

ANNUAL REPORT

IDA COUNTY, IOWA, SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

1954

DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS

H. L. ELK, CHAIRMAN	GALVA, IOWA
W. F. BUROW	BATTLE CREEK, IOWA
WM. ROSSOW	BATTLE CREEK, IOWA

TREASURER

RAY BRESNAHAN	IDA GROVE, IOWA
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SECRETARY

DON VOGEL, EXTENSION DIRECTOR	IDA COUNTY
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TECHNICIANS

KENNETH H. BURNETT	SOIL CONSERVATIONIST
BRUCE W. MARCUE	SOIL CONSERVATIONIST
GEORGE W. WITTERS	CONSERVATION AID
CHARLES P. BODHOLDT	CONSERVATION AID

SOIL FERTILITY CANNOT BE IMPROVED
WITHOUT CONTROLLING SOIL EROSION

INTRODUCTION

There are three main activities upon which the District has concentrated its efforts in 1954.

1. Developing interest in Soil Conservation.
2. Developing farm conservation plans to stop soil erosion.
3. Providing technical assistance where needed to put these plans into action. In the case of farmers who request assistance under ACP this step has sometimes preceded the first two. In some cases it has been the means of developing farmer interest.

There are many groups and individuals who have assisted the District in working towards these objectives. Space will not permit their enumeration in full. However the District wishes to express its sincere thanks to all groups and individuals for any assistance rendered. Listed below are the major contributions to our District program in 1954:

U. S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service:

Soil Conservationist GS-9 - 12 months service
Soil Conservationist GS-7 - 12 months service
Conservation Aids GS-4 - 20 months service
Transportation, office space and supplies for the above.
(U. S. Post Office Department furnished office space.)

The Ida County Farm Bureau, Extension Service and the Iowa State Extension Service cooperating with the U. S. Department of Agriculture:

Assistance from the County Extension Director in arranging meetings, schools and other educational activities and in performing the duties of Secretary for the District.

Ida County Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Committee:

\$2785.00 in off-set funds for the 1954 Agricultural Conservation Program and assistance in laying out contour guide lines.

Iowa State Soil Conservation Committee

\$2215.50 for Clerical Assistance
\$ 500.00 for Miscellaneous expenses

DEVELOPING INTEREST IN SOIL CONSERVATION

The 1954 ACP Program of ASC has had a marked effect on the interest the farmers have shown in helping themselves with Soil Conservation problems. In many cases ACP cost-sharing has been the determining factor as to whether or not a farmer will install a conservation practice. During 1954 Ida County ASC Committee modified their policy to the extent that all farmers asking for assistance with terracing were given priority on available funds instead of factoring these funds to so much per crop acre among all those asking for any type of assistance. As a result there has been a 100% increase in the annual rate of application for terraces. They have also changed their policy in that they will render cost-sharing assistance only for the initial establishment of contouring on a field.

The Sioux City Program for Permanent Agriculture was given wide-spread publicity in Sioux City papers. The program is sponsored jointly by the Journal-Tribune publication and Sioux City Chamber of Commerce. This District had 38 entries in the contest. The sponsors have provided each participant with a small token prize. This year for the first time the sponsors recognized outstanding work in group action programs such as Watershed development. Our East Aldrich Creek Watershed was given this recognition.

The Veteran-on-the-farm training program continues to be one of our principle tools in developing farmer interest. The instructor places considerable stress on the theory of Soil Erosion and Conservation. When these young farmers have completed their course, they are all interested in and understand soil conservation.

We are making steady progress in getting more and more conservation education installed in the public schools within the District.

The four weekly newspapers located within the District have rendered outstanding service in the publication of all matters concerning Soil Conservation. One of the papers added a reporter to its staff during the year who prepared a number of feature articles with pictures.

For the past two years the District has cooperated with eight other public and semi-public organizations in the operation of a farm tent at the Ida County 4-H Fair. Each cooperator has an exhibit in the tent and in addition assists in the operation of an information service for the fair. One of the cooperators was a local radio station making broadcasts from the tent. With this set up the District was able to get better than average viewing of its exhibit by Fair goers. This District cooperated with the Crawford County Soil Conservation District in the erection of the exhibit used at both fairs.

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The Leaders Land Use Training School was set up again in 1954 under the conditions outlined in our last report. The attendance was about the same as in previous years as outlined below. There was 277 total attendance. Of these 53 attended 2 sessions, 25 attended 3 sessions and 13 attended all 4 sessions.

We are continuing our policy to veterans who are in the on-the-farm training program. This preference allows the veteran to install his conservation program while he is under the supervision of this training instructor.

Our District chairman is still a member of the Ida County Extension Program Planning Committee. We feel that Soil Conservation is receiving its fair proportion of the County Extension Directors time.

The Community Committeemen of ASC have received considerable training on Soil Conservation practices. This is done so that they can better advise ACP participants regarding the practices to be selected for cost sharing. We are sure that this training has been passed on and that farmers in general are better informed about Soil Conservation.

SOIL CONSERVATION FARM PLANNING

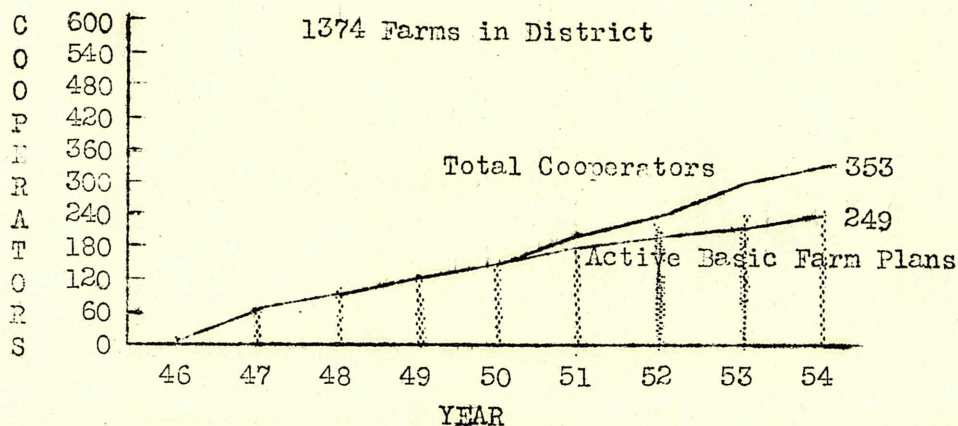
As of December 31, 1954 the District had 353 active District Cooperators. This includes 249 basic farm plans, 28 advanced and 76 initial cooperators.

We have continued to use the progressive farm planning procedures. This consists of accepting requests for assistance (initial cooperators), providing them with information about their farm (advanced), drafting a conservation plan for their farm (basic cooperator). The procedure has worked well in that it permits each cooperator to proceed as rapidly as he desires.

There have been no additional Flood Control plans worked up this year in this District.

1954 was a very favorable season for field work. Some field work was done in February. The frost was out of the ground by April 1 and weather remained warm enough to permit field work to continue to December 7. As a result of this long season we spent a larger amount of our time than we had anticipated on application work resulting in a corresponding curtailment of planning activities.

CHART OF DISTRICT COOPERATORS 1945 - 1954



APPLICATION AND SOIL CONSERVATION PRACTICE

During 1954, most of the Soil Conservation practices were completed in the East Aldrich Creek Watershed. This includes 9 structures, 44 miles of terraces and 3 miles of waterway improvement.

Now that the watershed has been completed most of the cooperators feel that the substitution of terraces for structures was a wise move and that they are receiving more benefits on the land under this program than they would have were only structures installed.

The following chart indicates by years the amounts of practices for which District personnel rendered on-site assistance.

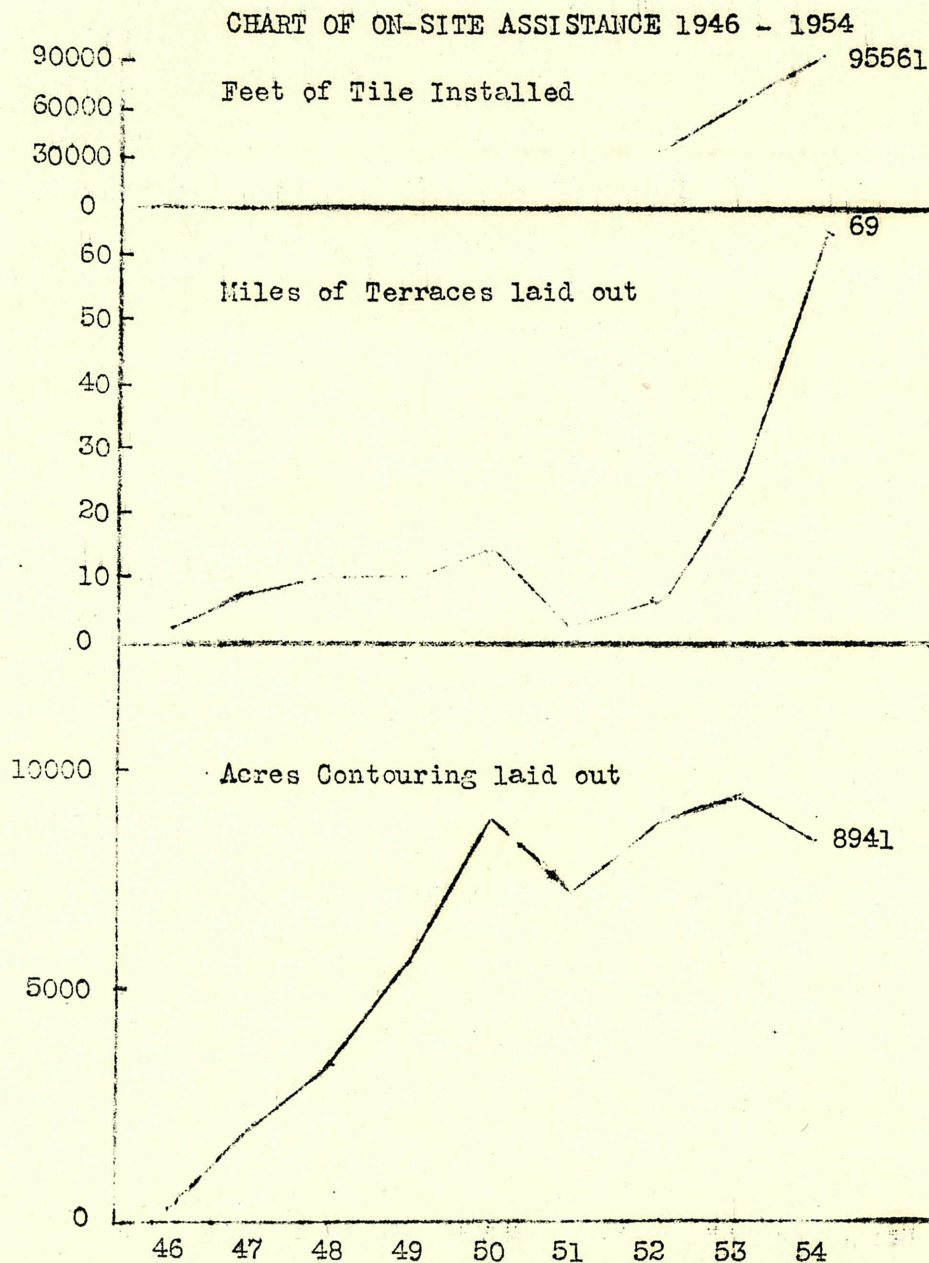
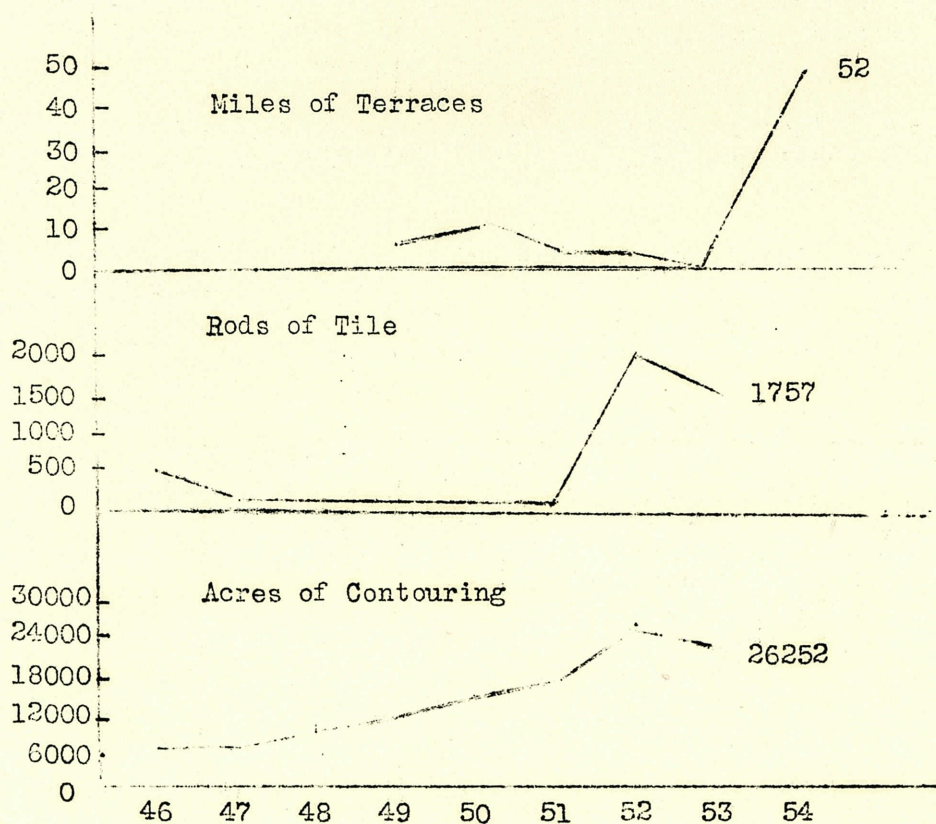


CHART OF ACP COST-SHARING



It must be remembered that neither of these tables indicates total accomplishments. Many farmers not now District cooperators and not receiving cost-sharing assistance have established conservation measures on their farm. We have no way of knowing the exact extent of accomplishments.

PROBLEMS

1. Corn acreage allotments as now administered make it difficult for many farmers to follow approved crop rotations. We know of no perfect solution and many times a compromise is quite unsatisfactory. In addition farmers who have been following a good crop rotation feel that they are unduly penalized when they are asked to reduce corn acreage while others may even increase their corn acreage.
2. Many farmers still feel that they can not use the amounts of roughage called for by proper crop rotations. This problem is aggravated by the lack of capital to purchase necessary livestock.
3. There is a need in this District for a large number of erosion control structures. Ordinarily such structures cost from \$1500 to \$5000. The need for most of these structures occur in areas of reduced productivity and the financing under these conditions is a serious problem.

PROGRESS SUMMARY
 IDA COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT
 ESTABLISHED - FEB. 19, 1946
 Work Unit Office Opened - March 13, 1946

	<u>In 1954</u>	<u>To Date</u>
Sub-Watershed Groups Organized	0	14
Soil Conservation Surveys (Acres)	7285	89594
Basic Conservation Plans (No.)	23	249
(Ac.)	4810	47286
Advanced Conservation Plans (No.)	21	28
(Ac.)	4241	5452
Initial Conservation Plans (No.)	45	76
(Ac.)	9557	15428
Acres Contour Laid Out	8941	
Miles Terraces Built	69	153
Education Meetings Held (No.)	5	122
(Attend)	304	3987
Tile Lines (Feet)	100841	207432
News Articles	24	302
Demonstrations and Tours (No.)	5	51
(Attend)	88	736
Radio & TV Talks	1	4
Birthday Party (No.)	1	8
(Attend)	180	1530

H. L. Elk

H. L. Elk, Chairman
 Ida County Soil Conservation District