, cropping history, water and wind erosion potential, and conservation practices being used. Other information being recorded includes the present type of land use, the condition of the land, and extent of conservation treatment needed to control soil erosion.

"We've studied the land and made inventories before," Bright noted. "It's a little like a professional sports team. You come back each season with mostly the same players, but you evaluate them to see how they've changed, and you make adjustments. Our evaluations may not be every year, but SCS is in the inventory and monitoring business now to stay. It will be a part of our job to keep up with how our resources are changing.

But Bright stressed that the ongoing study was not accurate enough to be reliable on the county level. "It would be too costly to sample enough points for statistically reliable information locally. It will be reliable on a regional, statewide level, though, and may be able to make some judgments about our resource locally. None of the information gathered identifies any landowners; it's strictly a resource accounting study."

SCS goal is to get 40 percent of the field work finished this year, and to complete the work in 1982. Results will be computerized nationally through a laboratory at Iowa State University and presented to Congress.

"The plan is to repeat the inventory every five years, and use the information to help guide voluntary conservation programs nationwide," Bright explained. Resources Conservation Act of 1977 calls for a continual appraisal of natural resources.

SCS Examines Sample Land Units

In the next two years, the U. S. Soil Conservation Service will continue to examine "sample units" of land in the county as part of its national resources inventory.

"We're looking at a total of about 44 sample units in the county that have been randomly selected," according to Howard Bright, SCS district conservationist. "On each of those 160-acre units, we sample three points."

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

INFORMATIONAL ACTIVITIES

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Move to align conservation soil policy here

Soil commissioners Wednesday passed a resolution of intent to adopt a soil conservation policy that complies with state law.

Des Moines county Soil Conservation commissioners took the action during regular session Wednesday. The board outlined a basic policy statement and agreed to rewrite its contents before the next meeting Oct. 22.

The commission's plan sets out three basis conditions for approving projects. Permits for land-disturbing activity that would reduce the use of prime farmland would be denied unless size makes its agricultural use uneconomical; needs for other uses override conservation considerations; or development has received prior approval by a permit issuing authority.

A complete text of the statement is available at Soil Conservation office, Room 230, Federal building. Commissioners are Ray Pilling, chairman; Joseph Beckman, Douglas L. Cling, Sam Jennison and Rex Prout.

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Farmers gear to stop Geode silt woes

By Bob Sogard
Farm Editor

DANVILLE — There's a big job ahead to stop silt from choking Lake Geode and to protect the farmland in the lake watershed southwest of Danville, but there is progress to report.

The Soil Conservation Service for many years has promoted terrace building, grass waterways, farm ponds and other means of preventing erosion.

Some of those structures, under-designed or poorly maintained, are wearing out; they must be repaired or replaced. But state and federal cost-share dollars are rare and even willing farmers have fewer of them to match government inducements.

HOWARD BRIGHT, district conservationist with the Soil Conservation Service, said many of the farmers in the 11,132-acre watershed like Keith Renner and Bob Gruenjes have been doing a good job of farming to slow the soil loss.

They use hay and pasture cropping most of the time, with row crops rotated, but in 1980 the gullywashers fell and sure enough, they began to suffer gulley erosion.

Gruenjes' wife, Gladys, said: "With those awful rains two years ago, it wasn't long until we had holes at the head of the gulleys that started washing out in the field."

They went down to Bright's office and signed up for terraces.

FUNDS WERE available this year and the soil district commissioners approved the pond and grassed waterway project which is on the property line of Gruenjes and Renner land. Terraces will be installed on the Gruenjes place above the pond this fall.

Frank Woodall built the pond and shaped the waterway, moving some 9,000 cubic yards of dirt. They will cost \$11,600 and the terraces about \$6,000.

The new pond is close to Geode State Park and the lake. The improvements will protect about 20 acres, bringing the cost of curing the erosion problem near \$900 per acre. Landowners pay 25% of the cost, the government the remainder.

THE NEXT PROJECT on the



BRAND NEW DAM is examined by district conservationist Howard Bright and soil conservationist Diane Reed. They are standing on the dam that will hold back a pondful of water on the Keith Renner and Bob

Gruenjes farms southwest of Danville. The pond was dry early last week and now has more than 15 feet of water at the deepest point.

Gruenjes land will be a larger pond; it will be built next year if funding's available.

The Gruenjes couple farms about 200 acres and runs a cow-calf herd. He said they have some black calves they sell as feeders.

Gladys said, "We don't use a plow, just a disk. This clay ground, if you let it freeze over the winter, it will 'mellow' up and you can plant in it real good the next year."

"If you plow, it will wash as deep as it's plowed. The disk only goes two-three inches deep and we found out it does just as well."

Bright said the Geode Wonderland Resource Conservation and Development unit is seeking 75% cost-share funding for 24 sites in the watershed in a massive plan to cure

gully erosion.

EARLIER THIS YEAR, Bright said there are 71 farms in Des Moines County and 19 in Henry County that drain into the lake, with more than 60% of the soils subject to excessive soil loss. He estimated treatment cost at \$2,727,000 with 5,393 acres needing terraces, 10 large ponds and 60 small ponds.

Most practical approach now, Bright said, is to get much of the cropland in the watershed in a no-till program.

There's \$49,000 available in a special federal program to treat 3,400 acres with zero-tillage planting. Landowners who sign up at the ASCS office by Sept. 15 can will receive \$15 per acre incentive payment next growing season.

Reed said she has signed up 2,400 acres for no-till, ranging from 20

acres to 230 acres per farmer. The project goal is to get 3,400 acres planted in debris of the present crops, half of the tillable acres in the watershed.

This is a one-time project, part of a \$6 million national agricultural conservation program in 44 states and the only one in Iowa. The entire amount, including administrative expense, is \$52,000 for Iowa while Illinois received \$331,750.

Reed arranged a special no-till seminar for 1 p.m. Sept. 15 in room 121 at Southeastern Community College and sent letters to all the Geode watershed farmers, urging them to attend. She reminds them that's the date that the ASCS county committee will meet and the final day in which they can approve no-till applications.

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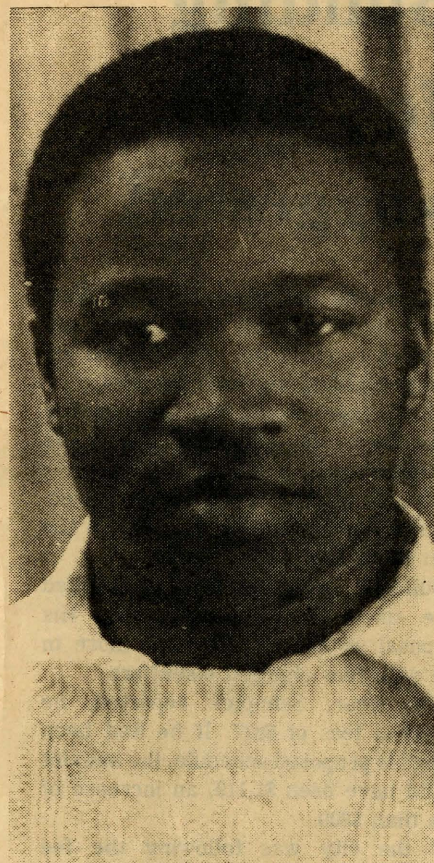
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JOSEPH LIDDELL, a junior at Alcorn St. university, is the new soil conservation trainee at the Des Moines county Soil Conservaton Service office. Liddell, 21, began work last Monday; he will be here through Aug. 26. A native of Belzoni Miss., Liddell is majoring in agriculture education with a minor in agronomy. As a trainee, Liddell will work with conservationist Howard Bright and other employees in all facets of the projects of the local office.

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Troute yields soil unit gavel to Jennison

James J. (Sam) Jennison, Burlington businessman and farm owner, was elected chairman of the Des Moines County Soil District Commission at the reorganizational meeting Monday afternoon. He succeeds Rex Troute, retiring after serving several terms over the past two decades.

Leonard Lane, rural Mediapolis, was elected vice chairman and Don Mathews, newly elected member and Danville farmer, was welcomed to the commission.

District clerk Dorothy Davis again was chosen secretary and Horace Sutton, treasurer. Howard Bright is district conservationist.

Mathews will address the Eastern Iowa Conservation Tillage Conference Jan. 25-26 at the Five Seasons Center in Cedar Rapids, discussing his experience in knifing liquid fertilizer into no-till fields.

Last year Mathews used no-till cropping on all but 20 of his 560 acres of row crops. He said he plans to use the system exclusively this year.

Terrifying "black rollers" suffocated towns for hours, even days — something that many Kansas and Oklahoma residents of the time will never forget.

50 Years Can't Erase Dust Bowl Memories

By Tom Webb
Staff Writer

DODGE CITY — The dust storms blew lightly at first, as they had in other droughts. Farmers in western Kansas had seen them before and knew that the dust would settle after a heavy rain.

But little rain fell in 1932, and even less in 1933, and the prairie wind whipped up clouds of grit that seeped into people's homes and stung their eyes and throats.

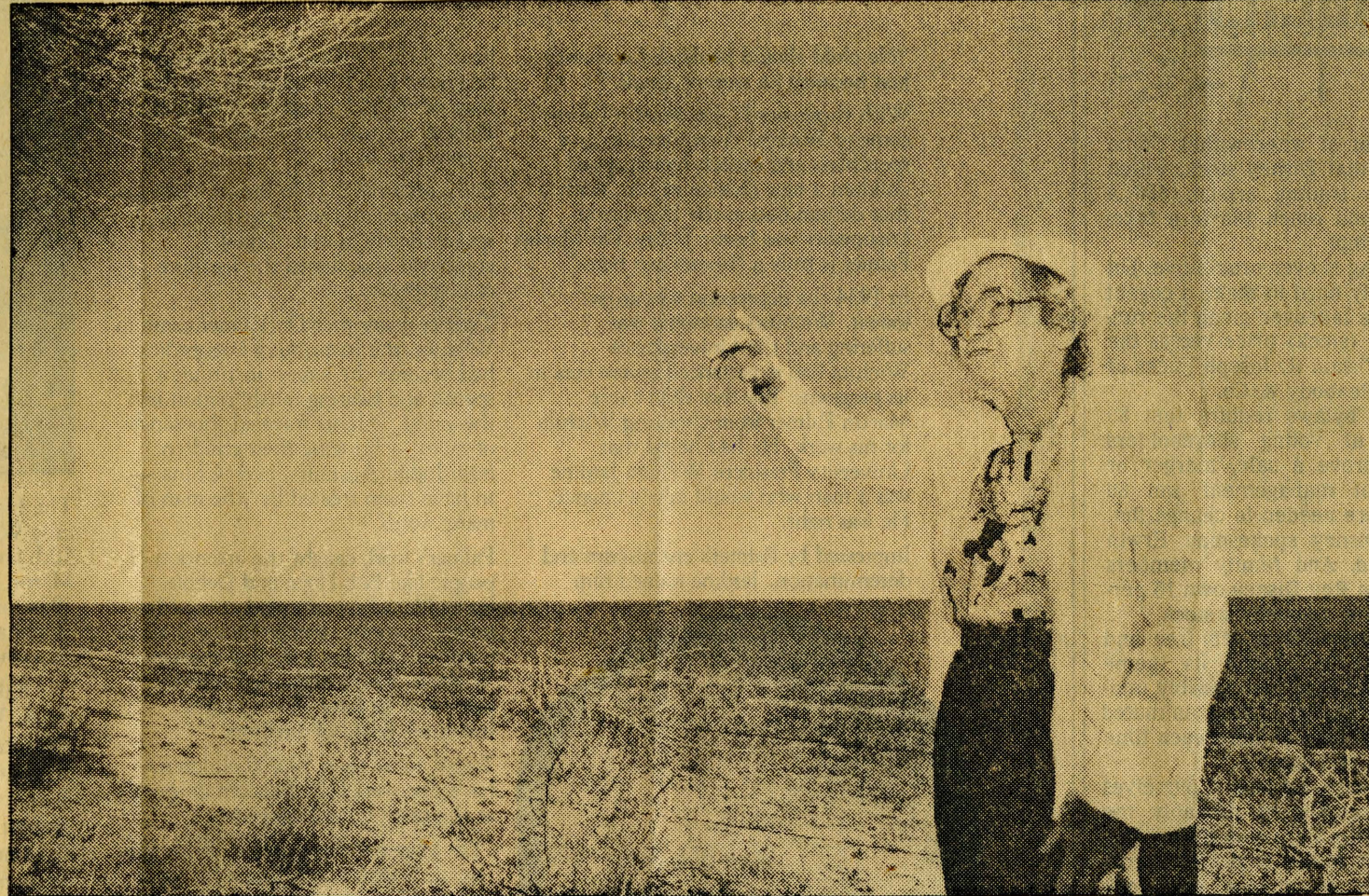
"The dust storms had already started, but they were not terrific," recalled Katie Weigel, a Dodge City resident. "They were more of an annoyance than anything else. Kansas is 'next year' country — next year is going to be better. That was the attitude."

BUT THE next year, 1934, the drought grew worse. Soil billowed into terrifying "black rollers" that suffocated towns for hours, even days. Then the dust blew east, darkening distant cities like Chicago and Washington, and the nation saw firsthand that the Plains literally were blowing away.

Fifty years have passed since that time, an era so dramatic that almost overnight it awakened stunned Americans to the dangers of soil erosion. Last week, conservation officials gathered in Kansas City to commemorate a half-century of soil and water conservation — and to remember.

"I think about it often," said John Tippi, state conservationist. "If we had not had this tremendous drought and the problems of the early '30s, we might have been 20 years longer in getting something going."

"The big impetus for soil and water conservation came from the Dust Bowl. It was something that everybody could see."



Steve Harper/Photography Editor

Vera Waters recalls dust storms: "We could see 'em on the horizon, a long ways away. They'd get bigger and bigger until they filled the sky."

Often we have to have some kind of crisis to get things moving."

AND THE Dust Bowl did get things

moving. President Franklin Roosevelt formed the Civilian Conservation Corps, and unemployed young men planted mil-

lions of trees, constructed dams and built terraces.

The government bought fragile land

that could not sustain a crop, and replanted it with native grasses.

It encouraged crop rotation, contour plowing and planting dry areas every other year. It plowed deep furrows into open fields, hoping to stop blowing soil. It tried to form conservation districts.

Yet these practices did not end the Dust Bowl; the dust settled only when the rain returned. But that era left another legacy: a new understanding of the land, which has changed farming in Kansas ever since.

"It sort of educated Kansas in the agriculture arena," said Bill Ellington, Wichita city historian. "Not that farmers weren't educated before that; a lot of farmers had horse sense about how to grow crops. But after the Dust Bowl, they went to college to learn their profession and learn how to manage the soil."

Homer Socolofsky, a historian at Kansas State University, said it also ended the old pioneer mentality.

"The pioneering attitude was that you used up a farm," Socolofsky said. "You get stories of pioneers that had one farm, and would move on to another farm, and then another one. People would say, 'He's a real pioneer — he used up three farms.' The quantity of the land in the United States was so great that people didn't pay much attention to soil conservation."

Today, soil conservation is so widely accepted that it's hard to believe it was once controversial. But 50 years ago, the belief that careful farming could halt soil erosion — and, by inference, that poor farming methods had helped cause the Dust Bowl — met with considerable resistance.

"THEY WERE afraid (that) the Soil Conservation Service was a way in which the government could take over their land," said Walter Rothe, one of the first farmers to apply conservation practices in Ness County.

In time, most farmers saw the benefits of conservation. Today, farmers in every county in Kansas have a conservation district and people to oversee it. But that awareness did not come cheaply; to remember how bad it was, you need only listen to voices from the "Dirty Thirties."

"They'd roll in from the north, usually, and you just couldn't see anything," said Vera Waters, who lives in Ensign. "We used to take rags and put paste on them, and seal the windows, and you'd still have piles and piles of dust."

During one bad dust storm, Waters said, the wind "took the baby chickens and just rolled 'em like a ball out there." Crops failed because of the drought and the dust, robbing her family of its income.

"WE BURNED corncobs because we couldn't afford coal," she said. "When those ran out, for three years we burned cow chips in order to keep warm in the wintertime."

● DUST BOWL, 2F, Col. 1

Legacy of Dust Bowl Lives On in Soil Conservation

● DUST BOWL, From 1F

George Winchell farmed just south of Liberal, near Tyrone, Okla., during the 1930s.

"There's no way you can really explain it," Winchell said. "When it comes in, it would be as dark as night. You could see them beginning to form, and you could watch them come for three or four hours. It would be still and quiet before these black ones rolled in."

Winchell lost his wheat four years in a row. He kept farming, but knew people who did not.

"A LOT of people left — went to Arkansas and California. You've heard about them. A lot of them come from around here."

John Steinbeck wrote about those migrants in his epic novel, "The Grapes of Wrath." "The dawn came," Steinbeck wrote of the dust storms, "but no day."

Katie Weigel's family did not leave Kansas in the '30s, and she doesn't know many people who did.

"People would often ask, 'Why did you stay?' Well, you couldn't afford to leave. We were in the automobile business at the time, and the fact of the matter is that you couldn't have given the business away at that time, so you just stayed with it."

OF ALL the dust storms, she most vividly remembers "Black Sunday," April 14, 1935.

"It was one of those things you never forget," Weigel said. "I was preparing dinner, broiling lambchops, and I looked into the oven — and when I looked up, I couldn't see across the room. It came in that fast."

"It sounds absolutely impossible," she admits — except that legions of other Kansans tell similar stories: people who thought they suddenly had gone blind; men who got caught outdoors and found their way indoors only by feeling the ground; children who could not see their hands.

Or the telegraph operator in western Kansas, who tapped out this message: "Oh my God, here it comes."

IN SOME areas, particularly in Baptist Oklahoma, preachers thundered Old Tes-



File Photo

Blowing dust would blind adults and children. Some were forced to feel their way along the ground, trying to return to their houses.

tament verses of any angry God. "The Lord shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust; from heaven it shall come down until you are destroyed."

One Wichita woman, who grew up in Oklahoma and was terrified of the dust storms, remembers the end-of-the-world preaching as unsettling as the dust.

Others found more secular causes for the Dust Bowl. And yet, even at a distance of 50 years, the cause of the Dust Bowl remains a remarkably lively topic.

"You can find as many causes as there are writers," said Leon Lyles, who runs the U.S. Department of Agriculture Wind Erosion Laboratory in Manhattan. "I don't think anybody really knows."

"CLIMATE WAS certainly a major factor. Some people say the development of machine technology during the '20s contributed to it. But you can read all kinds of other reasons, from solar disturbances to original sin."

Virtually everyone agrees that prolonged drought was a major cause. A Kansas weather summary from 1934 grimly reports: "It was the fifth successive year with a deficiency in precipitation, each of these years having less amount of moisture than the one preceding."

In 1934, rainfall in Kansas was 6½ inches below normal, and summertime temperatures were torrid.

"Temperatures of 110 were common," said Rich McNulty, a National Weather Service meteorologist. "It doesn't look like there's anything below 107 for the high temperatures. The whole state pretty well baked that summer."

WICHITA WAS outside of the worst part of the Dust Bowl region, because soil erosion in central Kansas was less severe than in the west. However, Wichita received plenty of dust storms, and historian Ellington remembers them well.

"It came in a bleary, brown color and

generally came in from the west or southwest," Ellington said. "And when it came in, brother, it was dark. It looked like evening. I remember my mother making some masks that we wore over our faces."

During the storms, Ellington said, everyone stayed indoors, with the windows and doors tightly sealed. The dust seeped in anyway. No air circulated in the sweltering homes, and for hours residents did nothing but wait for the dust to settle.

"We're talking about 116 for the highs, like that," Ellington said. "It was just hot, period. And of course there was no air conditioning back then."

NOBODY BLAMED the farmers, Ellington remembers. "It was just awfully dry and awfully hot, and I think everyone took it for granted that it was a part of that."

Yet, man-made factors also contributed to the Dust Bowl, most experts now agree. Commonly cited are:

- Plowing methods, which overturned the prairie sod, burying all ground cover and leaving soil open to the constant wind. Today, plows cut weeds and crop residue below the surface, leaving a cover on the land.

- Land that did not receive enough rain to support a steady crop, and in most years withered and blew away. Today, much of that land is irrigated, planted every other year, or has been returned to rangeland.

- Farmers who plowed their land straight up and down hills. Today, contour plowing and terracing are widely accepted.

- The arrival of farm machinery, which caused larger areas to be tilled, often repeatedly. Today, many farmers use conservation tillage which prevents bare fields and saves soil moisture.

In addition, farmers broke millions of acres of virgin prairie in the boom-and-bust years after World War I. More than 5 million acres were opened between 1925 and 1930.

In 1935, a superintendent at the Fort Hays Experimental Station, L.C. Aicher, attributed some of the trouble to "the get-rich-quick hysteria which followed the World War boom in wheat prices."

SO WHEN President Roosevelt first focused federal resources to combat erosion, many Kansans were indifferent,

some openly hostile.

Roy Selby, who was a CCC worker in the '30s, remembers that in six months at Wellington "we worked with only two or three (farmers) during my time there since the local people had signed a petition circulated by one man to get rid of the camp."

But by forming local groups, run by local people, the government in the late '30s helped ease fears.

The government also relied on demonstration projects, and among the first was a 1934 program to salvage heavily eroded land in Jewell County. Today, everybody admits that 50 years ago workers were "flying by the seat of their pants," as Tippie put it.

"LET'S BE honest about all of this," Weigel said. "The government in Washington didn't know what to do, but they tried. They had never been faced with anything like this before. But they tried, and some of it worked very, very well."

And the work continues. Tippie cites the accomplishments of the last 50 years: hundreds of thousands of miles in terraces in Kansas, wide acceptance of conservation measures, and the emergence of farmers and ranchers as "good stewards" of the land.

A preliminary report shows that 45 percent of Kansas cropland, and 54 percent of Kansas rangeland, is "adequately protected" from erosion, Tippie said. A lot has been accomplished, he said, but much remains.

"What we're talking about is terribly expensive for the landowners," Tippie said. "I suppose we're talking about \$400 to \$600 per acre to put in a good system of terraces and waterways. And the landowner can't pass that on in the form of increased prices."

THAT'S A real problem, Tippie said — but at least today people are aware of the need.

And that is the legacy of the Dust Bowl, Tippie said. There had been early attempts at conservation prior to the 1930s, but the dust and drought symbolized in shocking fashion the need to conserve the land. And land everywhere benefited — not only the Plains, but areas that were eroding in less dramatic fashion.

In that sense, Tippie said, the Dust Bowl was "a blessing in disguise."

Disney Productions: Rine for Takeover

H O M E T O W N

HEROES

Prairie grass fires are helpful tools

By Bob Hansen
The Hawk Eye

A dark cloud of smoke rolled into the clear March sky while at its base red tongues of flame snaked through the dry spring grass.

Ahead of the advancing flames, quail and pheasants rose in panicked flight while small animals dashed for safety or sought deep burrows below the heat and destruction.

A prairie grass fire can be an awesome and frightening sight, but what was once viewed as a destructive force has been harnessed as a management tool to restore native grasslands and improve wildlife habitat.

The fires that dot Iowa parklands and preserves are purposely set each spring as biologists attempt to duplicate those conditions that formed the native tall-grass prairies that once stretched from Indiana to central Nebraska.

Iowa Department of Natural Resources field technician Randy Robinson, has refined many of the techniques now employed in controlled burns and he reports that for 12,000 years the grass fire has been an important part of the area's ecology.

"Ever since the last glacier fires have been a fact of life on the tall-grass prairie," Robinson said. "Fires occurred naturally from lightning strikes or were set by the Indians to drive game or to encourage the grass growth that attracted game."

Robinson explained that the Indians realized the warm-season prairie grass flourished in the burn areas and this idea of regeneration was rediscovered

as a land management tool in the early 1970s.

"The prairie grass evolved under these conditions as the fires released the nutrients stored in leaf and stem litter back into the soil and the flames warmed the spring soil to give the grass a jump start," Robinson said.

The grasses in burn areas grow taller and are more nutritional for grazing animals.

The invasion of brush and trees onto the grassland is also discouraged as the flames will kill the young saplings.

Because remaining pockets of Iowa grassland are closely hemmed in by cropland development, modern prairie burns must be closely controlled to prevent spread and damage.

"We look for a spring day when the grass is dry, the wind is down and the humidity is high before we set a fire," Robinson said. "Mornings are best and we make sure we have enough people at the burn to avoid an uncontrollable situation."

Robinson admits there is some wildlife loss during a burn, but he contends that it is relatively minor.

"Birds and most animals leave ahead of the flames and mice go to their burrows," Robinson said. "But, I've walked a field right after a burn when it is still smoking and field mice are scampering everywhere. Then, the hawks just pile into the area because they know it is easy pickings on the exposed mice."

20 people attend Extension, SCS field day ^{3/90}

The Des Moines County Model Farm Project conducted its first field day, March 7, at the Charles Nealey farm, 2½ miles north of Danville. Twenty participants met at the Danville Community Building at 2 p.m. for introductory comments from James Jensen, Des Moines County agriculturist for Iowa State University's Extension Service, and Terry Cosby, director of the Des Moines County Soil Conservation Service (SCS).

The field day focused on procedures for measuring how much residue remains on the soil surface under various tillage methods. The SCS office explained the most accurate procedure to measure residue left on the land surface by various tillage methods, in order to stay in compliance with government programs.

Cosby said that SCS will be required to review 25 percent of the Food Security Act (FSA) compliance plans written each year between 1990 and 1995. All compliance plans (100 percent) should be reviewed by 1995. The SCS office will spot check fields for residue percentages.

The field day participants measured residue on Nealey's corn and soybean fields, utilizing SCS's measuring method. The measurements showed that there is 10 to 15 percent less residue on Nealey's para plow corn and soybean fields than on his no-till fields.

Nealey said the results send a strong message to producers that tillage methods, including para plowing, will not comply with the FSA's 70 percent residue requirement on no-till corn and the 40 percent residue re-

quirement on no-till soybeans after planting.

Nealey said that in 1989 he experienced a 10 bushel increase in yield, utilizing no-till on his ground for three to four years. He said farmers should not receive a decrease in yield if

the method is done properly. In a three to four-year period farmers should receive an increase in yield.

"I wanted to share with others the benefits of no-till," Nealey said. The Nealey farm is one of seven demonstrations

farms involved in the Des Moines County Model Farm Project.

Farmers should contact the SCS office for more information on how to measure residue on the soil surface with various tillage methods.