



NEW TERRACES — Hugh O'Meara, rural Williamsburg, has just completed work on four new terraces, two of which

are shown above, on land he owns in English township. O'Meara has installed 13,100 feet of terraces and

23,000 feet of tile over the past ten years, and has been recognized as the recipient of the Iowa county soil conser-

vation district's owner-operator award for 1986.

O'Meara Shows Ten-Year Commitment To Controlling Soil Erosion

By Alan Sieve

A ten-year commitment to soil conservation practices, particularly terrace and tile construction, on land he owns in Dayton and English townships has earned Hugh O'Meara, rural Williamsburg, the Iowa County Conservation Service district's owner-operator award for 1986.

O'Meara noted he began constructing terraces and tile in the mid-1970s when he stepped up his corn and soybean production, as it looked economical for the long run to put land into row crops rather than to have it in grass to raise cattle.

Since about 1976, district conservationist Harry Bryant noted O'Meara has installed 13,100 feet of terraces and 23,000 feet of terrace tile on the 855 acres near North English.

In addition, Bryant said O'Meara has worked with the county on two joint conservation projects and has worked with his neighbors on three projects.

The two joint-county projects involved roads adjoining his property in English township. O'Meara contacted the county engineer in both cases to arrange to have drop inlets installed rather than regular road culverts, so that the roads serve as terraces. To protect the road surface in each of the two projects, he explained emergency overflow pipes were installed about 6 to 8 feet below the road surface.

On the first project undertaken around 1976, O'Meara noted he paid the entire cost, as he felt it was worth it in being able to farm more ground near

the roadway. Otherwise he would have had to build a similar terrace 100 feet from the road. The cost of the second project, undertaken later, was shared by both him and the county, he said.

The projects he's undertaken with his neighbors mainly consist of terraces built along property lines, either to pro-

tect his property from erosion or theirs. "That's worked both ways," he said. "Some of my neighbors have done it for me, and I've done it for them."

O'Meara noted he's done approximately the same amount of work each year since he began terracing and tiling. Although he's not doing as much

each year now as he's done in the past, he has just finished installing four new terraces this year. Those added up to 1,000 feet and incorporated 1,650 feet of tile, according to SCS records.

He added he will continue installing terraces and tiling that are still needed, although he has no special plans. "You never get totally done with conservation," he noted.

Asked what his motivation was for continuing conservation work in these economic times, he agreed the economics aren't promising as they once were, "but I feel conservation is so important to the soil."

He noted one incentive for him to continue is that the tenant who now farms the land, Duane Schaefer, is also very conservation-minded and takes good care of the terrace and tiling that's been installed. "He does an excellent job of maintenance," O'Meara said.

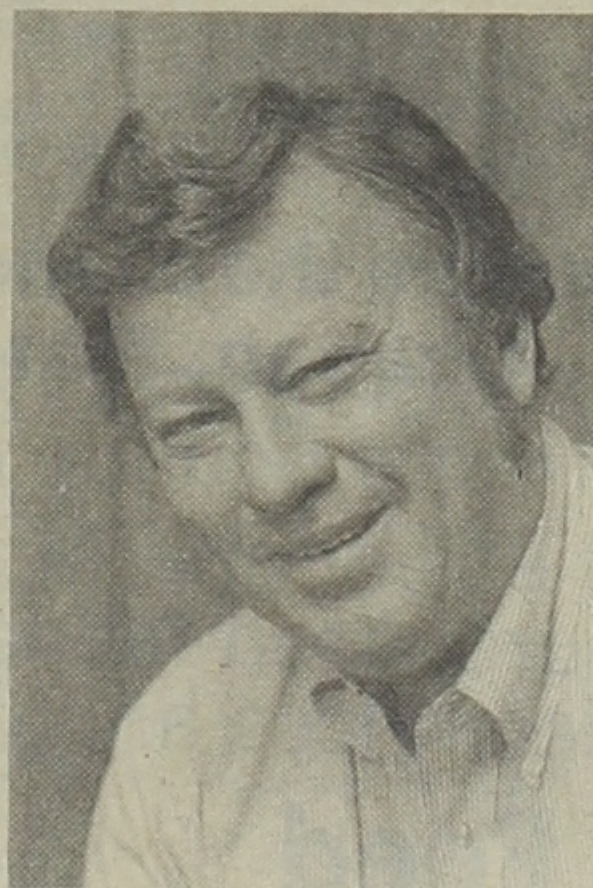
Schaefer also uses minimum tillage on all ground using a chisel plow on much of the ground, and just a disk on a lot of it. He never uses a conventional plow, O'Meara said.

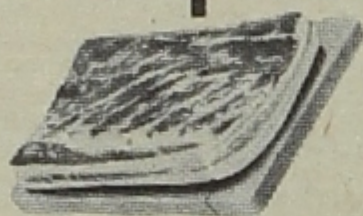
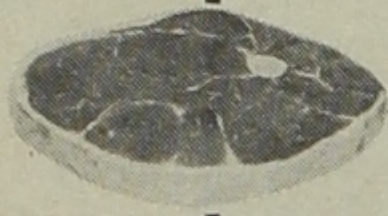
Although he has been selected for the district's owner-operator award, O'Meara noted he got out of active grain farming about six years ago and now just raises some cattle on pasture ground.

Although he's not actively involved in grain farming and the economics aren't what they once were, O'Meara said he'll still be active in conserving the soil. "If it washes away, you can't grow anything," he concluded.

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you can't grow
anything."**

— Hugh O'Meara,
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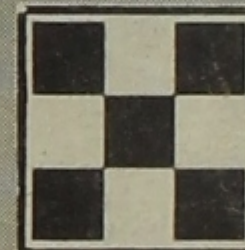
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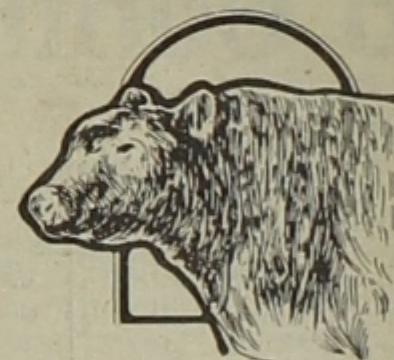
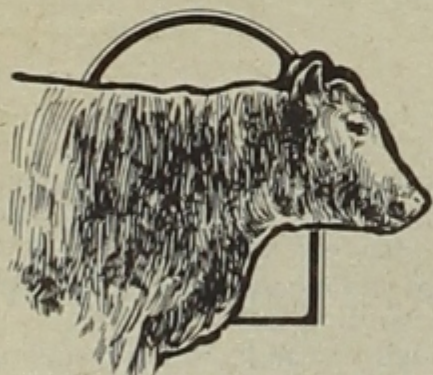
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Jean Swailes and Dave Upah are winners of the Benton county SCS's Landlord/Tenant division soil achievement awards.

Swales, Upah Win Benton SCS Award

By Dean Dickel

It takes a good deal of teamwork to win the war against soil loss on the rolling hills north and east of Belle Plaine, commonly known as the Buckeye Creek Watershed. The moderate slope and highly erodible sandy loam soils create a challenge for a number of farmers who are cooperating with the Benton county Soil Conservation Service (SCS) in a long-range program to curtail erosion in the area. The SCS plan calls for the program to be fully implemented by the year 2000.

As a result of that cooperation, the landlord/tenant team of Jean Swales and David Upah were recently named winners of the SCS's Achievements in Soil Conservation in the owner-tenant division. Upah and his father Bernie cash rent the 300 acre farm owned by Swales and her brother Dr. Don O. Newland, Des Moines.

By following SCS recommendations and minimum tillage practices, the

Upahs have managed to keep soil losses at or below five tons per acre on most of the 250 tillable acres. The farm has been contoured and strip farmed for many years and in addition to maintaining those practices, the Upahs use residue management to keep soil loss at acceptable levels.

No-till has become part of the Upahs' farming practices, as they no-till corn into sod and bean ground, avoiding the use of a moldboard plow. Dave says yields on the no-till corn are "equal to or better" than more conventional tillage programs. They obtained good weed control on sod ground this year using a tank mix of Lasso, Bladex and 2-4-D. Upah said he used 2-4-D instead of Parquat because it's "cheaper and safer to use."

Nitrogen was applied in the form of anhydrous ammonia with a rig equipped with disk openers. Upah said the only problem he experienced with

the special rig was that the marks made it hard to see planter marks later. Potash and phosphorous was applied in dry form with the planter—110 pounds per acre of 8-32-16. Upah used a John Deere 7000 Max-Emerge, equipped with two-inch fluted coulters, to put about 25,000 plants per acre into the soil. No-till ground was cultivated once, using a new cultivator with three shanks per 38 inch row that reduces problems with plugging.

On corn following corn, ground is disked lightly twice before planting. The same fertilization program is used, except that nitrogen is upped to 140 pounds per acre.

The Upahs farm a total of 500 acres, including a 160 acre farm near Koszta also owned by Swales. It was a natural for Dave to take over operation of the 300 acre Swales farm north and east of Belle Plaine. Dave grew up on the farm and actually prefers farming on the

hills. "It's not nearly as boring farming in the hills as it is where all the rows are straight," he said.

As co-owner of the property, Jean Swales has two main areas of concern—to keep the farm profitable on a year-to-year basis and at the same time preserve the long-term value of the land. On the latter, Swales credits the Upahs and the SCS for reaching her goal. "Our goal is to hand over the land to the next generation in as good or better shape than when we took over," Swales said.

New cooperator

A Blairstown farmer, Vic Koster, is the 1986 winner of the New Cooperator division. Soil losses on his farm in Leroy township averaged only five to seven tons per acre, according to SCS measurements. Soil loss on Koster's farm is controlled by contouring, contour strips and no-till planting.

Benton SCS Elections This Month

The Benton County Soil Conservation District is announcing that there will be a third vacancy on their Board of Commissioners to be filled at the up-coming general election.

Due to the resignation of Dennis Duello (Taylor township), an unexpired term running until January 1, 1988 will be up for election. This is in addition to the two vacancies announced earlier

caused by the expiration of terms for Paul Anderson (Benton township) and Stan Geiken (Eden township) which will be full six-year terms.

Any qualified elector residing in Benton County (cities & towns included) is eligible for the office of Commissioner. No more than one commissioner may reside in any one township, however.

Therefore, residents in Monroe and Fremont townships will not be eligible for office at this time because there are already Commissioners serving who reside in them.

Prospective candidates may obtain nomination papers from the County Auditor. These petitions must be completed and filed with the County Auditor no later than September 10, 1986.

There is still time for those interested to get this done.

Your help could make the difference. Help keep our soil and water where and how they belong. Consider running for the office of Soil Conservation District Commissioner. For more information, contact the Benton SCD office at 472-2161.

USDA Extends Comment Period On Conservation Provisions

The closing date for comments on the proposed Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation provisions — commonly referred to as cross-compliance, sodbuster and swampbuster — of the Food Security Act of 1985 has been extended from Aug. 26

to Oct. 25, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has announced.

These provisions are designed to reduce soil loss due to wind and water erosion, protect the nation's long-term capability to produce food and fiber, reduce sedimentation and improve

water quality, assist in preserving the nation's wetlands, and lessen the incentives to produce agricultural commodities on highly erodible farmland.

The comment period was extended because of the complex issues involved in implementation of the new provi-

sions, according to the USDA.

Comments should be sent to: Director, Cotton, Grains and Rice Division, USDA/ASCS, P.O. Box 2415, Washington, D.C. 20013 and must be received on or before Oct. 27 to be assured of consideration.

Farm Bill Calls For Soil Conservation

The Food Security Act of 1985, better known as the 1985 Farm Bill, contains strong incentives for soil conservation planning and implementation. Non-compliance will deny farmers benefits of some U.S. Department of Agriculture farm programs, according to Steve Barnhart, Iowa State University Extension agronomist.

Interim rules regulating future cropping of highly erodible cropland and wetlands were implemented June 25. Producers who fail to meet the interim rules will be ineligible for commodity price support and other program payments, disaster payments, crop insurance under the Farm Crop Insurance Act, Farmers Home Administration loans, farm storage facility loans and other farm program benefits.

Future cropping practices on highly erodible land will fall under either the conservation compliance or the sodbuster provisions. Land cropped at least one year during 1981-1985 will be considered under the conservation compliance provision. Land not cropped during 1981-1985, including long-term hay meadows, pastures and woodlands, will be evaluated under the sodbuster provision. Cropping of recently converted wetland will be governed by the swampbuster provisions.

Every county in Iowa has some highly erodible land or wetlands that will be affected by this legislation.

Soil Conservation Service (SCS) calculations show 8,200,000 acres of existing Iowa cropland and 2,700,000 acres of long-term hay, pasture or woodland are classed highly erodible. Iowa has an additional 150,000 acres of wetland that also fall under those provisions.

Each soil type is assigned an erosion potential based on rainfall, soil characteristics, and length and steepness of slope. Each also has a "tolerable" soil erosion rate, or T. Soil erosion below the T value is considered negligible.

Sodbuster and conservation compliance policies designate highly erodible soils as those with erosion potential eight times its T value. Most soils in Iowa with greater than 8 percent slope and soils with 6 percent slope and a slope length of 150 feet or longer are included. Soil Conservation districts (SCD) or SCS offices have classification lists of all soils in the county. Potential erodibility does not take into account existing crop management or conservation practices.

Wetlands are soil areas covered with standing water or saturated most of the year, and which support water-loving plants. Local SCS offices can identify their county's wetlands.

Conservation compliance and sodbuster policies require farmers who request certain USDA farm program benefits, and who are farming or plan to farm highly erodible land, to apply locally approved conservation plans. The provisions will have no effect on farmers who are already using an approved conservation plan.

Conservation compliance includes a grace period for those who are not using a conservation plan. Farmers who are currently producing agricultural commodities on highly erodible land have until Jan. 1, 1990, to develop and begin to apply a conservation plan. They have until Jan. 1, 1995, to have the plan fully in effect. If a soil survey is unavailable, producers have until two years after a survey is made to be subject to the policy.

SCS personnel will help farmers develop and apply conservation plans and help local conservation districts review them.

Farmers with highly erodible land or wetlands have several options:

- They can produce agricultural commodities on the highly erodible land without using an approved conservation plan or produce agricultural commodities on newly converted wetland and lose their eligibility for USDA programs.

- They can develop and apply con-

servation plans that will reduce excessive erosion on highly erodible cropland, but not convert existing wetlands, and retain their eligibility for covered USDA programs.

- They may apply to enroll their highly erodible land in the Conservation Reserve if they meet program criteria.

To find out who these policies affect,

Barnhart recommends:

- Visiting a local SCS office to find the erodibility and wetness of your land and whether your farm already has an approved conservation plan.

- Visiting a local Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service office (ASCS) to determine which fields contain highly erodible or wetlands. The ASCS is the official source for specific

details and any exemptions or appeals associated with these rules, regulations and programs.

Fields can be redefined for planning and management purposes. Barnhart said to remember that violation of conservation compliance, sodbuster or swampbuster rules on even one field may jeopardize program benefits for all land on the farm.

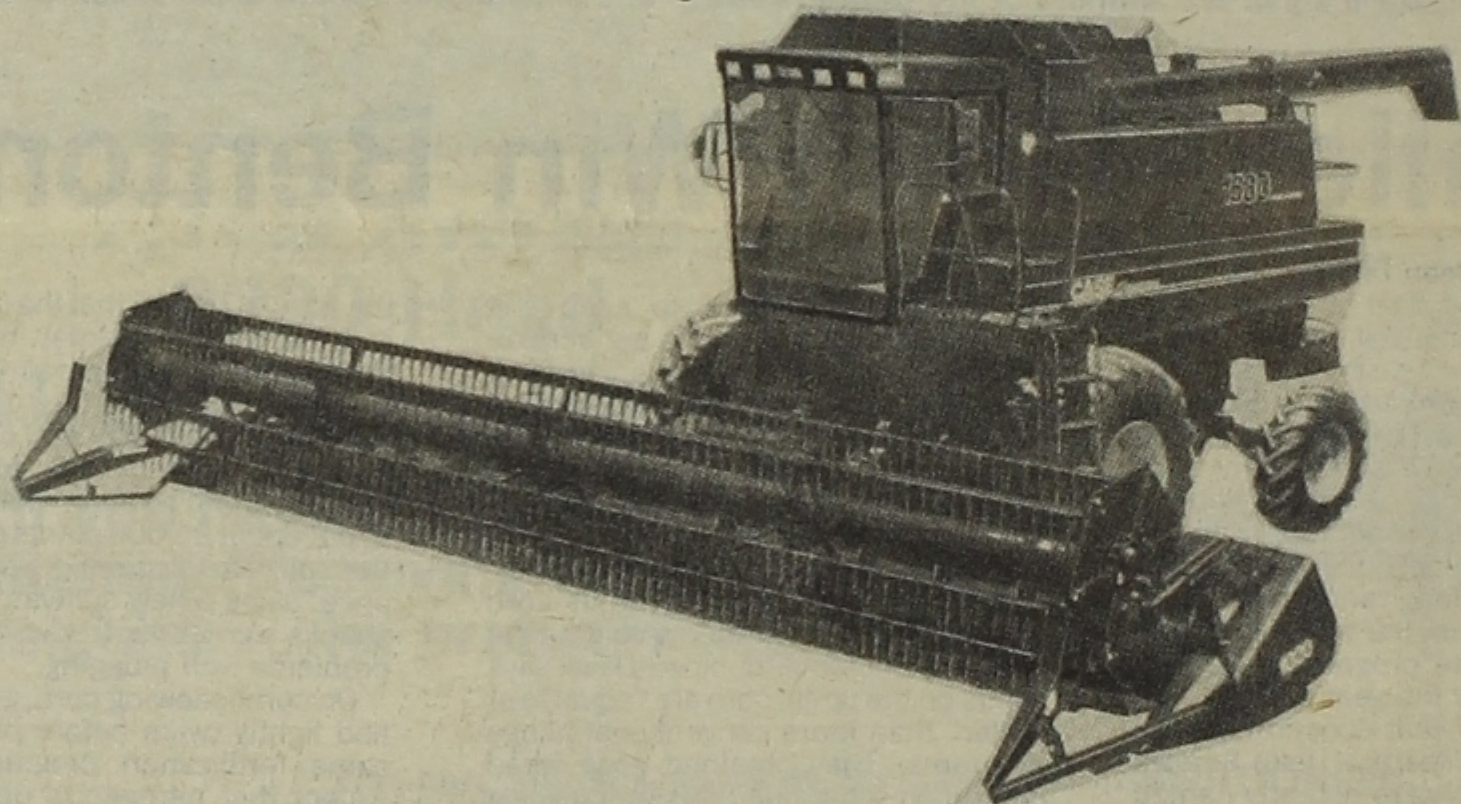
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Downstream Costs Of Erosion Higher Than On-Farm

Soil erosion on farm fields is costly because of lowered agricultural production, but the eroded soil that is dumped downstream may be even more costly, an Iowa study shows.

The study, called "Off-Site Costs of Erosion," estimates sediment damage in Iowa at more than \$47,000,000 a

year.

"We're looking at costs of cleaning sediment out of drainageways and road ditches, loss of recreation value in our streams and lakes, extra costs for treating drinking water — costs on which we can get some kind of estimate," according to Mike Nethery, Soil Conservation

Service state conservationist.

The SCS heads an interagency team that began gathering cost data in 1985.

"We've always known there were downstream costs associated with soil erosion," Nethery said, "but this is the first time we've made a concentrated effort to get specific damage estimates."

The Center for Agricultural and Rural Development (CARD) at Iowa State University gathered cost data from county engineers, state agencies, city water treatment officials and others, and is analyzing and projecting estimates

statewide.

Preliminary results estimate the annual damage at more than \$47,000,000: \$22,000,000 to transportation; \$10,000,000 to recreation, fish and wildlife; \$1,000,000 to municipal water supplies; and more than \$13,000,000 to agricultural land because of sediment buildup and blocked drainage.

"But those estimates tell only part of the story," Nethery said. "They represent current annual expenses to ease the problems, not eliminate them. In

(Please turn to page 7)

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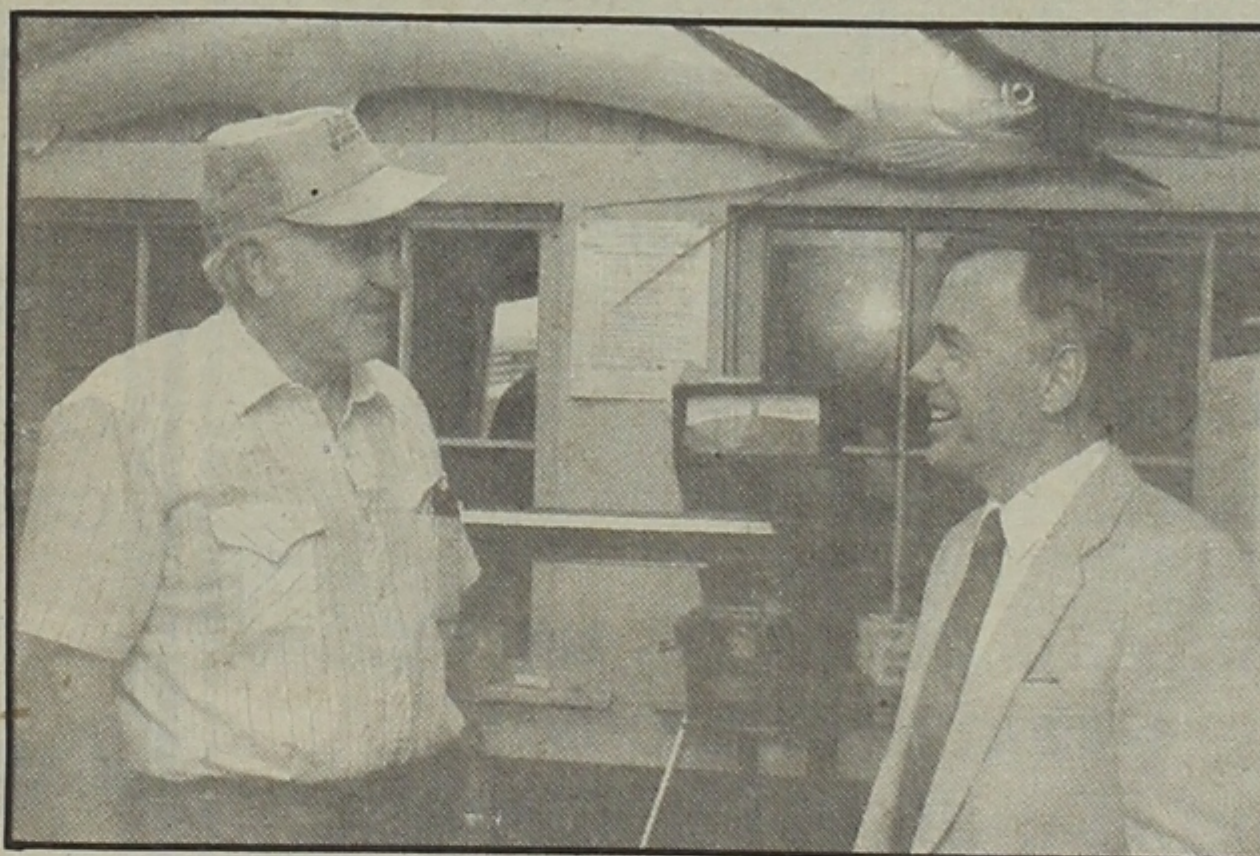
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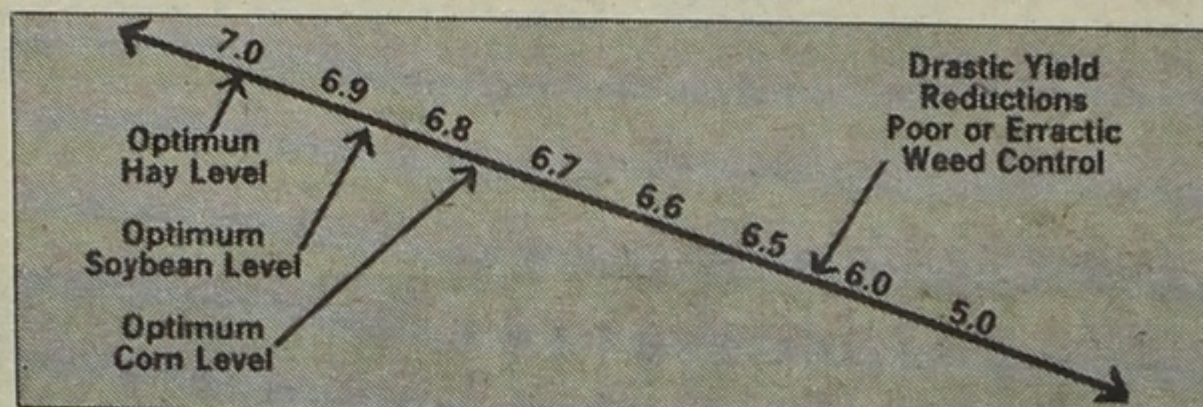
Roy Tubaugh, left, visits with Chelsea Savings Bank loan officer Dale Johnson.

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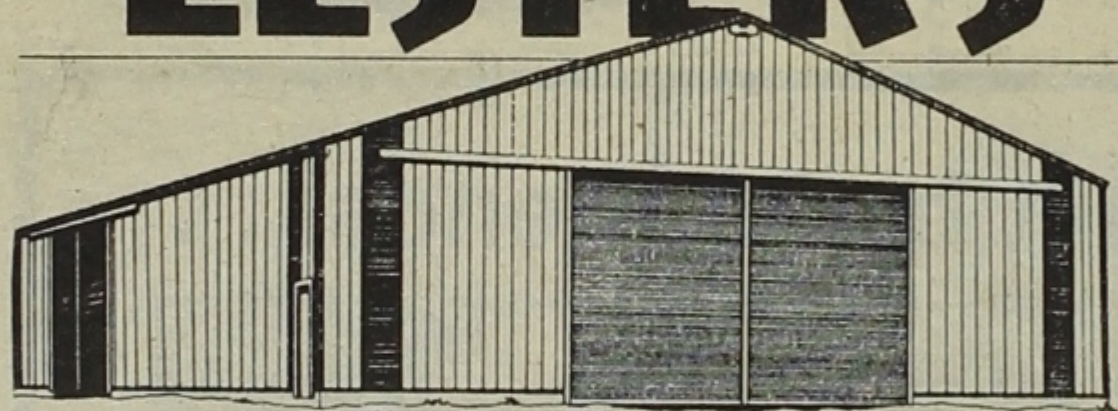
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Erosion Costs -

(Continued from page 5)
most cases, at least twice as much should be spent to correct the problems."

Nethery said road culvert cleanout by counties is done on a priority basis. Only the most severe cases are addressed.

The \$47,000,000, mostly public funds, is more than is being spent each year to control soil erosion in Iowa. Federal, state and county cost-share funds are about \$15,000,000 a year, or a third of the amount being spent trying to ease sediment problems.

The study, to be completed later this year, details the kinds of damage caused by sediment and estimates dollar amounts for specific problems.

Gaye

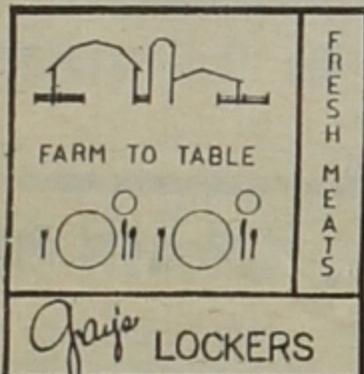
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John J. Cunninghams, Laverne Grimms

By Doris McCartney

A ditch was traded for a terrace on the 268 acre John J. Cunningham farm in the mid 1970's.

"That was the new approach to our conservation farming," admits Cunningham, a native of Iowa county.

As a result of that series of conservation practices, Cunningham, the landowner, and Laverne (Bud) Grimm, 58, Millersburg, tenant, were named this fall as winners of the landowner-tenant division by the Iowa County Soil Conservation service.

Winners of all divisions will be recognized at an awards dinner in November.

Improvements

The total earth improvements on the Cunningham land include: 5,800 feet of terraces, 500 feet of diversions, six and one-half acres of waterways and 13,445 feet of tile.

In addition the partnership has established crop rotation as another means of conservation.

The first terrace was started in 1976, three years after Bud Grimm began operating the acres as Cunningham's tenant.

"I confessed to Bud that my big worry was that eroding ditch," Cunningham recalls.

Grimm says, "I offered to seek help to halt that waste of topsoil."

According to the SCS, the primary purpose of a terrace system is to



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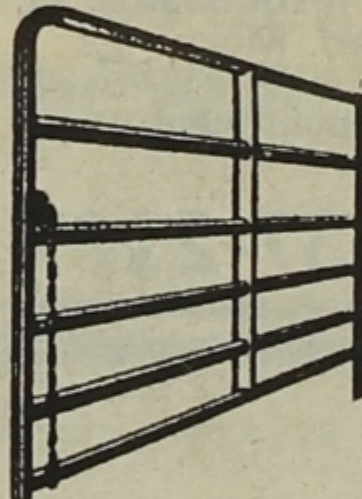
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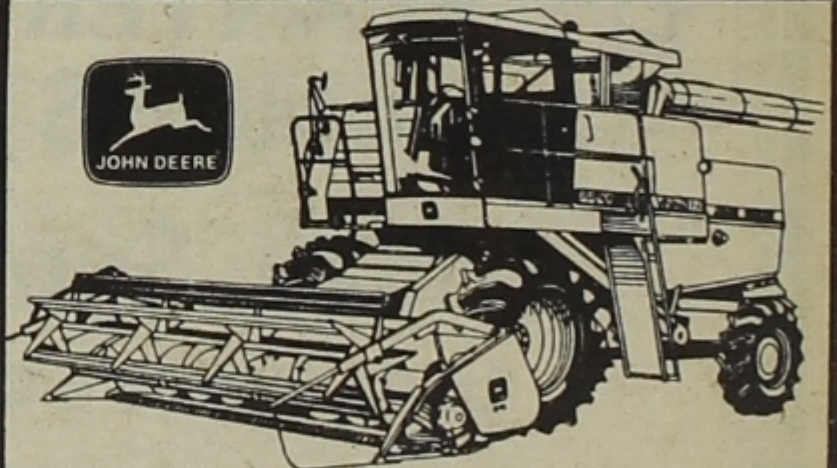
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Traded A Ditch For A Terrace

reduce sheet erosion on cropland fields. The runoff that is caught can give a real boost in dry years and can reduce lowland flooding in wet years.

The Cunningham farm is average for the southern part of Iowa county with some rolling hills.

Grimm suggests the farm now has more than a dozen dry ponds with surface inlets. Harry Bryant, county conservationist, says these are actually the terraces.

The terraces, gradually added from 1976-1985, were designed to hold at least two inches of runoff from the contributing area. Water caught by the terraces is drained into an outlet or grassed waterway.

Where possible terraces are built parallel to each other to eliminate point rows and facilitate farming. However, Cunningham notes they do have some point rows. Regardless of that inconvenience at some places, the projects have reduced soil erosion efficiently and are great assets.

Crops

Crops produced this year include: 68 acres of corn, 40 acres of soybeans, 22 acres of oats, while the balance is in pasture and hay. Grimm harvests large hay bales.

In addition the team maintains a 50 crossbred cow herd in partnership

since nearly 50 percent of the farm is left seeded down.

Cunningham observes, I'm following my father's advice: always leave the farm in better shape than what you had when you acquired it."

There are more than sentimental reasons for Cunningham, in his eighth decade, to maintain a farming interest here. His parents farmed on part of that land, building a home there on a portion of the land in 1904.

John and his wife Catherine farmed and raised a family here, remaining until 1963, when they moved to Sigourney. John commuted to the farm for the next eight years to farm by himself.

His son John P. Cunningham, Belle Plaine, owns a farm in Dayton township and is associated with a Waterloo bank.

Longtime Cooperator

"Farming has been my career," Cunningham comments.

"Since we aim for good crops, we are more than satisfied to have made a turnaround from that objectionable ditch."

The cost sharing with SCS and ASCS (Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service) has been a real benefit to the Cunningham program. He has been a longtime conservation cooperator since 1954.

As for the price of all the improve-

ments, Cunningham says he hasn't stopped to consider the bill. With the improvements, he says all the land is now farmable.

Credits Grimm

Besides the conservation investment, John credits the success of their partnership with Bud, whom he calls "a dedicated worker."

Grimm, who began as a farmhand at the age of 15, started renting land in

1960 in Keokuk county. He owns his home place, a tract in Millersburg.

Until this past year, his wife Joan has been his full-time helper in all field operations. Presently, she is employed by the University of Iowa hospitals.

A unique aspect of the Cunningham-Grimm partnership is that they operate on an oral contract year after year.

Grimm concludes, "I consider this a rare opportunity in the pressure of today's world."

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Jorgensen Is Elected ASA Officer

Marlyn Jorgensen, Garrison, formerly of Marengo, and John (Ted) Huser, Sac City, were elected to lead the nation's soybean producers at the American Soybean Association EXPO, Cincinnati, Ohio, last week.

Huser was named President of the American Soybean Development Foundation (ASDF), which funds market development and research programs worldwide. Funds raised through checkoff programs in 24 states make up the \$5,500,000 annual budget of ASDF. Matching funds from the Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) and cooperating countries made possible some 200 projects in more than 60 countries last year.

Jorgensen was elected vice president of the American Soybean Association (ASA). Jorgensen was first on the Iowa Soybean Association board in 1975, when he served as the Farm Bureau representative. He was elected to his first term on the ISA board in 1982. Jorgensen has represented Iowa as a director to the national group for three years and has been active in the area of grain quality standards. He and his wife, Ann, farm 1,520 acres in Benton County.

As vice president of ASA, Jorgensen

will be involved in farm policy affecting the nation's soybean producers.

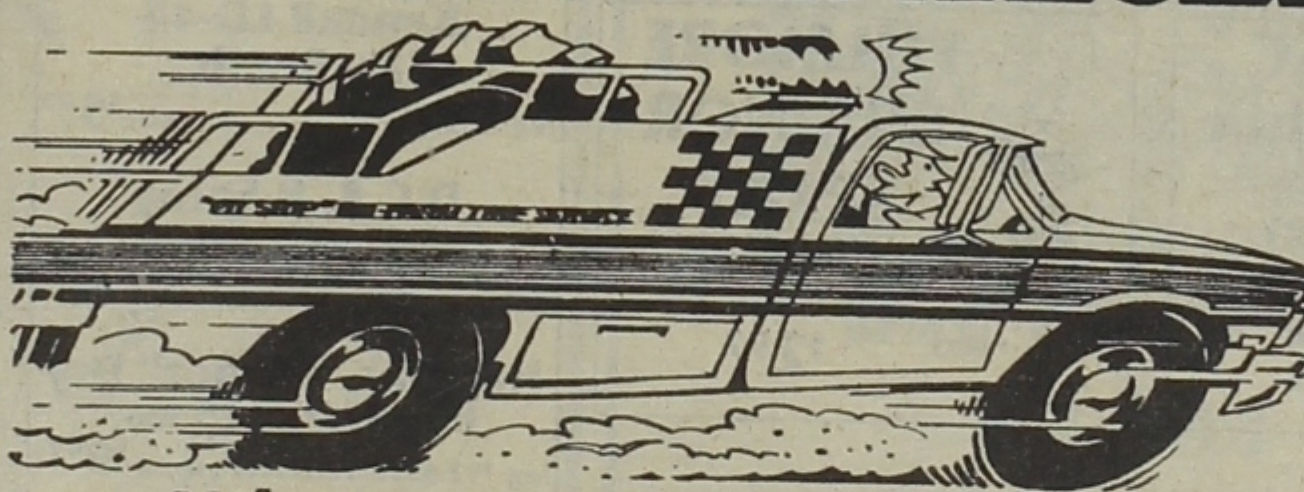
Farming Families' Image Bolstered By New Program

United Agri Products (UAP), through its association of Clean Crop Dealers, will enter the field of nationally-syndicated radio programs with its 1986 fall debut of The American Farmer. Aired daily, the short-format, lifestyle and feature program is designed to promote the achievements and positive contributions of successful farm families and agricultural leaders.

A feature of the image-building radio program is that the cost of producing and distributing the show is underwritten by United Agri Products network of Clean Crop Dealers.

The program consists of interviews featuring a broad spectrum of farm personalities from all parts of the country.

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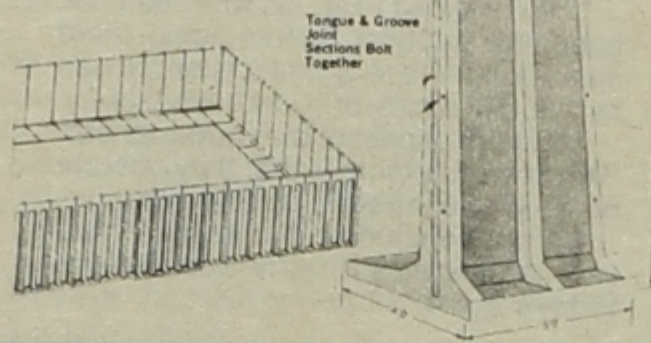
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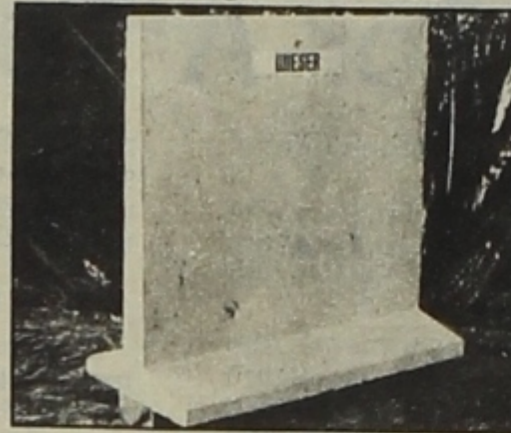
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For the first time, the state forestry nursery at Ames is offering tree and shrub seedlings for fall planting.

The nursery, operated by the Department of Natural Resources, distributes the low-cost stock for conservation purposes. Seedlings for fall planting must be ordered by Sept. 15. Order blanks are available from the nursery (call 515/233-4118), from DNR district foresters and wildlife biologists, from county Soil Conservation and county Extension Service offices, and from the DNR office in Des Moines, call 515/281-5629.

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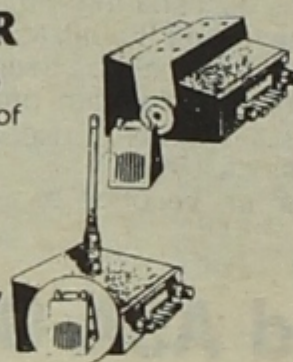
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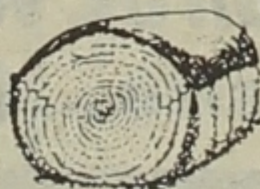
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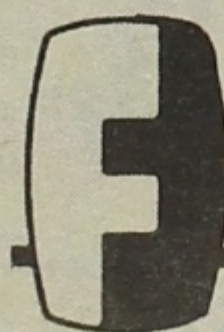
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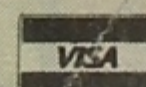
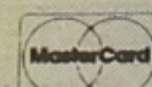
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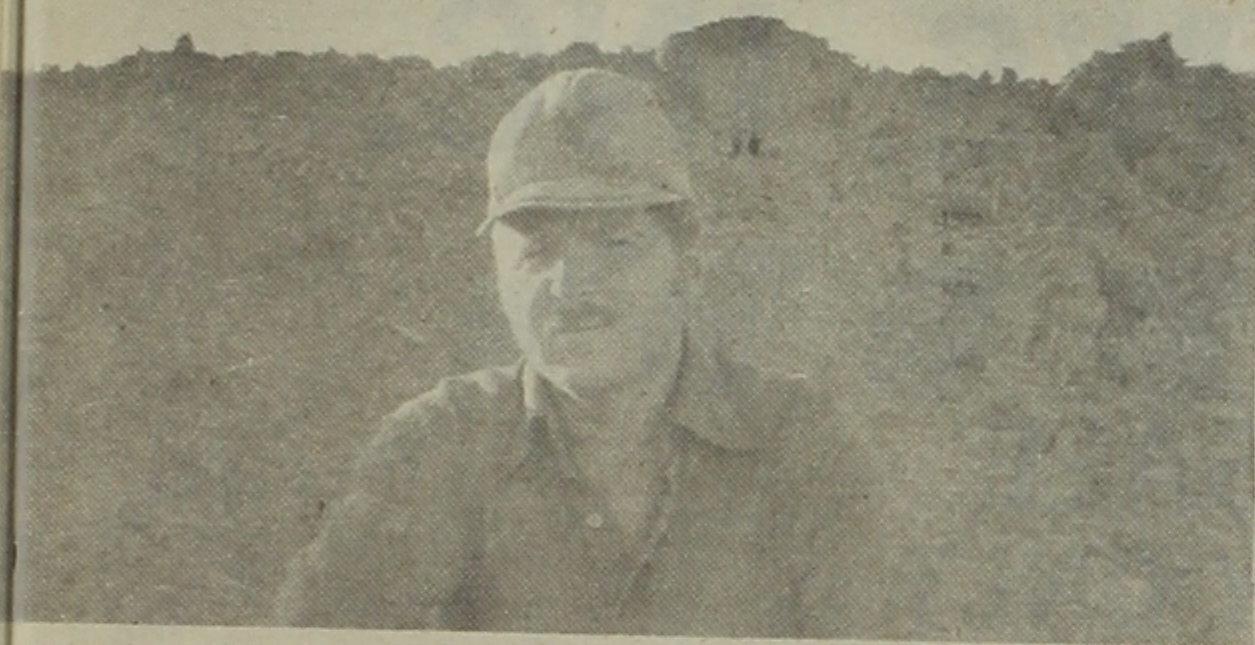
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SCS Names Miller New Cooperator

Rex Miller, Wellman, will receive the new cooperator award from the Iowa County Soil Conservation service for the extensive terraces, tiling and dry pond work he has completed on 46 acres in Greene township, Iowa county, that he bought this spring. Miller installed a total of 20 dry ponds on the rough, hilly ground, "to keep the soil from washing away," he explained. This amounts to 16,850 feet of terraces and 5,200 feet of tile. He plans to raise mostly corn on the acreage because it will hold the soil in place better. Miller, 36, farms with his father, Max. They have a 640-acre operation. The Millers are no strangers to conservation terracing. They started terrace work 12 years ago, and they currently have 12.5 miles of terraces installed on 50 acres. "We did some every year,"

said Rex.

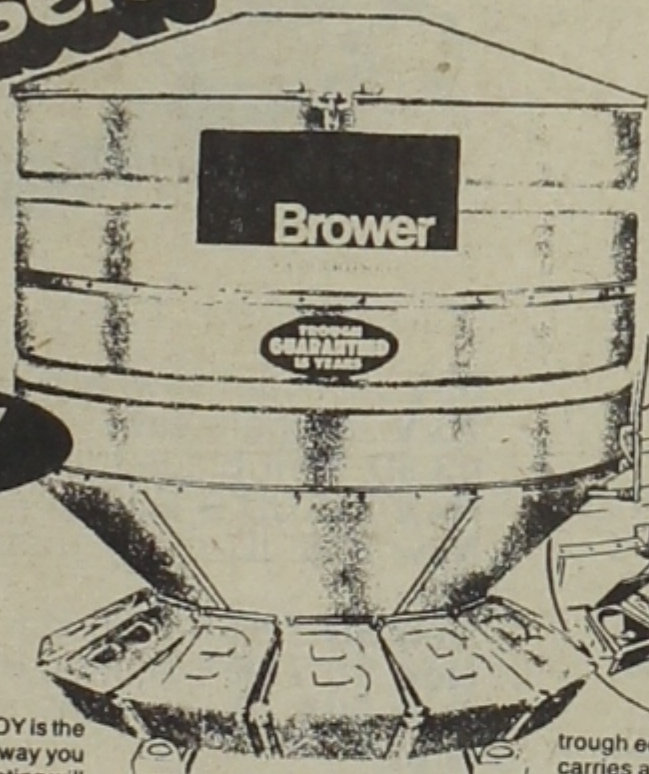
Miller explained that the SCS surveyed and provided the plans for the terracing of the 46 acres done this year. Through the SCS the state of Iowa paid half of the \$8,000, the terrace work cost and additionally paid some of the tiling work. "Farmers do occasionally get funds for projects," Miller pointed out. "I want people to know that."

The terrace and tiling took about a month to complete once work started. "It was slowed down because of the rains," Miller said.

The Millers also practice conservation tillage, crop rotation and contouring on their steep ground. When asked if it was difficult to plan and plant corn rows around the terrace and dry pond work, Rex replied, "It's easier than trying to go over gullies and ditches."

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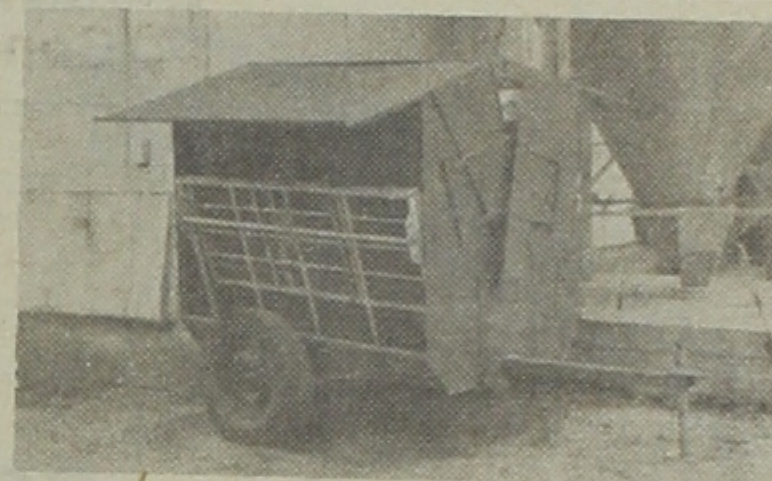
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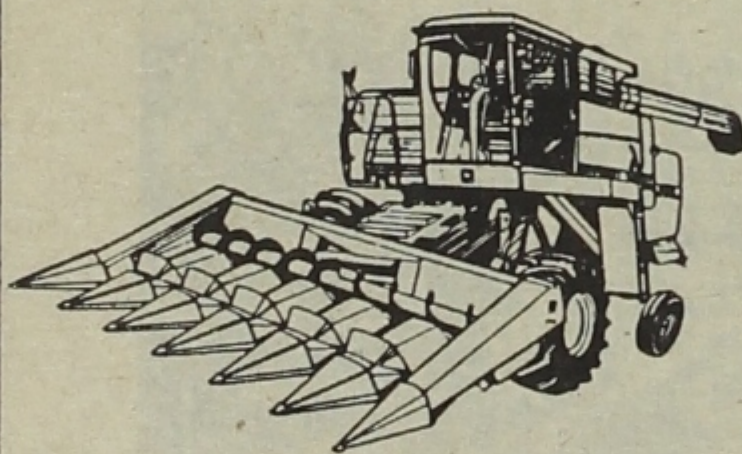
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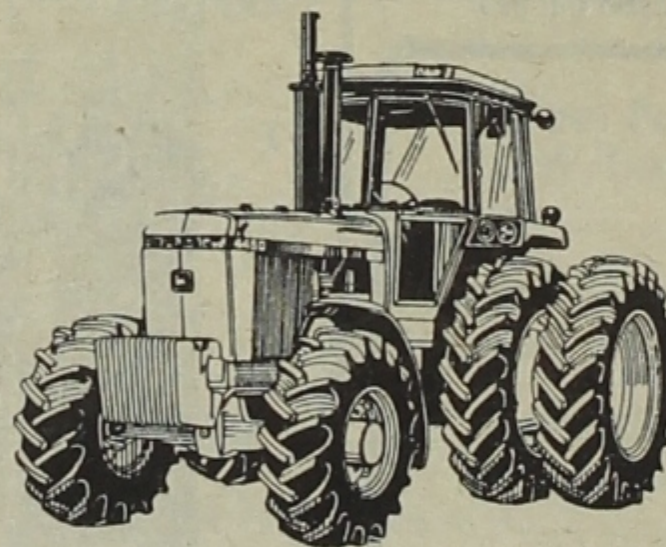
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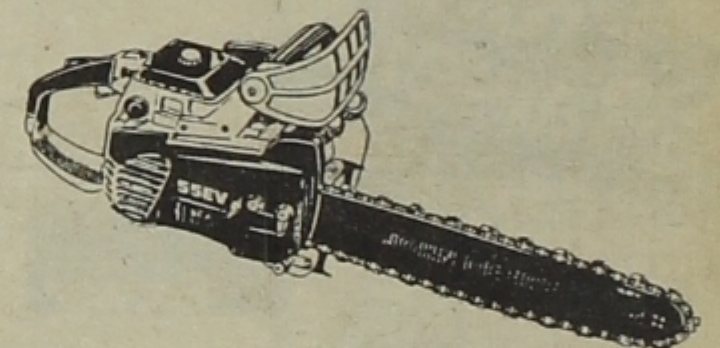


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