

CHEROKEE COUNTY
SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

ANNUAL REPORT

FOR

1947

INTRODUCTION

The goal of the district is a soil and water conservation plan in operation on every farm in Cherokee County. There are 357,116 acres in farms in Cherokee County; district conservation plans are being applied on 30,129 acres in the county. About 1/4% of the practices planned have been applied on these farms.

The district is emphasizing the development of conservation programs on a small watershed basis in Cherokee County so that the farmers in these watersheds will be in a position to request the extra assistance (in establishing soil and water control practices) made available through the Little Sioux Flood Control Program (House Document #268).

The district has revised its work program to further emphasize the importance of watershed conservation programs in Cherokee County. Plans have been worked out, in consultation with other districts in the Little Sioux River Watershed, whereby the district can make available to co-operating farmers the extra assistance available through the Soil Conservation Service and provided for in House Document #268.

FARM PLANNING ACTIVITIES DURING 1947:

Conservation plans were developed by 60 farmers (with district assistance) during 1947. These plans total 12,408 acres.

To date, 148 farmers have developed farm conservation plans for a total of 30,129 acres.

The distribution of district farm conservation plans in Cherokee County, by townships, is as follows:

Marous	Liberty	Cedar	Spring
0	2	4	6
Amherst	Sheridan	Cherokee	Aften
10	2	12	6
Tilden	Rock	Pilot	Pitcher
8	9	15	16
Grand Meadow	Willow	Silver	Diamond
10	21	23	4

The goal for 1948, is the development with district assistance of 50 farm conservation plans.

Technical assistance for development of farm conservation plans and application of planned practices is furnished the district by the Soil Conservation Service.

PROGRESS IN ESTABLISHING FARM CONSERVATION PLANS:

The U/S district co-operators have made the following progress, during 1947, toward establishment of their soil and water conservation plans:

Contoured	-	3212 acres
Terraces	-	14.4 miles
Grassed Waterways	-	56,300 In.ft.
Seeded Headlands	-	124 acres
Seeded New Pastures	-	13 acres
Diversions Built	-	300 In.ft.
Built Contour Fence	-	260 rods
Limed	-	505 acres
New Seedings Fertilized	-	141 acres
Treeplanting	-	3 acres
Contour Field Div.Est.	-	7752 rods

A good crop rotation is the basis of all sound conservation plans but, at the same time, is rather difficult to put down in accomplishments in figures. However, the district feels that real progress has been made in the past year in encouraging the adoption of better seeding programs; despite the high demand for cereal grains, many farmers are increasing their hay acreage.

OTHER FARMERS ASSISTED:

In addition to the co-operators listed, other farmers were assisted in establishing the following practices, in 1947:

Contouring	-	2196 acres
Contour Field Divisions	-	360 rods
Terraces	-	2400 In.ft.

Steele State Bank constructed 12.5 miles of terraces on their farms in 1947.

ALTOGETHER, a total of 161 farmers were directly assisted by the district, in planning and applying soil conservation practices, during 1947.

GOALS FOR 1948:

The following goals have been set for the establishment of conservation practices during 1948:

Terracing	-	20 miles
Contouring	-	5920 acres
Grassed Waterways	-	91000 In.ft.
Grassed Headlands	-	148 acres
Diversions	-	1600 In.ft.
Contour Fence	-	126 rods
Contour Field Div.Estab.	-	7800 rods

FOLLOWING IS A LIST OF THE WATERSHEDS NOW BEING DEVELOPED IN CHEROKEE COUNTY AND THEIR PRESENT STATUS:

MARTIN WATERSHED - This watershed, located in Spring township, has a total area of 477 acres. It lies within the boundaries of 5 farms with a total acreage of 1100. 91.6% of the watershed acreage is now in the process of applying conservation plans. A request for assistance has been received from the remaining 8.4%. All but 1 of the farms in the watershed had some conservation practices in effect during 1947.

MORTENSON WATERSHED - This watershed, located in Pilot and Silver townships, has a total area of 1218 acres. All or parts of 15 farms are included; these farms have a total acreage of 2147. Owners of 72.3% of the acreage in the watershed are co-operating with the district and all of these had 1 or more conservation practices in effect during 1947.

PEE WATERSHED - This watershed, located in Willow township, has a total area of 910 acres. All or parts of 13 farms are included; the total acreage in this farm is 2080. 65.2% of the watershed acreage is now in the process of applying conservation plans in co-operation with the district. All of these had 1 or more conservation practices in effect during 1947.

4-MILE CREEK WATERSHED - This watershed located in Willow and Silver townships, has a total area of 5371 acres. All or parts of 43 farms are included; the total acreage included in these farms is 7530. At present 40% of the watershed acreage (17 farms) are applying farmer-district conservation plans. Requests have been received from an additional 30% of the watershed (11 farms). 22 farms in this watershed had 1 or more conservation practices in effect during 1947.

SIMONSEN WATERSHED - This watershed, located in Rock and Willow townships, has a total area of 1092 acres. All or parts of 10 farms are included; the total acreage in these farms is 2911. At present 75% of the watershed acreage is co-operating with the district in applying conservation plans. All of the co-operating farms had 1 or more conservation practices in effect during 1947; as did 2 additional farms in the watershed.

RALEIGH WATERSHED - This watershed, located in Grand Meadow township and parts of Woodbury and Ida County, has a total area of 2207 acres. This watershed is in the process of development; and organization meeting has been held and requests are now being obtained. 11% of the watershed acreage is included in farms applying conservation plans.

CONLEY WATERSHED - This watershed, located in Willow township, has a total area of 3429 acres. It lies within the boundaries of 37 farms whose total acreage is 5450. Two local leaders are now canvassing this watershed preliminary to holding an organization meeting. 22% of the watershed acreage is co-operating with the district in applying conservation plans.

STATE HOSPITAL, PATTERSON AND RAILROAD CREEK WATERSHEDS - These watersheds are in the process of development and more interest needs to be stirred up before they are ready for organization.

PILOT ROCK PLOWING MATCH ASSOCIATION:

The Pilot Rock Plowing Match Association is one of the oldest plowing match associations in the middle west. It has operated an annual plowing match for over 40 years with the exception that during wartime the matches were suspended. The members of this association are all residents of Cherokee County (farmers and others interested in agriculture).

In June, 1947, the association called a meeting of its members to determine if there was sufficient interest to revive the plowing matches. At this meeting the members decided that they wanted to revive the plowing matches but upon a different basis. Instead of sponsoring level land plowing contests, as had been done in the past, it was decided to sponsor a contour plowing and terrace building contest. It was decided to hold the first match of this sort on August 22 and 23, 1947. It gave a very short time for preparation, but members thought it would be well to get started right away rather than postpone activity for another year.

The district felt that this show would help materially in promoting the use of soil conservation practices and give its full support. All commissioners served on committees to aid in organizing and putting on the match. The Soil Conservation Service and the Extension Service gave much needed assistance in planning, technical arrangements and judging.

In 1947 show consisted of a senior and junior contour plowing contest (11 entrants); three terrace-building contests were held; (1) farm tractor and moldboard plow class, (2) farm tractor and special terracing machines class, (3) heavy terracing equipment class (total of 3 entrants). The show was well attended and apparently enjoyed by all.

In October, 1947, the Plowing Match Association had their annual meeting; at this time it was decided that the 1947 show had been enough of a success to warrant putting on a bigger and better show in 1948. The organization work for the 1948 show is now under way; a general chairman and many of the committees have been appointed and are functioning. Aid has been solicited from the Soil Conservation Service and the Extension Service. Tentative plans included contour plowing contests, terrace building contests and a farm renovation. The farm renovation will see every soil conservation practice, applicable to the farm at which the plowing contests are held, put into effect during the two day show. The Frank Northman farm, southwest of Cherokee, has been selected as the site of the contest and field day.

The district is wholehearted in its approval of this promotion and has voted to give all available assistance toward making it a big success. The commissioners will all serve on Plowing Match committees. This will be the first event of its kind in Western Iowa.

THE PERMANENT AGRICULTURE PROGRAM OF THE SIOUX CITY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
AND THE SIOUX CITY JOURNAL-TRIBUNE PUBLICATIONS.

The program, sponsored by the above mentioned organizations, was developed to stimulate interest in soil conservation in the Sioux City trade area and to give recognition to Soil Conservation Districts for the work they have done. It was sponsored for the first time in 1947.

The program, in brief, involved the sponsorship of a contest to select the districts doing outstanding work and to recognize them with awards.

Each district sponsored a contest, in its own area, to select three farmers who were doing an outstanding job in the application of soil conservation measures on their own farm. The three farmers selected comprised the team which represented their district in competition for area and grand prize awards.

In Cherokee County there were 37 entries. A local committee of judges sifted these down to the top 10 entries. Then a group from Ida County were invited to come and select the top 3 from among these 10. Cherokee County Soil Conservation District then sent a similar group to Ida County to judge. The district believes that this is a very satisfactory method of making the selections.

In selecting districts for area and grand prize awards, judges (from the Soil Conservation Service and the Extension Service) visited the farms of the team members from each district and then made their selections. Points considered in judging were: (1) Extent of soil conservation program being used on farm, (2) Quality of conservation practices being used, (3) Community leadership in soil conservation activities.

The Cherokee County Soil Conservation District received a plaque as an area award and a \$100.00 check as a grand prize award. The team representing the district included; Herbert Althaus, Peter Carsten and James E. Pee.

The district feels that this program was a worthwhile one in that it gave additional publicity and emphasis to the need for soil conservation work and also gave recognition to men who have done an outstanding job. The district wishes to express its appreciation to the sponsoring groups and assure them it will co-operate in their 1948 program.

THE GOODYEAR TYRE AND RUBBER COMPANY SOIL CONSERVATION CONTEST:

The above company has inaugurated a program to give recognition to district commissioners for a good job well done. The basis of this recognition is a competition to select the board that has done the outstanding job in each state in the middle west for the year ending June 30, 1948. The Cherokee County Soil Conservation District has voted to enter this competition and has so notified the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company.

CO-OPERATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES:

SCHOOLS - Cherokee County schools are presenting soil conservation information in their classwork. Aurelia High School (which is the only school in the county having a Smith-Hughes program) also held one session of their adult nite school on the topic of soil conservation. Soil Conservation Service technicians assisted with this. The Aurelia Smith-Hughes instructor also happens to be in charge of the O.I. farm training program. In co-operation with S.C.S. technicians, he sponsored two evening sessions and a field tour on soil conservation with this group. The Cleghorn high school annually holds a spring contouring school for members of its agriculture classes (Extension and Soil Conservation personnel assist with this).

BANKS - Cherokee County is very fortunate in having an interested group of bankers who have been outstanding in their support of the Soil Conservation Program and who are actively engaged in promoting it.

NEWSPAPERS - The local newspapers have made special effort to give district activities complete news coverage. Special note should be made of the issues of both Cherokee papers during June, 1947 (Soil Conservation Week). Soil conservation information was featured in both news stories and advertising in these issues. News stories on district activities have appeared on an average of once a week or better during 1947.

FA - The active soil conservation program of this organization has been of much help in promoting district activities. The district appreciates the assistance and co-operation given by county committee and township committee members. Extension and Soil Conservation personnel along with the Chairman of the district commissioners were invited to explain their soil conservation program at the annual meeting of township committeemen. Also, early in 1947, a training school in soil conservation for county committeemen in northwest Iowa was held at Cherokee.

CHEROKEE COUNTY FARM BUREAU - This organization has actively supported the objectives of the district and has included soil conservation as a part of its county program. The agronomy committee of the county Farm Bureau organization (of which one of the district commissioners is a member) has recommended to the Extension personnel that they sponsor a series of county-wide community meetings and leader-training sessions on soil conservation; such a program is being planned. Soil Conservation programs were presented at 6 township Farm Bureau meetings during 1947; in addition such programs were also presented at 1 meeting of the Junior Farm Bureau and at one meeting of each of the 10 L-H clubs (conservation practices were emphasized on club tours). Extension personnel presented most of the information at these meetings.

ROTARY CLUBS - Through the efforts of county extension personnel, a tour was arranged for the Cherokee Rotary Club during July, 1947, to show them soil conservation practices on the land. 28 businessmen attended. S.C.S. technicians assisted on the tour. During September a speaker was furnished to discuss soil conservation at a meeting of the Harcus Rotary Club. 25 businessmen attended.

EXTENSION SERVICE - The district is indebted to the Extension Service for the assistance given to the soil conservation educational program during 1947. An assistant extension director (soil conservation) was assigned to Cherokee County in April, 1947, who spent his full time on the educational phase of soil conservation. This help was much needed and the district has adopted a resolution asking that the Extension Service continue this program for 1948. The local Extension personnel have secured technical assistance to put on a terracing demonstration in the spring of 1948; also a cottonwood planting demonstration. Also, the assistant county extension director maintained a weekly column on soil conservation in the Farm Bureau Spokesman.

SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE - The district has received much assistance from the Soil Conservation Service, both in technical assistance and through the Little Sioux Flood Control program. This assistance has meant a great deal to the district. Cherokee County farmers have been enabled to apply conservation programs at a far faster rate than would otherwise have been possible. Personnel, such as those furnished by the Soil Conservation Service, are necessary if the district is to reach its goals.

SMALL WATERSHED ORGANIZATIONS - The development of conservation programs on a small watershed basis has been greatly assisted by the efforts of farmer leaders in the small watersheds; they have done much to further this work by interesting and organizing their neighbors. During 1947, meetings were held in 5 small watersheds organized by local leaders. Soil Conservation and Extension personnel assisted with these along with the Chairman of the district commissioners. Local leaders are working in other watersheds to further organization and development of watershed programs.

FARM MACHINERY COMPANIES - Farm machinery companies and their local dealers have done much to further and promote conservation in Cherokee County. One of the outstanding contributions of these companies are the conservation movies they have made and which are available for use.

COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS - The commissioners met several times with the board and explained the Little Sioux Flood Control Program and the part the various county road systems play in it. The Cherokee County Board of Supervisors has voted to co-operate with the district in applying erosion control practices in the Martin watershed.

OTHER ACTIVITIES:

TILLAGE TRIALS - Through the co-operation of the Soil Conservation Service and the Extension Service, tillage trial plots have been put in on two farms in the county during 1946 and 1947. Such experimental work as this is of much value in providing information which will guide future recommendations and the district recommends that they be continued.

WEED CONTROL - The use of 2-4-D in weed control promises to be of much value to the soil conservation program in Cherokee County because it helps eliminate the objection to drill corn. The district wishes to commend the Extension Service for the extensive educational program it has put on in promotion and explanation of its use.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

TECHNICAL PERSONNEL - If the district is to operate effectively, adequate technical personnel is a necessity. If the Little Sioux Flood Control plan is to be put into effect, in the next few years, it becomes still more important. The district commissioners are not alone in this feeling. The Cherokee County Farm Bureau has presented the following resolution to the district with the request that it be acted upon:

"WHEREAS, the continual productivity of the soils of Cherokee County being basic to the continued prosperity of this agricultural community, it is realized that specific effort be expended to maintain these soils. The efforts of the existing Soil Conservation Service staff have been effective and the work progressing. The requests or technical assistance have been increasing beyond the capacity of the present staff, and

"WHEREAS, the Cherokee County Farm Bureau has gone on record as favoring an increase in the application of Soil Conservation practices, and

"WHEREAS, in order to properly plan and give assistance to those who desire to carry on sound soil conservation practices, and

"WHEREAS, the Little Sioux Flood Control Project is operating on an experimental basis and it is desirable to complete this project as soon as practicable.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Soil Conservation District Commissioners be requested to make a request for additional soil conservation technicians in order to expedite the soils program."

The commissioners have discussed this resolution and the following decision was reached: Moved by Fee and seconded by Bengtson that the Soil Conservation Service be requested to furnish additional

personnel in keeping with the resolution presented by the Cherokee County Farm Bureau. Motion Carried.

The Soil Conservation Service has been notified of this action and additional technical help has been requested.

This problem became more acute in December, 1947, as the district commissioners were informed that in January, 1948 the assistant county extension director (soil conservation) and one of the Soil Conservation Service technicians were planning on resigning.

It is hoped that it will be possible to furnish the district with adequate technical personnel during 1948.

THE CHEROKEE COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

C. C. Martin, Chairman District Commissioners	Cherokee, Iowa
Louis C. Bengsten, District Commissioner	Aurelia, Iowa
James R. Fee, District Commissioner	Washita, Iowa