



Plan Soil Conservation Tour In Hardin, Grundy Counties

Want to take a pleasant drive in the country and learn something about the job some of the farmers in the Pine Lake Watershed are doing to maintain their soil and its fertility?

A "Drive-It-Yourself" Soil Conservation tour of the areas has been planned by the Hardin Soil Conservation District according to Cal Moore, Hardin County Soil Conservationist.

The tour was arranged so that town residents and local farmers can get an idea of what their farming neighbors are doing.

The "Drive-It-Yourself" tour starts today and can be taken any day at your leisure, with the aid of the accompanying map. The tour is about 15 miles long.

Moore said he believes it is the first time this type of tour has been arranged in Hardin County.

The route was planned to include scenic areas of the lake watershed and to show examples of work farmers are doing to save and build up soil fertility in crop production. The route also goes past several areas on which land improvements could be made.

The tour covers the west half of the nearly 10,000 acre watershed in Hardin and Grundy counties. The area has been of significant interest since the recent appropriation of \$93,500 by the State Legislature to enlarge the Upper Lake from 72 to 106 acres. A requirement that 75 percent of the land in the watershed be under a conservation program was one of the provisions of the appropriation. Eighty percent of the watershed land in both Hardin and Grundy counties has now been signed under the Soil Conservation District program.

Here are the points of interest: The tour starts at the bridge east of Eldora. Continue on east of Eldora on highway 57 1/4 miles to the curve, turn left.

Point 1 — Terraces and grassed waterways on the Ed Wiesner farm. Many of these terraces were constructed during the 1930's with CCC assistance. Terraces are low ridges on the contour and are used to break up long slopes into a series of shorter slopes. A most effective conservation mea-

sure. terraces slow the runoff of water and divert it into grassed waterways to be carried off the field with a minimum of erosion.

Point 2 — Terraces on the Guy Norris 46 acres. Terraces are in a field of hay.

Point 3 — Strip cropping, contouring and grassed waterways on the Lewis Crosser farm. Strip cropping is the alternating strips of corn, oats, and hay established on the contour. Strip cropping slows the runoff of water and helps prevent erosion. Contouring is the planting in level line around and across slopes.

Point 4 — Contouring on the Ivan DeWitt farm may be observed on the north side of the road.

Point 5 — Newly established contouring on the Henry Peters farm can be seen east of the buildings.

Point 6 — Contouring with contour field divisions on the Dick Freese farm. Using a contour line for a field division as is observed between the corn and oats field east of the buildings. Straight field divisions would cut across contour lines resulting in many short rows.

Point 7 — Contouring and new grassed waterways on the M. Q. Reynolds farm operated by Don Balvanz. Waterways were constructed this spring by the Triple R Construction, Wellsburg. A grassed waterway provides for the runoff of water without gully-ing.

Point 8 — Newly constructed parallel terraces and waterways in the oats field of the Balvanz farm. Terraces were constructed parallel to eliminate short rows between terraces. Construction work was completed by the Triple R Construction, Wellsburg.

Point 9 — Terraces, contouring and grassed waterways on the George Primus farm in Grundy County.

Point 10 — Parallel terraces and contour field boundary on the Lee Lundy farm operated by Marilyn Eilers. Terraces were constructed this spring. Terraces are constructed low and broad to allow use of 4 row equipment.

Point 11 — Strip cropping, grassed waterways, and contouring can be observed on the Joe Beach farm. Terraces have been

constructed every year for the past 3 years on the east side of the farm. A concrete drop box structure has been constructed at the road. The structure is built on to a culvert at the road. The structure stabilized the grass waterway above it.

Point 12 — New bridge under construction over Pine Creek. The bridge will be a 55 foot pre-stressed concrete structure.

Point 13 — Strip cropping on the Bill Schuneman farm east of the road.

Point 14 — Strip cropping on the John Snapp farm. The strips were established in the spring of 1958.

Point 15 — Contouring on the Butler Farms operated by Paul Primus. The contouring is north of the Country Club Golf Course.

Governor Proclaims June 7 to 14 as Conservation Week

June 7-14 has been proclaimed Soil and Water Conservation Week in Iowa by Gov. Herschel Loveless.

This marks the state's twenty-second observance of conservation week. Prior to 1955, "water" was not included in the week's title.

Soil and Water Conservation Week is jointly selected by the State Soil Conservation Committee and the State Association of Soil Conservation Districts as a time when special emphasis is given to conservation in Iowa.

Iowa was completely organized by 1952 into local soil conservation districts which coincide with county boundaries. The only exception to this is Pottawattamie County, where there are two local districts. Each of the local county districts is a subdivision of state government and is governed by farmer-elected commissioners.

The State Soil Conservation Committee is made up of five farmers, Secretary of Agriculture Clyde Spry, Director of Extension, Floyd Andre and Adviser Frank Mendell.

The committee is responsible for administration of the soil districts law and has general supervision of the soil and water conservation program in Iowa. The committee also administers state funds provided by the state legislature to assist in the soil and water conservation program.

Grassed Waterways Widely Accepted Conservation Measure

Grassed waterways are the most widely accepted of all conservation practices, according to Extension Conservationist Frank Schaller at Iowa State College.

In a recent study conducted in Jasper County, 91 out of 93 farmers interviewed said waterways were a necessary practice and a good investment.

"Why do farmers like and use grassed waterways?" the Jasper farmers were asked. A large proportion of them constructed and maintained waterways partly because of the greater speed with they could farm their land. Many farmers said was costly to farm around gullies and that crossing gullies is a personal safety hazard and also harmful to machinery. In other words, says Schaller, these farmers wanted to be able to move rapidly and with safety across their fields. Also, they wanted to protect their investment in corn pickers, combines and other expensive machinery.

Nearly all were convinced that gully erosion must be stopped or in a few years good land would be lost from cultivation.

There are still many gullies, large and small, on Iowa farms which need to be controlled and grassed down, Schaller points out.

The key to obtaining successful waterways is to make them large enough to handle the area being drained, achieve a smooth, saucer shape in the channel, and get a dense, tough sod cover, says Schaller. After establishment, persistent and timely maintenance is also important. Waterways handled to meet these requirements are successfully controlling even very large gullies. In fact, says Schaller, grassed waterways are

it may be difficult to maintain a grass-legume mixture on productive soils. The heavy growth left on the field after mowing may smother the stand. Bromegrass alone, sprayed to control weeds, would solve this problem and eliminate mowing. For mixtures use a disease-resistant variety of alfalfa, such as Ranger, Buffalo or Vernal, and bromegrass. Mow at a height of 8 to 10 inches.

Many tests and observations on the design, construction and maintenance of waterways have been carried out by Iowa State College Agricultural Research Service and the Soil Conservation Service.

For a rotation pasture, Agronomist J. M. Scholl of Iowa State College suggests a seeding mixture of 5 pounds of bromegrass, 3 pounds of orchardgrass and 8 pounds of alfalfa to produce the desirable amount of grass in the mixture. Orchardgrass is included because it makes better recovery after grazing or cutting than bromegrass and also distributes its growth more uniformly throughout the growing season than other grasses.

1959 Field Day and Plowing Matches to Be in Woodbury Co.

Extreme western Iowa will be the scene of the 1959 Field Day and Plowing Matches, and Woodbury County Soil Conservation district will be the host for the event. The site for the field day, scheduled for September 25, will be approximately 25 miles southwest of Sioux City in the Little Sioux Watershed.

Both level land and contour plowing matches are being planned, according to sponsors of the field day. The State Soil Conservation Committee and Iowa Association of Soil Conservation District Commissioners are cooperating with Radio Station WHO of Des Moines and various agricultural agencies in sponsoring the field day and plowing matches.

William Hughes, Woodbury district commissioner, has been appointed general chairman of the field day and plowing matches. He has selected the following members to serve on the central committee to plan and develop the various activities:

Ed Helming of Hornick and Richard Schunk of Danbury, Woodbury district commissioners; James Cord and J. J. Finn, representing the Sioux City Chamber of Commerce; Gene Flaherty and Paul Beck of Sioux City; Paul Hummel of Oto; Ed Beem of Hornick; Bruce Marcue and George Lamp of the Soil Conservation Services; Robert B. Hegland, county Extension Director.

Everett Rice of Storm Lake and Walt Burow of Battle Creek, representing the Little Sioux Watershed Works Committee; George Mason of LeMars, Chairman of the State Soil Conservation Committee; Frank Mendell of Des Moines, state conservationist; Charles Ballantyne, extension conservationist of Iowa State College; and Keith Kirkpatrick of Radio Station WHO in Des Moines.

Rotation Practices Advised by Soil Conservation Experts

Agronomists and agricultural engineers at Iowa State College are confirming that tillage and rotational practices have a considerable influence on soil and losses. For instance, agronomists report that on Seymour silt (a southern Iowa soil) with a percent slope and a corn-oats-meadow-meadow rotation and second-year corn average soil loss of 2 tons per acre and water loss of about 0.75 inch, through 1957. But continuous corn, mulch-tilled with a crop averaged a soil loss of 0.2 and a water loss of 0.1 inch.

The Iowa State College testing laboratory does not rely on trace elements because fertility research has shown response cannot be expected from any of the minor elements under Iowa conditions. A possible exception might be in production of alfalfa seed, where a slight crease has been noted when bromegrass was applied.

Bromegrass is still the outstanding grass for waterways in Iowa. It is easy to establish, provides a dense, tough sod and adapted all over Iowa. Adequate fertility is necessary for its establishment and growth. Agronomist Frank Schaller suggests planting rate of 15 to 20 pounds per acre.

Your next chance to build terraces you need will come some fields in late summer and fall, and on others in the spring of 1960.