

Hardin Soil Conservation District



Erosion problems were enormous-the need was obvious

Soil erosion caused concern locally and nationally in the 1940's. Concern over the damages caused by erosion is what prompted soil conservation districts to be organized. Soil losses from fields were caused by plowing up and down hill. Gullies deep enough to bury tractors were common. E. J. Foster, Eldora photographer, is pictured some 40 years ago in one of five gullies in this field in Eldora township now owned by Cecil Rooks.

Conservation award winners...

1959



Ernest Barz

1962



J. Juchems

1963



LaVerne Haywood

Soil Conservation in the early years...

The soil conservation district and soil conservation service technicians assisted cooperators with the establishment of conservation plans for their farms. These conservation plans consisted of conservation cropping systems that included meadow seedings. These rotations not only protected the soil but also built soil fertility when plowed under. Contour strip cropping systems were very common on sloping land. Contouring and terraces and grassed waterways were used on fields that were row crops.



Chester Vigars, chairman of the Hardin County District Commissioners, stands in the channel of one of the terraces he constructed with a tractor and plow in the spring of 1945. Rounds two miles long were plowed in preparing the land for beans above this terrace.



In 1945, Dale Lawrence and Jerold Lawler are shown on border of oat and corn strip. Jerold, the operator, established the entire farm to strip crops.

Seeded in 1945...

Homer Calkins seeded this field of Fischer Brome Grass in 1945. The field was used as one of the first sources of smooth brome grass seeded in Iowa. Brome grass was used with alfalfa in crop rotations that were in common use in the late 1940's.



Homer Calkins stands beside a terrace intake which is a part of the terrace system that was installed at Calkins Campus during 1984. Trails are planned so people can walk on the terrace to see how a terrace works. Terraces are a component of a resource management system used on cropland today. SCS designed and laid out these terraces in the same field which SCS laid out a contour line in 1945.



Native warm season grasses such as switchgrass can be used in today's pasture management system. Other warm season grasses such as big blue stem, little blue stem, and Indiangrass can be found in grass identification plots at Calkins Campus.



Soil commissioners meet in late 1940s



The Soil Conservation Service provides technical assistance to the Hardin Soil Conservation District. Pictured is a commissioners' meeting in the late 1940's. Pictured from left to right are Lloyd Roland, Iowa Falls; James Halsey, SCS District Conservationist; Dale Shadle, Work Unit Conservationist; C. J. Kelsey, Iowa Falls; standing, Stan Dunn, Soil Scientist; Stan Collins, Area Engineer; Lee Lundy, assistant commissioner, and B. R. Wood, New Providence.

Hardin County made soil conservation history with 1968 Pine Lake Watershed Project



The conservation field day committee which organized the event represented not only SCS and District Officials, but also local people. This cooperation and team work is what makes soil conservation efforts a success. Committee members were, left to right: C. O. Rubow, Harold Dettbarn, Carl King, District Conservationist Chuck McCarty, Paul Primus (chairman), Eileen Miller (clerk), John Jaspers, Carroll White, Extension Director James Goode and George Tesch.

Pine Lake

In 1968 Hardin County made soil conservation history. Terrace construction in the Pine Lake watershed was highlighted during the Iowa Conservation Field Day & Plowing Matches. This event represents one of the most important events in Hardin County's soil conservation history. The event was made possible because of the efforts of many individuals.



Because of the Pine Lake Field Days many farms were completely terraced as shown in these photos.



Special cost incentives made the Pine Lake watershed treatments a reality. Through the years ASCS county committee has provided cost share funds for conservation projects. ASCS officials in 1968 were, left to right: Gaylord Thayer, office director, and commissioners Carroll White, Bob Willems and Robert Hoffman.

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