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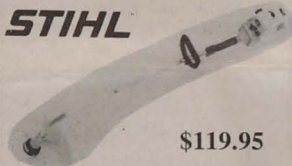
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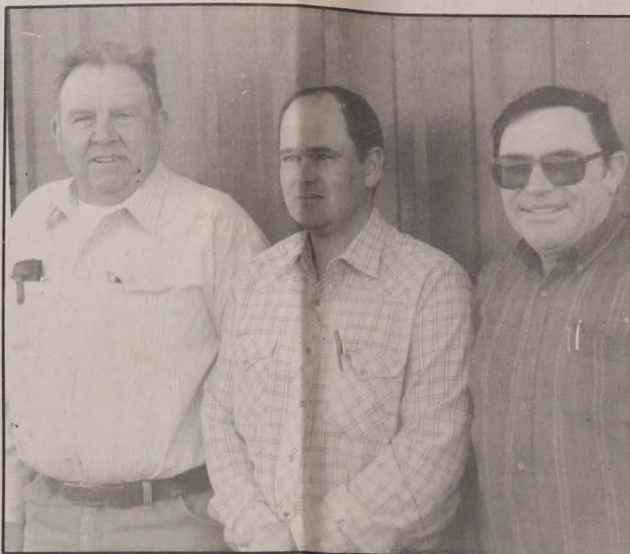
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SOIL CONSERVATION -



DES MOINES COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS. Left to right: Keith Renner, Charles Nealey, Leonard Lane. Not pictured: Sherman Smith and Lloyd Schmelser.



ASSISTANT COMMISSIONERS. Left to right: Jeff Bergman, Gary Wagner, Horace Sutton. Not pictured: Bill Walker, Arlyn Musselman.

Annual Report of Des Moines County Soil & Water Conservation District

Fiscal Year July 1, 1988 - June 30, 1989

Expenditures of funds provided by State of Iowa for District Commissioners' Expenses, Office Supplies and Expenses, Office Equipment and Financial Incentive Programs:

1-M FUNDS - TRAVEL, OFFICE SUPPLIES, EXPENSES & EQUIPMENT	REVOLVING FUND ACCOUNT July 1, 1988 - June 30, 1989	
Commissioners' Travel \$1,079.18	Balance, July 1, 1988	\$1,192.95
Office Supplies 414.29	Receipts:	
Funds Released to State 206.53	Certificate of Deposit	\$3,384.64
Total Allocation \$1,700.00	State Reimbursement	555.59
	Sales	92.44
1988-89 STATE FINANCIAL INCENTIVE FUNDS	Sales Tax Refund	56
Terraces, 5,551 lin. ft. \$9,070.60	Total Receipts	\$4,033.23
Water & Sediment Control Basins, 798 lin. ft. 1,775.02		4,033.23
Obligated Funds 6,318.42	Expenses:	
Funds Released to Div. of Soil Cons. 2,501.46	CD Investment	\$3,300.00
Total Allocation \$20,065.50	Office Supplies	538.61
	Equipment Repair	141.30
1987-88 STATE FINANCIAL INCENTIVE FUNDS	ISWCD dues	210.00
Terraces, 4,500 lin. ft. \$13,266.77	Measuring Scales	135.00
Grade Stabilization Structures, 2 no. 429.23	Woodland Manager Program	25.00
Funds Released to Div. of Soil Cons. \$13,696.00	Planting in the Dust Program	50.00
Total Allocation	Trees	82.46
	Subscription	12.00
1988-89 GEODE SPECIAL LAKES FUNDS	Sales Tax	5.01
Grade Stabilization Structures, 2 no. \$18,974.53	Bank Service Charge	12.32
Terraces, 2,975 lin. ft. 6,305.88	Total Expense	\$4,601.70
Total Funds Spent \$25,280.51		4,601.70
	Balance, June 30, 1989	\$624.48
	CD Value, June 30, 1989	\$5,385.67
	CD Value, June 30, 1989	\$3,366.00

District Activities and Reports

By Dorothy Davis, District Secretary

District purchased two computer terminals for the office using surplus Cooperative Agreement funds.

District donated \$25 to the Geode RC&D for woodland training.

District approved an Addendum to the Supplemental Memorandum of Understanding between the District and the Soil Conservation Service concerning nondiscrimination on the basis of sex, religion, marital status, race, color, age or handicap.

Supplemental cost share funds were requested, and the district received \$5,817.50 additional funds for cost sharing.

Seventy-five percent cost sharing for Special lakes projects was allowed again this year in the Lake Geode Watershed.

Cost estimates made by the district on tile were updated to reflect a fifteen percent increase in tile prices. Earthmoving was increased to two dollars per foot for terraces and to one dollar per cubic yard for structures.

The ASC County Committee met with commissioners to discuss items of mutual interest - ponds being designed, but not built, reduction of soil loss and cost sharing rates.

Cost sharing on projects will be approved on the basis of a priority rating system. Applicants must have a conservation compliance plan for eligibility. Low priority will be given to Grade Stabilization Structures (ponds).

District gave financial assistance to the County Conservation Board for the production of a one-person performance, "Planting in the Dust," at Southeastern Community College.

The district has used the assistance of several volunteers who donated their time to help with Food Security Act (FSA) program. Norma J. Ford, Craig Bartlett, Cindy Anderson and Julie Musselman each did a super job.

District Annual Plan of work and Long Range Program were developed and approved.

Planning Ahead For 1995

By Kathy R. Baughman, Technician

The USDA Soil Conservation Service has produced a very practical and instructional video tape called "Conservation On Your Own" which is currently available for personal at-home or group viewing.

This tape is designed for the producer's benefit and covers the following topics:

- how to measure and manage crop residues,
- how to lay out contour lines,
- how to use grass to control small erosive areas,
- how to plant and maintain field windbreaks,
- and the use of field borders, contour buffer strips and wind strips.

The tape also points out the value of maintaining terraces as well as some considerations in contour strip cropping.

Approximately 92% of the highly erodible tracts in Des Moines County that are enrolled in government programs have a conservation plan written on them. This video tape gives "how to" instructions on conservation practices that may be included in a producer's plan.

Time may not allow the SCS staff to respond to every request for assistance in laying out conservation practices that are written into compliance plans. The information provided in the tape, however, is an excellent self-help resource for implementing the practices required to remain in compliance with the Food Security Act.

This tape is available and is waiting to be used. It can be taken out on loan at the following locations:

- Cropmate, Mediapolis
- Danville Mill, Danville
- Des Moines County Conservation Board, Main St., Burlington
- Des Moines Co. Extension Office, Osborn St., Burlington
- Des Moines Co. SCS, Agency St., West Burlington
- Farm Bureau, Agency St., West Burlington
- First National Bank, Jefferson & Main, Burlington
- FFA Chapter, Mediapolis
- Hassenzitz & Co., Hwy 61, north of Burlington
- Hazen Supply, Mt. Union
- Resource, Conservation & Development (RC&D), Winograd Drive, Burlington
- Sperry Store, Sperry
- Southeastern Community College, Gear Ave., West Burlington

RC&D- A Program for People

Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) board members are making things happen. They are doing things to improve life in their rural communities for themselves and their neighbors.

The RC&D program was established by the Food and Agriculture Act of 1962. The act authorizes the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) to help local units of government to conserve and properly use natural resources in solving local problems and assigns leadership to the Soil Conservation Service.

The Geode Wonderland RC&D area covers Des Moines, Louisa, Lee and Henry counties and is run by a board representing the sponsoring organizations (county governments, oil and water conservation district, towns, planning agencies, and other not-for-profit groups).

RC&D responsibilities include forestry, finding alternative sources of energy, encouraging tourism, helping establish or improve local water supplies, crop diversification, and other rural development activities.

The Geode Wonderland RC&D staff includes:

- Ron Snyder, coordinator
- Rita Marshall, secretary
- Bob Petzelka, forester
- Mary Rheinschmidt, clerk-typist
- John Horan, technician

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ANNUAL REPORT

District Accomplishments

October 1988 - September 1989

ITEM/NAME	NUMBER	ACRES/FT.
New Cooperators	1	268
Individuals Assisted	736	
Conservation Practices Applied	189	
Conservation Plan		6,859
Non-Highly Erodible Land Determinations	76	
Highly Erodible Land Determinations	85	2,696
*FSA Conservation Practices Applied	31	1,336
*FSA Conservation Plans	182	5,949
Conservation Reserve Program		2,062
Conservation Cropping System		3,625
Conservation Tillage System		3,852
Contour Farming		90
Cover & Green Manure Crop		940
Grade Stabilization Structures	2	
Grassed Waterways		11
Pasture & Hayland Management		145
Pasture & Hayland Planting		88
Terraces		24,633
Cropland Treated		6,375
Pasture & Hayland Treated		132
Woodland Treated		11
Wildlife Land Treated		1,926

*Food Security Act

COMMISSIONERS

Sherman A. Smith, Chairman
Leonard L. Lane, Vice Chairman
Keith B. Renner
Lloyd F. Schmeiser
Charles T. Nealey

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONERS

Horace Sutton, Treasurer
William Walker
Arlyn Musselman
Jeff Bergman
Gary Wagner

OFFICE STAFF

Terry J. Cosby, SCS District Conservator
Lisa M. K. Niedermayer, Soil Conservation
Kathy R. Baughman, Conservation Technician
Sally J. Mehaffy, Soil Conservation Aide
John K. Frueling, Soil Conservation Aide
Dorothy E. Davis, State Clerk, District Secretary



OFFICE STAFF. Front row, left to right: Kathy Baughman, Lisa Niedermayer. Back row: Sally Mehaffy, Dorothy Davis, Terry Cosby. Not pictured: John Frueling.

On 80 acres which we wanted to convert from orchard grass to native grasses we used 2% Roundup. We then prepared the seed bed by plowing, disking and catpawking the ground.

Native grasses need a very firm seed bed. We thought our seedbed looked good so we rented the Truax Native Grass Drill that was available at the Des Moines County Conservation Board and we were ready to plant. Jeff Bergman, director of the Des Moines County Conservation Board, came out to assist in calibrating the drill. He looked at the seedbed and told us to "pack it again," so we did.

We planted 40 acres of Big Bluestem (Roundtree variety) and had it in and packed on June 8, 1989. The next day we got two and one-half inches of rain.

As soon as the ground dried we applied one and three eighths pounds of Atrazine to the area where we had planted the Big Bluestem. In 18 days we saw signs of the Big Bluestem. By fall it had headed out and was seven feet tall over most of the area.

The ideal planting time for native grasses in Iowa is from May 15-June 15. We planted 35 acres Rumsey variety Indian Grass and 5 acres Blaze variety Little Bluestem at the end of June. We did see some germination even though we didn't get another rain until July 18.

Atrazine cannot be used with Indian Grass and Little Bluestem. This made competition from foxtail, buttonweed and lambquarter a big factor. We decided that to keep the competition from shading out the native grass we would need to mow often, setting the mower height to just above the native grasses.

Often Indian Grass and Little Bluestem may look like a failure the first year but will come on strong the second year. We feel that we have a fine stand of Big bluestem but we will have to wait until May or June of 1990 to see what kind of a stand of Indian Grass and Little Bluestem we will have.

A proposal has been presented by Des Moines County Conservation Board that a No-Till Native Grass drill be purchased through a joint effort of Des Moines County Conservation Board, Pheasants Forever, Des Moines County Soil and Water Conservation District, Geode Road and perhaps other organizations.

As I reflect back on the time and effort and cost that we put into preparing the seedbed for our native grasses I realize how valuable a No-Till Native Grass drill would have been to us. It may be necessary for us to do some interseeding in the future to improve our stand. If we have to do so and the No-Till drill is available that will be the best deal in town.

The REAP Act-Protecting Iowa's Natural Resources

By Lisa M. K. Niedermayer,
Soil Conservationist

The Resource Enhancement and Protection Act (REAP) was passed during the 1989 session of the Iowa General Assembly. The intentions of the REAP Act are to develop a long-term integrated effort to wisely use and protect Iowa's natural resources through acquisition and management of public lands; environmental education; research; and upgrading of public park and preserve facilities. The resource enhancement program will also encourage Iowans to develop a conservation ethic and appreciation for the natural environment.

Over the next 10 years, about \$200 million will be targeted for REAP. This year \$20 million was set aside for action projects, with the intent of \$20 million a year for the next nine years. These funds will be acquired from standing appropriations and legislative intent to acquire monies from the lottery receipts. Some additional funds will come from a new state-sponsored credit card and state corporate income tax revenues collected on windfall profits.

The details of the REAP Act are still being worked through. REAP applies to many functions of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Iowa Department of Education, Iowa Department of Transportation, Department of Cultural Affairs, county conservation boards and private conservation organizations. Spending of the REAP funds has been designated as follows:

- *The first \$350,000 for conservation education
- *One percent of total receipts for administration.
- *The rest is divided as follows:

- *28% Open Spaces Program (state acquisition and development of lands and waters)
- *20% County Conservation Board Activities
- *20% Soil and Water Enhancement
- *15% City Parks
- *9% State Land Management and Maintenance
- *5% Historical Resources
- *3% Living Roadway Trust Fund

Funding from the REAP Act will be distributed to Soil and Water Conservation Districts to be used on conservation practices to protect and enhance soil and water quality, such

as reforestation, timber stand improvement, field and farm Windbreaks, native grass seedings, wildlife habitat protection and establishment, and protecting highly erodible land. Starting February 1, 1990, Soil and Water Conservation District offices, statewide, will be taking cost-share applications for these practices. If you are interested in conservation work in Des Moines County, contact the Des Moines County Soil and Water Conservation District office at 1104 Derek Lincoln Drive in West Burlington, at phone (319) 753-6221.

The REAP Act, in combination with the Groundwater Protection Act passed in 1987, has put Iowa in the front nationally in environmental and conservation initiatives. REAP committees are being formed locally and at the county and regional level. The public is encouraged to participate in committee meetings to discuss projects and activities planned through the REAP program.

Give No-Till a Second Chance

By Charles Nealey, Des Moines County
Soil Commissioner

Twelve years ago the concept of No-Till farming hit Des Moines County with a bang. Thinking we had found the lazy man's farming secrets, we jumped in both feet first. Mistake, yes! No-till does require less time tractor driving; however, it does require more time thinking, and crop scouting. We failed on the second requirement.

The majority of our mistakes can be grouped into three areas.

Mistake Number One: Incorrect field selection for first time No-Till.

Fields with problems, such as a low pH, low fertility, high weed pressure, or compaction should not be No-Tilled until these problems have been corrected. Let's be fair with No-Till and not blame it for a problem that has already existed.

Mistake Number Two: Incorrect herbicide usage.

When we first started to No-Till a burn down herbicide was mixed with our normal herbicide program and sprayed at planting time. What happened was the burn down herbicide worked and killed existing vegetation. However, all small weeds and grasses that had already germinated but were not through the soil surface soon were competing for nutrients with the crop. It was then we discovered that the normal herbicide we were using must be absorbed through the shoot to work, and the grass and weeds had already grown past this stage.

This mistake can be avoided many ways. One would be by using a root absorbed or contact herbicide. Another would be to apply one-half of the herbicide early preplant and one-half pre-emerge. Thus avoiding the burn down herbicide altogether. Today we have a wide selection of herbicides available. It is up to us as farmers to know their traits so we can use the correct herbicide, the correct amount at the correct time. A little time spent studying can pay big dividends for both our pocketbooks and our environment.

Mistake Number Three: Applying nitrogen on the surface.

Nitrogen solutions are composed of 50% urea. Urea is highly volatile, requiring rainfall within a few hours to incorporate it into the soil. The results were usually that we applied 150 lbs. of nitrogen, but one day later only 75 lbs were left available for the corn plant.

This problem can easily be solved by injecting nitrogen. Side-dressing is preferred with No-Till since preplant sometimes causes compaction; also less may be used because it is applied close to the time the crop needs it.

If we avoid these three mistakes, plus keep our eyes open, No-Till has a lot to offer. Over half of our topsoil on unprotected sloping cropland in Iowa has already been lost to erosion. A recent study shows soil losses can be reduced from 9.0 tons per acre yearly using conventional tillage methods to 0.8 of a ton per acre yearly with No-Till. No-Till requires less fuel, less machinery and for those who know their fields, less herbicide, since a seedbed is prepared only for the crop and not for the weeds.

There have been numerous documented reports of No-Till crops out-yielding crops grown with other forms of tillage last year in Southeast Iowa. It can't be all wrong. Let's give No-Till a Second Chance.



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Conservation Provisions of the 1985 Farm Bill

By Terry J. Cosby

The conservation provisions of Food Security Act - 1985 Farm Bill have encouraged the reduction of soil erosion, and the retention of wetlands. These provisions are known as the Conservation Reserve, Conservation Compliance, Sodbuster, and Swampbuster.

The Conservation Reserve Program

The Conservation Reserve programs offer farmers an option of retiring highly erodible cropland acres. To date, 6,322 acres have been signed up in Des Moines County, during 9 enrollment periods. This program entitles farmers an annual payment for 10 years, along with cost-share to established cool or warm season grasses, wildlife habitat or tree planting.

Conservation Compliance

The Conservation Compliance provision disqualifies you for certain USDA farm program benefits if crops are produced on highly erodible acres without a conservation plan and system approved by the local soil and water conservation district.

The Soil Conservation Service has identified approximately 25,000 acres as highly erodible land in Des Moines County. As stated in the law, producers had until December 31, 1989 to write and sign these plans and until January 1, 1995 to start actively applying the options selected during the planning process.

To date, 98% of the highly erodible acres are under plans in Des Moines County. These producers have taken the first necessary steps in staying eligible for USDA benefits. The next step will be to implement these plans.

During the planning process, most of you elected to wait until 1994 to start the implementation. I encourage you to look at your options and start applying the plan as soon as possible.

Sodbuster

The Sodbuster provision applies if you plant annually tilled crops on a highly erodible field that was not used for crop production during the period of 1985-89. If you plow out such a highly erodible field, you must develop a conservation plan that reduces soil loss to allowable limits. This plan must be approved by the local conservation district in order to remain eligible for USDA program benefits.

Remember, if you plan to convert any land that was not farmed between 81-85, do so under an approve conservation plan.

Swampbuster

The Swampbuster provision applies if you convert naturally occurring wetlands to cropland after December 23, 1985. Wetlands consist of soils that are covered with standing water or are saturated most of the year, and that support mostly water-loving plants.

With some exceptions, to remain eligible for certain USDA farm benefits you must discontinue production of annually tilled crops on newly converted wetlands. A minimal amount of determinations have been completed in Des Moines County. The majority of these determinations will be completed at a later date by a Wetland Inventory Team.

Remember, before doing any tilling or drainage, please check with the SCS office to determine if you will be in violation of this provision.

Native Grass Planting

By Gary Wagner,
Prairie Falls Unlimited, Inc.

SCS Assistant Commissioner Gary Wagner submitted the following report of his observations in working with native grasses.

In 1987 we didn't even attempt to plant our native grass. It was so dry that trying to pack the soil just turned it to dust.

My son, Greg Wagner, went to Wapello to work for a couple of weeks with Wayne Ryan, who is the president of Iowa Corn Growers Association. Greg learned some basic information about equipment and techniques in preparing for planting. (We are city boys with a lot to learn, so we have to ask a lot of questions.)