

Wednesday, October 17, 1984

OPINION-TRIBUNE

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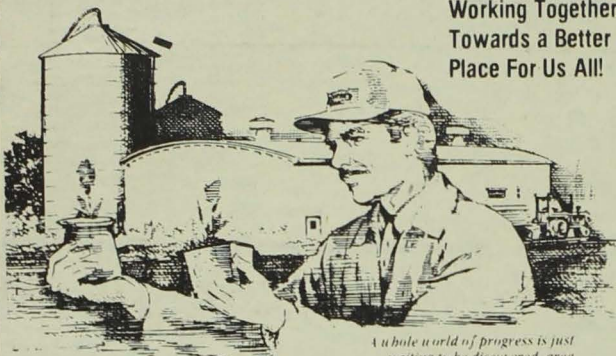
Soil Edition



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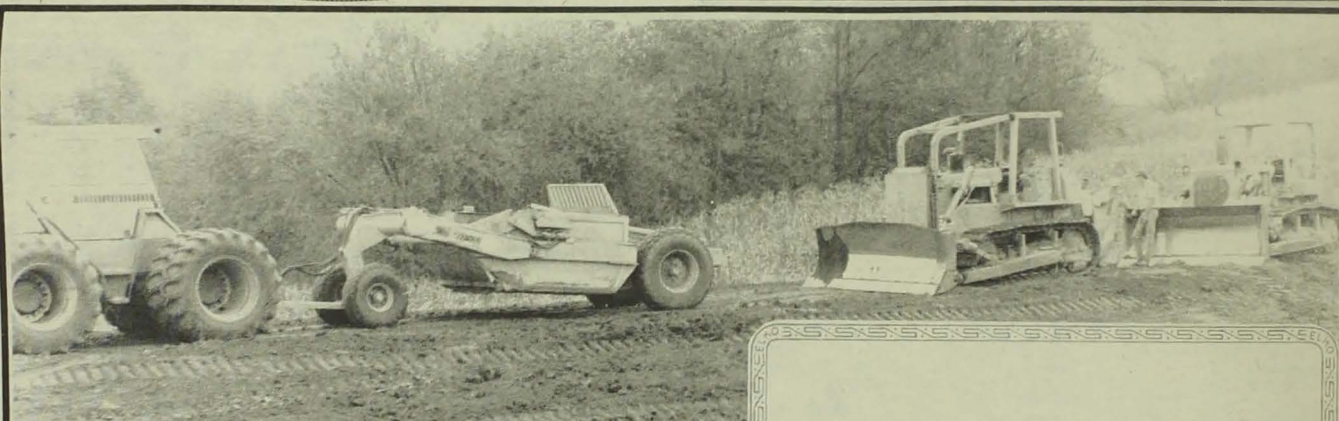
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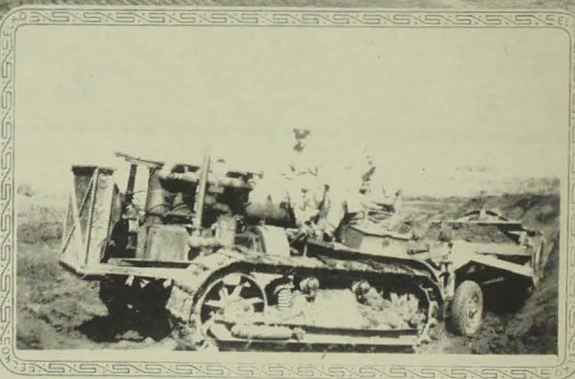


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Jay Bowen-Operator

Terraces of today

By Leo Van Fosson
SCS Technician

During the past few years a new tool for erosion control has been used extensively. This new tool is the narrow-base terrace. Narrow-base terraces have 2:1 side slopes on upper and lower sides of each terrace. These steeper side slopes are seeded to brome or some other type of grass, no legumes. With both sides steep and seeded you do not farm any portion of the terrace. By not farming the terrace, machinery will not be tearing down the terraces and depleting its capacity.

When tile is being used in the terrace system, the intakes are next to the upper terrace base and are not in the way of farming operations.

Narrow base terraces are somewhat cheaper to construct because there is less soil used in construction of the system.

Today almost 95 percent of our terrace systems are of the narrow-base type. We have observed these terraces the past few years and have found that the maintenance is much less than other types of cropland terraces constructed on land in the 8-14 percent range.

This type of terrace can be paralleled, where applicable, to help reduce point rows and make the farming operations easier.

Although any type of cropland terrace helps reduce soil movement it is not the total answer to erosion control. Along the terraces other resource management practices such as crop rotations, minimum till, and no-till are also needed to keep our food producing soils in place.

Mule Creek Watershed gets a boost

By Richard Stille
District Conservationist

Mule Creek, Mills County's first watershed is scheduled to get a lift on maintenance problems. Jobs Bill money has been allocated for rehabilitation of several structures. The watershed covers 8,013 acres and is located four miles southwest of the town of Malvern.

Mule Creek Watershed was organized in 1949 and was one of eleven pilot watershed projects nation-wide. Its purpose was grade stabilization and flood control. Construction started in 1954 and Mule Creek was the first watershed to break ground in the U.S. A total of 24 structures were built in 1956.

The structures have performed well for 30 years, but time was not kind to them. Tow drains finally failed, causing saturated back slopes and slumping of slopes which resulted in spillway pipes being pulled apart. A total of 14 sites have serious problems and will be repaired.

New tow drain systems and new principal spillway pipes will be installed. Emergency spillways and structure tops and sides will also be restored to original design elevations. All disturbed areas will be revegetated.

No-till farming liked

By Richard Maaske
State Engineering Aide

More and more Iowa farmers are deciding against any tillage in the fall. Particularly on soybean stubble. There are a number of advantages of no tillage in the fall.

a. Leaving residues untouched in the fall keeps options wide open for no-till the next spring.

b. Residues prevent wind erosion in the winter.

c. Bean stubble will prevent severe

water erosion in the spring.

d. Residues provide some food and shelter for wildlife.

e. Snow caught by standing stubble is moisture for the next years' crop.

f. With no fall tillage, both time and fuel are saved, reducing the fall workload.

No-till farming will save you soil. No-till can cut soil losses to under five tons per acre a year on gentle slope. On steep slopes, with a corn-soybean rotation, no-till in combination with

other conservation practices may be the only way to get soil losses to within the five ton figure. Field time is cut half with no-till which can save up to 3-4 gallons of fuel an acre.

If you are concerned about having enough time, worried about high fuel cost, concerned about erosion, and wanting to try no-till next spring, leave the soybean stubble alone. This winter, ask those who have done no-till and read information available on no-till.

Look ahead with conservation plans

By Lane Collins
Soil Conservationist

The rains that Mills County experienced in June did a lot in making soil erosion more visible. Precious topsoil was lost at a tremendous rate. Farmers need to slow this erosion down so that there will be adequate topsoil left for future generations. A conservation plan can help by giving tillage practices and crop rotations that will reduce the present rate of soil erosion.

The conservation plan will contain

formation that is used to calculate the present soil erosion rate for a particular crop rotation and tillage practice. If the present erosion rate is at a level that the soil cannot rebuild itself and maintain maximum productivity, alternatives will

be given to bring this level down. Some alternatives may include reduced tillage, no-till, contouring, terracing or a crop rotation that is less intensive than corn-soybeans.

This conservation plan will also

contain a soils map and an aerial photo of the particular farm. The aerial photo will have lines drawn to show farm boundaries, field divisions, present terrace locations, and where new terraces need to be built.

A conservation plan is free and takes only a few short visits to get the necessary information. If you are interested in a conservation plan or want more information, stop by the Soil Conservation Service in Malvern.

Let's consider the soil. . .

By Terry Branstad
Governor of Iowa

In Iowa, agriculture means an abundance of crops ripe for harvest—twenty-six million acres or almost three-fourths of our state is planted yearly to row crops.

Our massive production of agriculture commodities is sustained by our soil resources. Combined with suitable climate and agricultural management, our rich topsoil makes Iowa a major source of food productions for this country and the world. Moreover, three-fourths of all jobs can be traced to agriculture. Thus, it makes sense for Iowans, both on and off the farm, to recognize and share an interest in the important responsibility we have to protect our soil resources.

The riches of our soil are so great that they are seemingly limitless. However, the abundance of our food production could dramatically diminish in the next 20 years if steps are not taken to deal with serious soil erosion problems. I am pleased to say that in Iowa, we are 'considering the soil.'

In this 1984 "State Year of the Soil," it seems appropriate to recap some of our successes. In 1980, the Iowa General Assembly enacted legislation known as the "Iowa Soil 2000 Program." Iowa's 100 soil conservation districts have begun the process of delivering Iowa Soil 2000 folders to each landowner in the state. These folders will alert landowners to their soil conservation needs, suggest steps they can take to reduce their own erosion losses, and explain incentive and assistance programs available for the design and installation of conservation systems.

To further accelerate land treatment and to meet demand stimulated by Iowa Soil 2000, funding for the state's cost-sharing program for soil conser-

vation was increased in 1983 from \$5.6 million to \$8.3 million. Funding for the current fiscal year was authorized at a level of \$8.6 million this past spring. These monies are used for cost-sharing with landowners who put an equal amount of their own dollars for the construction of permanent soil conservation practices. These practices—terraces, grass waterways, grade stabilization structures, and others—have off-site benefits of controlling run-off and siltation as well as their on-site purpose of holding soil in place to preserve its productivity.

During this past year, we were also able to make the first no-interest loan as part of a program initiated just a year ago. Used for the same types of permanent soil conservation practices as cost-share funds, this program offers an alternative approach for low net

worth farmers who might not otherwise be able to finance needed conservation practices.

The record of participation by landowners in these programs during the past year is indicative of the agriculture community's commitment to protecting this all-important natural resource. While much still needs to be done, and we are far from finished, landowners' investment in soil conservation this past year is proof of their faith in the future.

I am also pleased to report that Iowa's farmers and landowners are rapidly adopting new reduced-tillage techniques that can substantially reduce erosion losses without additional capital investments.

We must rededicate ourselves to the land and recommit our resources and support to Iowa's soil programs.

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Iowa Soil 2000 Programworks

By Richard Biermann
SCD Chairman

In 1980, Chapter 467A.62 of the Iowa Code was enacted by the Iowa Legislature. It requires Soil Conservation Districts to begin a process of informing individual landowners about erosion problems by distributing conservation folders. This legislation is better known as the "Iowa Soil 2000 Program." The primary objective of the program is the reduction of excessive soil losses from all Iowa land by the year 2000. The legislation supports this objective through a coordinated program of educational, financial and technical assistance.

Soil erosion is a natural process involving detachment and transportation of soil particles. But when it proceeds at an excessive rate, the soil resource

suffers debilitating damage. New topsoil is formed by natural process but is very slow. Under ideal conditions with very low erosion, Iowa topsoil is produced at about 1 inch in 30 years or more. So theoretically, Iowa soils could lose 1 inch of topsoil every 30 years and retain their productivity indefinitely. This works out to a tolerable soil loss of 2 to 5 tons per acre per year.

Unfortunately, average soil losses in Iowa are over 9 tons per acre per year. In Mills County, soil losses in excess of 20 to 30 tons per acre per year are not unusual. There are instances of much high erosion rates.

Whose fault is soil erosion? It's very easy to blame farmers for the problem, but it isn't that simple. Farmers are some of the strongest supporters of soil conservation and demonstrate their

concern through installation of conservation practices. Farmers are under great pressure to produce more and more grain from their land to support export objectives. Increasing production costs, declining grain prices, and rising interest rates are some of the pressures making it very difficult for farmers to invest in conservation. Conservation practices pay long-term dividends, but are next to impossible to justify as short term expenses. Its future generations who will mainly benefit from soil conservation, not the present landowners.

Soil erosion has many detrimental effects. This includes reduced productivity, increased production costs, and siltation of off-site facilities such as reservoirs and drainage systems. Soil erosion can have several consequences,

but it can also be controlled. Many practices can be used including crop rotations, contouring, no-till or residue management, strip-cropping, grassed waterways, terraces, and grade stabilization structures. Land use can also be changed from cropland to hayland, pasture, or woodland.

The Iowa Soil 2000 Program is an attempt to educate landowners and the public about soil erosion and offer ways to control it. Conservation plans are used to design a program with the landuser resulting in controlled soil losses. The landuser is not told what to do.

The Mills County Soil Conservation District has begun the Iowa Soils 2000 program in the Waubonsie Creek area. This will be expanded into the Pony Creek area in 1985.

Warm-season grasses help pasture rotation

By Galen Hartman
Soil Conservationist

Do you usually run short of pasture during the hot dry summer months? The use of warm-season grasses in a pasture rotation can help maintain forage production during hot dry weather.

Cool-season grasses such as brome-grass and bluegrass make most of their growth during the cooler weather, 32-78 degrees. Warm-season grasses such as switchgrass and big bluestem make

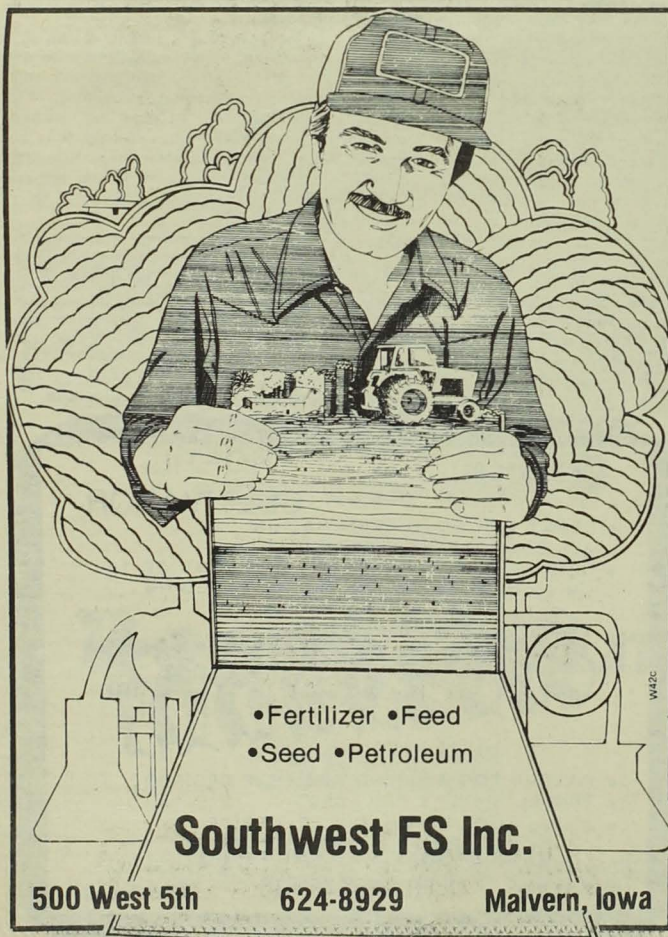
most of their growth after the middle of June within the temperature range of 55-90 degrees. Since warm-season grasses make their growth in the summer there is still spring moisture available when it is most needed. The root system of warm-season grasses grow downward 5-6 feet to reach available moisture. By using cool-season grasses in the spring and fall and warm season grasses in the summer, cattle will be grazing high quality forage

throughout the growing season. When warm season grasses are ready to graze, the grazing of cool-season grasses can be deferred until fall. Cool-season grasses will recover more quickly in the fall if they are not over grazed.

Most pasture programs will benefit from having separate pastures of warm-season grasses and cool-season grasses. There will be increased carrying capacity and higher liveweight gains. In Nebraska average daily gains

from late April to early November increased 40 percent when steers grazed separate pastures of warm-season and cool-season grasses rather than cool-season grasses only. This increase was due entirely to higher gains during the summer when warm-season grasses are productive.

There have been approximately 240 acres of warm-season pastures established in Mills County the last two years.



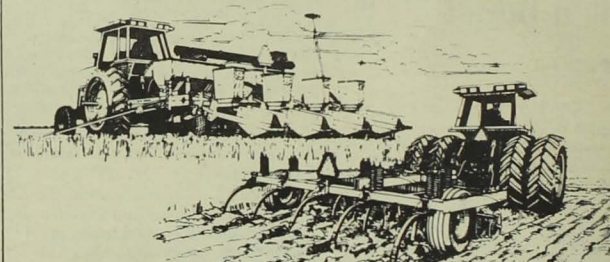
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50 years of conservation

By Steven C. Stover
Area 4 Conservationist

Few people remember the creation of Soil Conservation in this country. Or do they? I would bet that many remember the depression and the great "Dust Storms." This is really when Soil Conservation programs began. The public was becoming more and more concerned over the deterioration of our most important resource -- our soil. In August 1933, the Soil Erosion Service was created. Hugh Hammond Bennett, soil scientist and crusade for soil conservation, was named to head the new agency.

Civilian Conservation Corps

The CCC was established and immediately began projects to curb erosion. Trees were planted to control erosion of both wind and water. Terraces, erosion control dams, etc., were built to demonstrate how erosion could be harnessed. Yet, in April 1935 things had gotten worse. Dust clouds over Washington, DC dimmed the sun. Dust from the midwest was making headlines on the east coast. On April 27, 1935, Congress enacted the first Conservation Public Law and renamed the Soil Erosion Service, the Soil Conservation Service.

Slowly at first, then with the zeal of a revivalist, the conservation movement picked up speed. State laws were rapidly developed creating Soil Con-

servation Districts in nearly every state in the Nation.

50 Years Later

Today Soil Conservation Districts have been formed in nearly every county. Neighboring Districts work together through their State and National Association of Conservation Districts to continually promote the wise use of all of our natural resources. The country has made major strides in controlling erosion, but it is minute, when compared with the total job needed.

Contour farming, terraces, waterways, erosion control and flood prevention dams are common sites as we drive down Iowa roads. However, the eroded hillsides and disappearing topsoil are most often noted. We have only completed 40 percent of the work needed to control soil erosion.

Technical Assistance

The Soil Conservation Service is the "technical arm" helping Districts carryout conservation programs. The agency provides leadership in planning and applying conservation practices with farmers and units of government.

Basic to this service is conducting soil surveys nationwide. In the late 1980s every Iowa county will have been mapped. This soils information is provided free to landowners, users and developers. It is "a must" for proper use of the Nation's soil resources.

1983 A Good Year

Conservation progress was good in Southwest Iowa. More landowners were contacted, conservation plans developed and practices installed than in many years. This is a good indication of the concerns farmers have in protecting their resources from erosion. Over 580 miles of terraces were built in this eleven county area. This is an increase of 100 miles more than in 1982. Yet, this protected less than 12,000 acres of the 1.2 million acres needing land treatment.

Conservation Tillage And No-Till

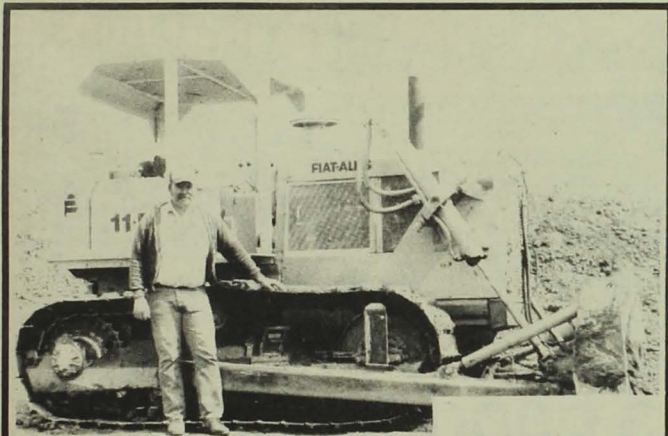
Both conservation tillage and no-till cropping systems are rapidly increasing. Generally farmers using till plant and no-till have doubled, along with the acres planted since 1981. Last year 753 farmers used till plant and no-till on 68,713 acres in the 11 county area. Conservation tillage has continued to increase with chisels and discs the main implements used. The residue cover left on the land is the first defense against wind and water erosion. Conservation and no-till systems conserve soil and water, labor and energy. Yields have

remained high with this new farming technique. Normally in western Iowa a combination of practices are needed to bring erosion to acceptable limits. Conservation tillage, contour farming, rotations, terraces and other practices may be needed.

Where To Now

Soil erosion from wind and water in the U.S. amounts to 6.5 million tons a year, including 5.3 million tons from agriculture lands. Coming closer to home, the Mississippi River carries enough past Memphis every hour to cover 40 acres of land to a depth of six inches. Only you know how much of that is yours in the Missouri or Mississippi River.

Yes, our job is far from complete. Only if we continually work together can we control this monster - EROSION. If you need help in controlling your erosion problems, contact the Soil Conservation District office. Fifty years of conservation has not solved all the problems, but it has established a trained cadre to help you solve your resource problems.



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Wildlife is product of the farm

By Carl Priebe
Wildlife Management Biologist
Iowa Conservation Commission

Wildlife is a product of the farm. From agriculture's earliest days in Iowa our agricultural areas have produced the majority of our wildlife. Even in today's era of high technology farming that statement still holds true. Due to the shift away from livestock and the increased use of soybeans the types of wildlife have changed considerably but never-the-less rural land is still the major producer of wildlife in Iowa.

With the loss of extensive pasture land in much of our area we have seen the disappearance of the up-land sandpiper and reduced numbers of once common song birds like the meadowlark and bobolink. In recent years we have begun to see a decline in the pheasant

population because of the loss of grassland nesting area plus the loss of hay fields and large waterways.

The decline in livestock has not adversely affected all wildlife, however. Ungrazed timber areas have responded quickly providing improved deer habitat and are at least partially responsible for the success of the wild turkeys in the loess hills.

Larger row crop equipment and the farm economy have encouraged the removal of interior fences and brushy fence rows. In many areas long standing covies of quail and rabbits went up in smoke with the piles of brush that were removed. Cardinals, shrikes and numerous other song birds that frequented those areas were forced to leave and never return.

The larger corn fields that resulted

made hiding especially easy for some animals. Deer have learned to use these fields much the same as timbered areas for security, escape cover and for food. That, plus the deer's ability to move considerable distances to food and timbered areas once the corn is harvested have allowed them to continually increase in population over the last 30-40 years. There are more deer in Iowa today than at any time in our history.

Changes in agriculture have had a tremendous impact on wildlife. Some once abundant birds and animals are now uncommon while others such as the turkey, deer, and raccoon are at high levels. That indicates how important each land management decision is to our resident wildlife. Any change made in management of a farm will have a

direct bearing on all the wildlife using that area, some for the worst and perhaps some for the best. The fact is, each land manager is controlling the future of each wildlife species using his land, from cardinals to deer.

In many instances wildlife can be assisted at little or no cost by improving areas too small, too rough, or unprofitable to farm. Look at areas holding the type of wildlife you enjoy and try to duplicate those conditions on your area. Wildlife can't pay all the bills but the sight of a deer fawn on a clear summer morning, the whistling of a quail from atop a fence post, or the melodic call of a cardinal on that first warm spring morning can generate a feeling of deep satisfaction that is hard to compare.

IFIP equals state cost share equals \$\$\$\$

By Ruth Stevens
Clerk - SCD

IFIP or Iowa Financial Incentives Program or Cost-share or a means of relieving some of the financial burden of the landowners who install permanent soil conservation erosion control practices.

The Iowa Legislature budgets money each year to share the costs of installing erosion control practices. In 81/82 FY

Mills County received \$84,902; in 82/83 FY \$72,050; in 83/84 FY \$97,959 and in 84/85 FY \$180,364 - and still we never seem to have enough money to cost-share with everyone who applies.

As with all money appropriated by the state, there are rules and regulations that come with it. It is the District Commissioners' responsibility to allocate the money to the landowners and still comply with the law.

Since 1973 we have used several methods of determining who would receive cost-share funds. To date, we have not come up with any solution that satisfies everyone. Perhaps we never will.

The rules for 1985 have just two changes:

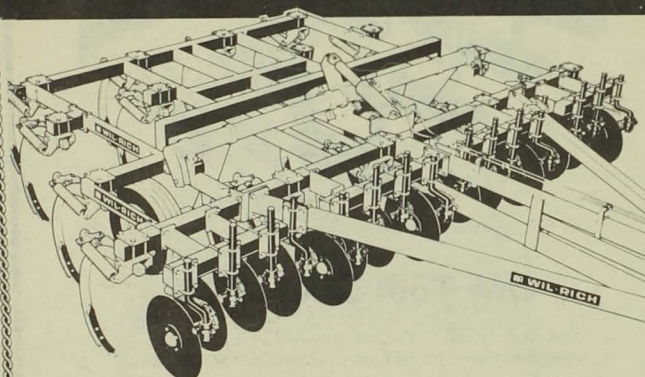
1. Sign up for the '85 year will be from Jan. 2 thru Feb. 28.
2. Drawing for sequence of funding

will be the 1st Tuesday in March.

All other rules remain the same. All applications must be signed by the landowner or be accompanied by a Power of Attorney.

If you have questions concerning cost-share, please, come in and visit with the people who work for you in the Soil Conservation Office. We're here to help.

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RC&D helps you help yourself

By Richard L. Bolli
Coordinator, Golden Hills RC&D

RC&D? This program is designed to help you help yourself. Its priorities, set by its Directors, are oriented towards the development and conservation of the resources of this area. The people in Mills County are quite aggressive at identifying and working towards conserving and developing their resources.

Among some of these is the project known as the Tinkle Branch Critical Area Treatment measure. This project is to control gullies that are eating their way up the side draws from Tinkle Branch and carrying the sediment down through the City. This is an innovative project instead of building large dams in deep gullies a series of water and sediment basins and associated terraced

are planned that will stairstep the runoff water from the hills down into the channel and allow it to slowly run away without gaining the velocity that causes erosion.

Another project is the Loess Hills Prehistoric Heritage Society. They recognized a resource in the archaeological findings of the area. They have identified the need to preserve these and are in the process of developing a plan to build an interpretative center and museum where artifacts can be displayed and help educate the students and adults about the cultures that lived here a long time ago.

While this in itself is good, it does provide the opportunity to increase the jobs in the area through direct employment and by attracting tourist

into the surrounding area. This increases the demand for automotive services, restaurants, motels and other things that are of interest to tourists. The fact that it is close to a large population area increases its value.

The third thing is the Lake in the Glenwood Park. It had been eroding the shoreline for many years and has endangered the large maple trees on the shoreline. The Park Board has asked for assistance through the RC&D program. Plans have been developed to rip rap the shoreline to stabilize it. This will extend the life of the pond and the trees so that many people can enjoy this fine asset of the community.

The Southwest Iowa Hay Growers Association is another example of individuals grouping together to carry

out a needed service in the area. They organized and are conducting an educational program to inform themselves and fellow farmers on how to produce high quality hay that will be in demand on the market. They are working to develop markets that will increase the price of the hay and make it competitive to row cropping. This in itself is going to help conserve the soil by reducing the acres of row crop in the area.

The question of what is RC&D can be best answered by saying it is you, the local citizen that recognizes the need and is willing to step forward and take the initiative to find out what can be done and be willing to put forth the effort necessary to do it.

Soil conservation programs are offered through 4H

Gaining new knowledge and learning new skills are two important goals of 4H. 4H'ers accomplish these goals through their project work. Selecting a project that fits their interests can be a learning, creating, achieving and satisfying experience. 4H'ers set their goals, do their own work (sometimes with the help of leaders, project leaders and parents), finish their work, and show it to others. Ideas are shared and projects shown to others in presentations or working exhibits at local club meetings or county presentations contests.

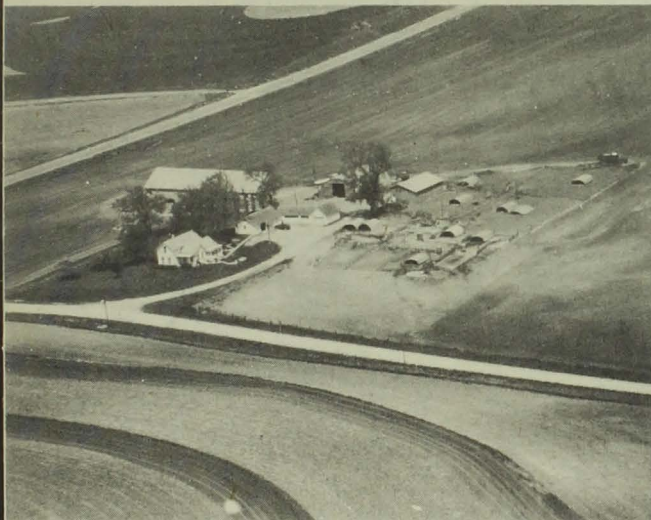
Several of the 4H project areas give members a chance to explore soil conservation. The conservation project stresses the general conservation concepts involving man and our natural resources and provides an introduction to the principles involved in managing and using those resources. The forestry project provides several opportunities for learning about soil conservation. This project explores forest resources and can help develop an understanding of forest management, use, and development. Unit I emphasizes basic knowledge of how trees work, how they

reproduce, how to identify them, and why trees are important. Unit II emphasizes the total forest environment, how it works, how forests are managed, and the dollar value of forests. The third unit that the 4H'er in this project may enroll in offers several advanced forestry options. One of those options includes managing the forest for water, wildlife, and forage which gives an introduction to forest management. Another option is urban forestry which helps the 4H'er realize that trees are important in towns and cities too and how they must be managed to be

successful. There are several other options such as forest creation, forestry careers, and making forestry pay, but the two mentioned earlier relate most closely to the concept of soil conservation.

The Extension Service has information on the Ding Darling project that can be used in the school systems or purchased through the extension service. The 4H Ding Darling project is a series of 30 teaching plans (modules), 10 each in the areas of soil, water, and wildlife. It is intended for teachers of students in grades 5-8.

PRACTICE CONSERVATION



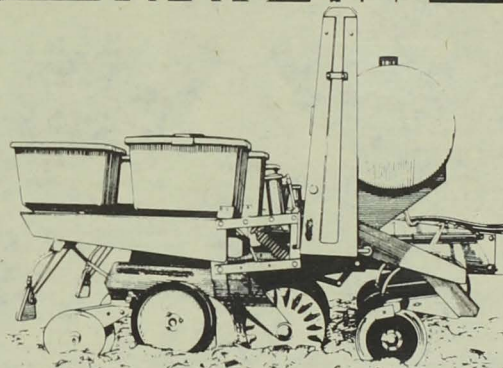
The land is our greatest provider. What we take from it, we must put back with care and cultivation, in order to keep it thriving. Our efforts in conservation today, will enable us to reap the rich rewards of our abundant lands for generations to come.

Mineola State Bank

526-2131



FOR LOW-TILL OR NO-TILL



Save fuel, time, moisture
and soil with a

Max-Emerge conservation planter

Here's a rugged planter you can rely on in most soil conditions, including stubble and many sod fields.

Heavy-duty springs help transfer weight from the 7-inch frame to each planting unit to keep unit-mounted coulters in the ground. Frame-mounted coulters and cast-iron firming wheels are available, too, for extra-tough conditions.

Whether you no-till, low-till or conventionally till your ground, these 4-row (30 to 40-inch rows), and 6- and 8-row narrow models can help you save fuel, time, moisture and soil. See us soon for details.

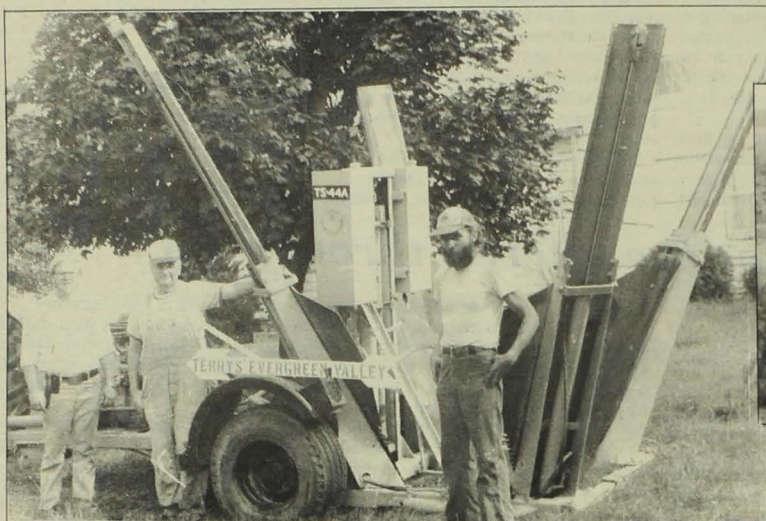


Mills County Equipment

1605 Main Malvern, Ia. 624-8665

Reduce heating bills and stop winter winds with an attractive
windbreak from the gustbusting team from

Terry's Evergreen Valley Nursery



Digging with 44" Vermeer spade.



Basketing the trees with the spade.



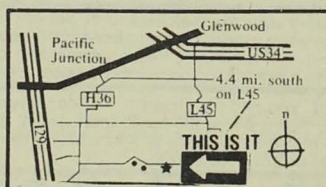
Putting the burlap on.



Hauling the tree to its new home.



Patti, Richard, Morris and Joel Terry;
the gustbusting team.



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