

ANNUAL REPORT

POWESHIEK COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

The commissioners of the Poweshiek County Soil Conservation District wish to present to the farmers, all cooperating groups, and others in the county interested in soils conservation this report of the progress of the district for the year 1946 and the outlook for 1947.

J. F. Hiller

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POWESHIEK COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

The Poweshiek County Soil Conservation District, which was established in April 1945, has carried a constructive and an aggressive program in 1946. The year 1946 is the first complete calendar year of operation.

It is indeed a pleasure as commissioners of the Poweshiek County Soils District to have been able to have furnished assistance to the farmers of Poweshiek County at the close of a great war, realizing the cost to their acres in fertility and soil loss which was freely given, but which they wish to recon-vert to peacetime use with a soil retention and restoration program.

Your commissioners, consisting of the Chairman, J. J. Boatman, Howard Sears, and Elmer Dunnick, together with the Soil Conservation Service represented by Morton C. James, Robert Lord, Richard Hogue, county soils technicians, and L.M. Mitchell, District Soil Conservationist; and the Extension Service represented by L. D. Brown, county extension director, working cooperatively with all other groups in the county, have endeavored to furnish Poweshiek County the best possible conservation program during this postwar era. This period, with its multitude of problems, has had a direct effect upon the actual application of soil conservation to the land. Even so, the statistics showing actual progress, which are presented further on in the report, are informative as to what has been accomplished in our efforts to retain fertility and soil in Poweshiek County.

The commissioners realize the seriousness of the conservation problems and also realize that in relation to the total need that one year's work has been done.

It is a constant and continuing pleasure to note the confidence and enthusiasm of the farmer with a farm plan in operation, secure in the knowledge that his soil is safe and his life savings protected from loss.

The commissioners appreciate the interest shown by the farmers as evidenced by the many applications for assistance. It is hoped that the townships which have not formed groups will avail themselves of the opportunity, as the commissioners would prefer to see the services distributed over as wide an area and as completely as possible. To this end the commissioners are ready to give all information as to how the district is organized and assistance made available to any and all interested people of Poweshiek County.

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

In the cooperative agreement with the Soil Conservation Service and the Soil Conservation District the Extension Service is responsible for the educational program. The county extension director served as secretary to the county soil conservation commissioners and as representative of the Extension Service, directed the educational work.

Realizing that the success of a program of this nature is dependent on a large number of people cooperating and taking part, the group plan has been used in this county. Where interest was evidenced in soil conservation work, group meetings were arranged through a leader in the community and farmers in that community invited to the meeting. At this meeting, in charge of one of the

county commissioners, the soil conservation program was outlined to them by representatives of the Soil Conservation Service and the county extension director. After explanation of the program, if enough interest was evidenced by the group, a signed request for help was made by those present and a group leader selected. This request was then forwarded to the county commissioners who placed a priority for the work on the request and the soil conservation technicians then went ahead with the development of farm plans as rapidly as possible.

Demonstrations:

The same method as used with the organization of groups has been used with demonstrations. Group action has been used and demonstrations set up within the group. In several instances the demonstration has developed into a "bee" where several farmers brought their tractors and plow and helped each other construct terraces, grassed waterways, etc. In this method it is possible to instruct a larger number of farmers in actual construction procedures. They in turn can help their neighbors complete their work.

Seventeen contour demonstrations were held during the year with an attendance of about 250 farmers. These demonstrations were held on the farms of Harvey Harris and Jesse Olson, Chester Township; Wayne Reams, Sheridan Township; Calvin Korn, Jefferson Township; Sherley Eichhorn and Clarence Decatur, Grant Township; Glen Ferneau, Malcom Township; J. Gaylord Dempster, Washington Township; C. L. Braley, Jake Rook and James Kellogg, Pleasant Township; Kenneth Taylor and Lester King, Scott Township; Floyd Hasley, Sugar Creek Township; Basil Hicks and Sylvan VeVerka, Jackson Township and Clint Icenbice, Deep River Township.

A terrace demonstration on constructing of terraces with a moldboard plow was held at the A. D. Hopwood farm in Deep River Township and the Forrest Read farm in Madison Township. Bryan Boatman, District Soil Conservation Technician; Morton James and Robert Lord, County Soil Conservation Technicians; and L. D. Brown, County Extension Director, assisted with these demonstrations.

Meetings:

A conference for planning program for soils, fertilizers and pasture improvement on January 22, 1946, was attended by 42 men representing all areas of the county. Mr. E. R. Duncan of the Extension Service, Iowa State College, and Bryan Boatman, District Soil Conservation Technician, were present. At this meeting it was decided that the 1947 program should include:

- (1) Assist with explaining conservation practices for which AAA payments were advanced for 1946.
- (2) Provide local farm planning groups and local township Farm Bureau meetings with discussion leaders relative to the use of commercial fertilizers, both as to kind adapted to Poweshiek County soils and methods of application.
- (3) Arrange for fertilizer demonstrations on field basis in different areas of the county.
- (4) Arrange for county-wide assistance in contouring.
- (5) Arrange for pasture improvement demonstrations.

The working of the Soil Conservation District and the need for soil conservation has been discussed at a number of township Farm Bureau meetings and at a Young Married Couples' group meeting. The night school at Brooklyn, Montezuma and Grinnell each devoted one meeting to soil conservation.

4-H Project:

A 4-H contouring project was organized in the county in 1946. The County Bankers' Association contributed \$50.00 in prizes for this activity. Rules for the project and score card may be found in the appendix.

Members enrolled in the project selected a field of more than 5 acres in size and were required to lay out the contour lines and plant the field. Several of the boys even planned the fields on the contour. In July a committee visited each member and checked the contour layout. Final placing was made in the fall after the record books were completed. Six members completed the project with the following winners:

First -- Gerald Bell, Sheridan Township
Second -- Maynard Raffety, Chester Township
Third -- Darrell Iverson, Chester Township

It is planned to carry out this project again in 1947.

Publicity:

There has been a fine working relationship with the Montezuma Republican, the Grinnell Herald-Register and the Brooklyn Chronicle in covering of demonstrations and carrying of news stories relative to the soil conservation program. News articles have also been published in the Farm Bureau Spokesman.

School Program:

An effort is being made through the County Superintendent of Schools to carry on soil conservation as part of the course of instruction in the rural school program. The district soil conservation technician, Mr. Mitchell, and Mr. Boatman, Chairman of the Poweshiek County District, have met with the County Superintendent of Schools and outlined a proposed program.

FIELD OPERATIONS

Soil Conservation Planning Groups:

To date, a total of 18 farm planning groups have been organized. By December 31, 1946, conservation plans had been completed on 8 of these groups. Group #1 was planned in 1945. Ten groups including approximately 170 farms, therefore, are ready for action as soon as the farm planners can get to them.

The organization of new groups has slowed somewhat during the year. No groups have been organized in Malcom, Bear Creek, Sugar Creek, Lincoln and Scott Townships. Apparently more attention should be given to these areas.

Conservation Plans:

One hundred conservation plans have been developed to date in the district. Eighty-six of these were planned in 1946.

Response of farmers to technical assistance in conservation planning has been excellent. Practically 100 percent of those attending group planning meetings have come through with conservation plans.

Soils maps of organized groups are being prepared by the soils mapper as rapidly as time permits. Mr. Sandford Smith of Sigourney is responsible for soil mapping over six counties and it is a race for him to keep ahead.

Application of Conservation Practices:

The application of conservation practices on planned farms has been encouraging. In many instances application has taken place faster than provided for in the plan. Due to a comparatively open spring two cooperators were able to do some terracing ahead of schedule last spring. Aside from staking contour lines and laying out field boundaries, fall is the season for applying practices requiring more time and labor.

During the past fall, three bulldozers were operating in the county filling in and shaping the larger gullies. One outfit did such work for several farmers in the Fred Yount group in Jefferson and Warren Townships. The other two outfits operated principally in Jackson Township in leveling large gullies and in building one large pond.

The Forrest Read group of Madison Township can be congratulated in constructing terraces cooperatively between members of their own group. In the southeast part of the county, Deep River Township, the Harry Taylor group, filled and shaped waterways cooperatively. This method of application has several advantages, including the saving of time for technicians. It is encouraging to note that several other groups are planning to apply practices cooperatively within groups.

Assistance Given to Groups Organized But Not Yet Planned:

On January 1, seven groups had been planned; ten additional groups are organized. Effort was made to maintain interest among the latter by holding general information meetings in the spring prior to the layout season. Also, it is the policy of the district to make members of organized groups second in priority only to farmers with conservation plans in the securing of technical assistance. Such assistance has been given to many in new groups during the year.

In the spring a contour demonstration was held in each organized group. Technical assistance was given in the construction of a farm pond south of Montezuma and north of Grinnell a large amount of terracing was staked by the district technicians.

Many more group members were helped with individual conservation problems.

PROBLEMS AND OUTLOOK

Educational:

Although there has been an excellent job of informing people on the function and activities of the district and the benefits of carrying on soil conservation, there is much more to be done. That job will only be accomplished when each and every acre in Poweshiek County is put to the most productive use without soil waste. Therefore, there is still the problem of acquainting as many people

as possible on the subject. This means not only the farmer, but all others not living on the land, because they, too, are directly or indirectly dependent on the soil resources of the county for food and livelihood. The commissioners will continue to use every available means to carry on educational work.

Use of Conservation Practices:

Many farmers in the district have or are planning to make changes in land use and to use various conservation practices. This number is still a small percentage of the total in the district. There is need of an increased rate of wide adoption of soil conserving practices, if we are to materially prevent heavy soil loss in the county in the immediate future. This is especially true after the high production of soil depleting crops during the war years.

Formation of Additional Groups:

There has been a total of 18 farm planning groups organized to date. Eight of these have gone through farm planning meetings leaving 10 ahead. It has been found advisable to have a considerable number of groups organized in advance of the planning meeting. Therefore, it will be the continued policy of the district to encourage and assist in the formation of additional groups.

Group Application:

The policy of using group action in planning has been used very successfully in the district to date and it is the intention to continue that way. In the 100 farm conservation plans prepared to date, the application of practices planned present a large layout job. Therefore, it will be the policy of the district to carry the group activity over into layout work as much as possible. It has been demonstrated that neighborhoods can exchange work on the layout and installation of conservation practices in the same way as they do in other major farm jobs such as haying and harvesting.

Land Tenure:

Many farms are tenant operated in Poweshiek County with many of these on a one year lease and occupancy basis. This basis does not make for the good use of the land and the adoption of conservation measures. For this reason there is a need of both the landlord and tenants seriously considering longer tenancy which will in turn be favorable to good soil conservation. Both need to be interested in order to prepare and use a farm conservation plan and the doing of this will pay dividends in the long run. In group planning the landlord and tenant need to be side by side in the meetings and on the farm in order to prepare and use a farm conservation plan.

DATE January 24, 1947

(SIGNED)

J. J. Boatman
J. J. Boatman, Chm.

Howard Sears
Howard Sears, Commissioner

Elmer Dunnick
Elmer Dunnick, Commissioner

Soil Conservation District
ANNUAL REPORT OF EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

DISTRICT IA - SCD - 54
(Name)

Brooklyn, Iowa
(Headquarters of Dist. Gov. Body)(State)

Period January 1, 1946 to December 31, 1946

ACTIVITY		This Year	To Date
	Number	39	51
Educational Meetings	Attendance	905	1195
	Number		
Tours	Attendance		
	Number	20	22
Demonstrations	Attendance	310	810
	Number	1	1
Leader Training Meetings	Attendance	40	40
	Number	None	
Exhibits	Number	None	
Radio Talks	Number	None	
News Articles	Number	54	

Iowa
(State)

Agreements Signed:	This Year	To Date	Amendments:	This Year	To Date	Agreements Cancelled:	To Date
Number:	<u>86</u>	<u>100</u>	Number:	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	Number:	<u>0</u>
Acres:	<u>14829</u>	<u>16851</u>				Acres:	<u>0</u>

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