

Soils cons. history , 2 330.12
WEST POTTAWATTAMIE SOIL PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT
1918 to 1944

Soils and water conservation and efficient crop production, through use of improved varieties and the best soil practices have been a part of the Farm Bureau program since its beginning in 1917. One of the first programs which was during World War I was to help farmers to grow two blades of grass where one grew before.

Actual soil erosion control methods were first started in about 1927 when 9 soil erosion demonstrations were conducted in the county. These were mainly wire dams and ditch dams of different types.

Through the years of 1920 to 1930 main soil activities included soil testing, fertilizers, test plots, soils fertility meeting, crop rotation, weed eradication, and ditch dams.

1930 to 1933 marked the period of time when farmers became more aware of soil and moisture losses and the program included surveys of needs for special soils work. Visits were made to experiment stations and other counties.

1934 to 1936, gully control by tree planting, proper soil management and further surveys were made by the County Extension Service.

In 1937, four farms in Hardin township were selected as extension demonstrations farms to show the value of erosion control methods. The next year these farms included demonstrations on contouring, terraces, Brome grass seeding, and others.

1939 marked the big drive for contouring. Agricultural engineers from the Extension Service assisted with laying out contours with the walking A. 32 men attended the first demonstration and 11 of them contoured that year.

In 1940 a CCC Camp was established in Oakland. The service of their soils personnel and the camp boys was made available to 9 demonstration farms in West Pottawattamie.

In 1941 a special soils committee was appointed ^{by} on the County Farm Bureau to assist in enlarging the soils program. Fertilizer demonstrations were started on

on two farms. 13 farms were under Extension-Soil Conservation agreements. 5.2 miles of terraces had been constructed. Much contouring was being practiced.

In 1942 contour demonstrations were held in each township, development of a soils district was being encouraged, a series of educational soils meetings were conducted. About 35% of the farmers were using some improved soil practices.

Last year, 1943, farmers were demanding more technical assistance on soils problems so the soils districts program was encouraged. Petitions were submitted, a hearing was held and the referendum taken with the result that a soils district was approved March 3, 1944. By 1943, 9 miles of terraces had been constructed, 5 terrace and 3 contour demonstrations were held. Approximately 55% of the farmers have adopted some of the soil erosion control and moisture conservation practices.