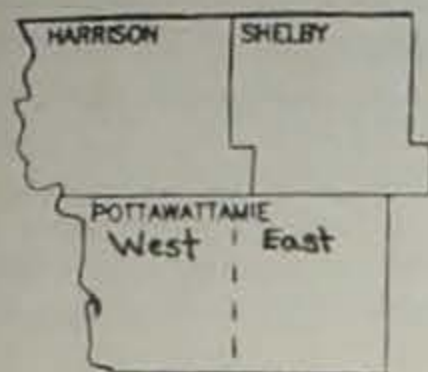




Spring
Volume 1

Quad-District Conservation Newsletter



1996
Issue 1

BULK RATE
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Welcome to your first issue

of the Quad-District Conservation Quarterly Newsletter. Through this publication, we hope to provide information which will enable you to better utilize the services of your Soil and Water Conservation Districts and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

The newsletter will be printed four times each year. It will contain articles from Harrison, Shelby, East Pottawattamie and West Pottawattamie districts and include information about current programs and activities of each, as well as what is happening at the state and national level.

Landowners in East Pott have been receiving a "Conservation Quarterly" for the past three years. The newsletter in your hand is replacing that publication, with the other three districts added.

We felt the readers would be better served with one publication, rather than four separate issues. This combined effort should provide more consistency of information across county lines, and less redundancy as well.

Since many individuals own or operate land in more than one district, they will be able to read about the policies and programs of all the districts in one publication, rather than having to peruse four.

Feel free to visit your own district office, make comments, suggest changes or mention articles you would like to see printed.

This newsletter is for your information and is free to you. If you receive duplicate copies, please let us know, or if you know of someone who is not on our mailing list, we would appreciate knowing that as well.

Remember, we are here to serve you, and have your interests in mind. That is the basic purpose of this newsletter. We hope you enjoy it.

Manharts winners of IASWCDC regional Owner-Operator award



Left to right: David Manhart, wife Cindy and baby Kelli; Peggy and Dan Manhart; Eva and Lynn Manhart and presenter Glen Jones of the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation.

Lynn and Eva Manhart of Neola were honored at the regional meeting of the Iowa Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners, held March 6 at the Menlo, Iowa Country Club.

Each year the SWCD Districts select conservation winners in various categories, and these winners advance to regional competition. The Manharts, who farm with sons Daniel and David, were Harrison district winners, and later chosen as winners of the ten-district region.

The senior Manharts live on the farm his father purchased in 1915, and in the (now extensively remodeled) house where Lynn was born.

Lynn's father began installing grassed waterways and field borders back when the field work was done with horses. After Lynn began farming in 1947, he continued to expand the operation, and also the efforts toward conservation.

Old terraces have been rebuilt, and new structures installed, 44,635 feet since 1987, and a total of 86,725 feet in all. Lynn prefers grassed back terraces, feeling they "have more capacity to hold water after the big rains."

Sons Dan and David and wives Peggy and Cindy are part of the combined farm operation, which encompasses 1500 acres. No till has cut down on the erosion in the fields, some of which have some "pretty steep slopes." On the less highly erodible land, minimum till is used to good advantage, while the Manharts work toward a complete no till system. With the terraces and no till, 90% of the cropland has a soil loss of less than 5 tons per acre,

which is two times better than what is required by the conservation plan.

"We have some really steep slopes on the farm we bought in the early 90's," Lynn said, "and a lot of work to do there yet. Before we bought it, everything had been planted up and down the hills, and you know what that does! Too many farmers ignore contour lines, and I feel there should be more rules about that!"

The Manharts have a herd of 70 stock cows, and feed out about 300 head of cattle each year. They also market 1200 hogs, farrow to finish. Forage is a high-priority crop, and they manage 100 acres of alfalfa, using a 3-cut system, letting the cows graze on the fourth cutting. They have 40 acres of brome grass pasture, divided into 20-acre segments, with cows rotated among them.

Three ponds have been built on the farm. The largest structure with a 5-acre pond controls three gullies which once bisected the land. It was especially designed by Lynn himself and built with his own funds. Surrounded by native grasses and wildflowers and stocked with fish, the pond site is a favorite spot for family recreation, and is an idyll of natural beauty as well.

Very active in community and church affairs, the senior Manharts enjoy traveling to warmer climes during the winter months. But the summers are spent on the land they love and serve.

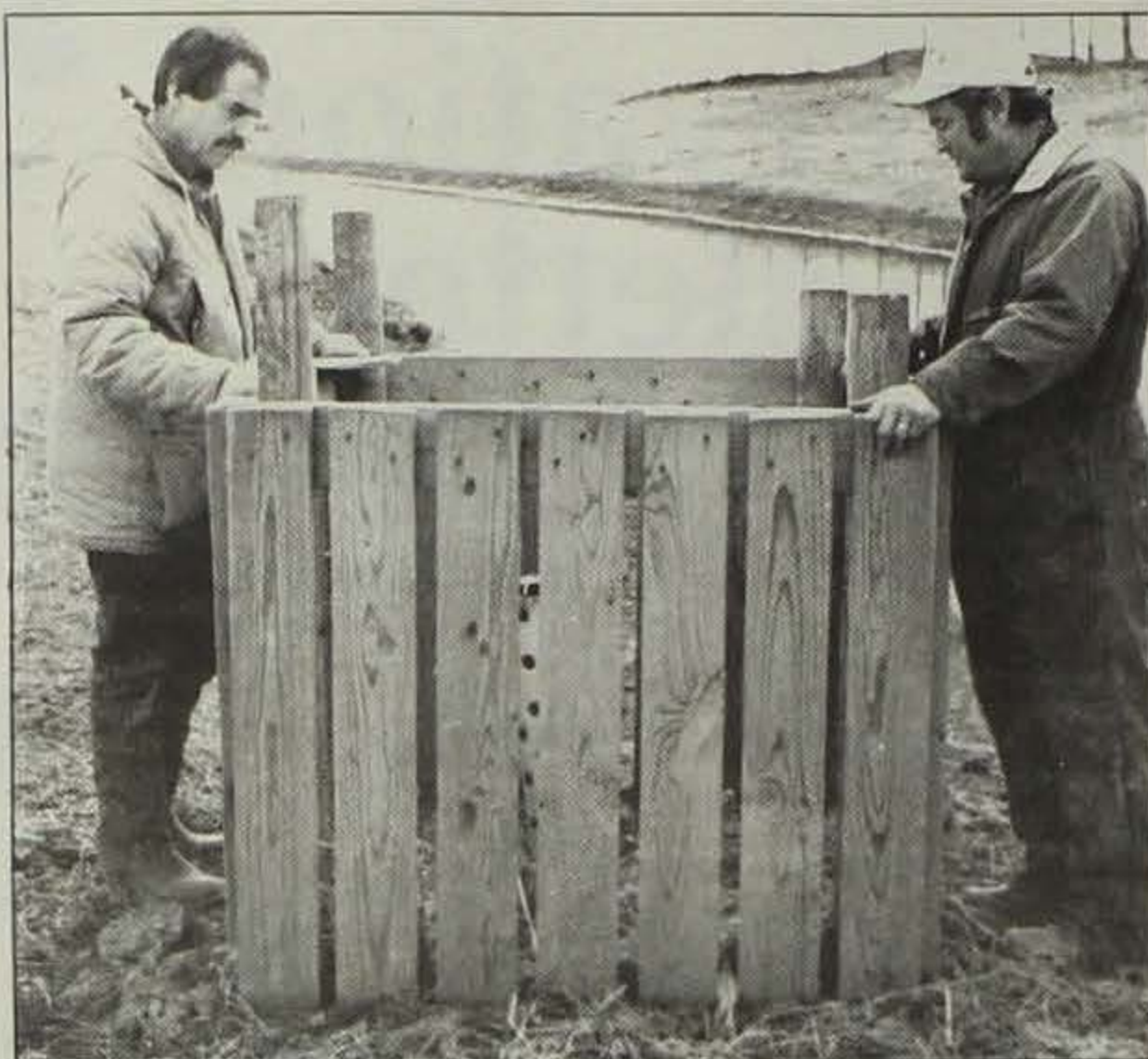
Dwight Mills, Chairman of the Harrison SWCD said "The district commissioners are very proud of the conservation system the Manharts are using on their farm, and we are happy that their achievements have been recognized throughout the region. Theirs is an outstanding example to follow."



Emily Craft (at computer) and Alex Oliver are helping put Woodbine on the map through the Internet. See story on page 10.

Structure controls feedlot waste and water runoff

District Conservationist Russ Kurth and Frank Paul at site of first waste/water control structure in county



R. Franklin Paul, better known as "Frank", for years was troubled by the fact that a terrace across the road on his "neighbor's" farm usually had a puddle in it. That the water was running from Frank's farmstead and feedlot to his neighbor's land was one concern, and that after every heavy rain the terrace ran over and had to be repaired was another.

"So one day I went into the NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service) office and told them that my neighbor across the road was getting on my case, and I had better do something about it," Frank said. Then with a grin, "The fact that the neighbor was my dad may have had something to do with it!"

What was decided was that a water/waste control structure should be built, thereby alleviating two problems at one time.

Frank admitted that the "seed" idea had been planted years before when NRCS personnel warned him the terrace would be catching a lot of runoff. Terraces

constructed five years before had helped the situation, but Frank said he could see there still would be a continuous problem without further treatment.

The Pauls have a purebred Charolais cow-calf herd, and also raise hogs periodically "when there's any money in it". The drainage contained by the control structure came mainly from the cattle yards, however, and that is now contained and controlled.

The pasture just below the yards, once filled with "trickle ditches" and buffalo burrs, has noticeably improved. And now heavy rainfall water disperses more slowly most of it evaporating or soaking into the ground before it reaches the overflow pipe to continue on across the road. Hence, no more complaints from the "neighbor".

As part of the management procedures, Frank takes great care to prevent diseases

which could be spread by the animal waste. The storage area is fenced, and he never pastures cows and baby calves there. This is only one example of many which are part of the operation.

Frank began farming when a senior in high school, and came back to the farm following service in the Vietnam war, where he was wounded and lost his left leg. This has never deterred him from achieving what he sets out to do. His well-kept and well-tended farmstead is witness to that fact.

Frank farms 900 acres, with son Robert, who holds a degree from Iowa State University, involved in the operation, and wife Connie Ann very much a part of the workforce.

Other children are Kimberly and husband, Brad Blum, parents of the Pauls' only grandchild Elizabeth (as Frank informed, beaming with pride); and Karen, who is a freshman at ISU, majoring in farm business.

"I have to say that when this structure was being built, I said to Russ (Kurth) 'If this puppy doesn't work, it gonna be catted out'. Well, I guess since its still here two years later, Russ doesn't have to worry! It is working, and I'm very pleased to say that!"

Kurth commented: "Cost-share funds for this structure were obtained through the Organic Nutrient Management Program. Frank was the first person in the county to use it."

"This is a new program which will cost-share 50 percent of the expense of building an animal control waste structure, with a maximum of \$7500."

"There are a lot of places in the country where a similar structure could be built to help livestock producers control feedlot runoff."

"Anyone interested in more information may inquire at their local SWCD office," Kurth concluded.

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GOOD DEALS...AND A GOOD DEAL MORE

Timber management REAP cost-share available

by Brent Olson
District Forester

Timber management has suffered in southwest Iowa, largely due to low timber prices and lack of markets for low-grade hardwoods. The problem is that low timber prices will always be paid for low-grade trees which come from grazed, abused and mismanaged woodlots, such as the majority of those which exist in this region of the state. Fortunately, the majority of second growth timber can be improved through proper management and at minimal expense to the forest landowner, through cost-share assistance.

Timber stand improvement, or "TSI" as it is referred to by foresters, involves the identification of potential crop trees and using forestry practices to enhance their growth and quality. Timber stand improvement is performed to shift growth to fewer trees of better form and higher value. Typically, TSI involves thinning a forest by increasing the spacing between crop trees and reducing the number of trees with marketing defects. But TSI also means maintaining forest diversity and enhancing wildlife habitat by providing improved ground forage and reducing the risk of fire, insect or disease damage.

Oak-hickory pole-timber stands, resulting from harvests back in the 30's and 40's, are typically overstocked with trees averaging 6 to 12 inches in diameter.

These same stands could be properly stocked with 14 to 20 inch diameter trees if they are thinned and managed properly. By implementing timber stand improvement practices known as thinning and crop tree release, many of the overstocked low quality stands which now exist could be improved to produce a crop of sawtimber and veneer products, worth 6 to 10 times as much as the low quality timber which now exists. The prescribed improvement practice may vary from timber to timber, but involves protecting the stand from grazing and regulating tree density through thinning or crop tree release. This would allow leaving 45 to 80 of the fastest growing and best quality trees per acre. Trees removed in the improvement process could be used for firewood and the timber will be improved for wildlife habitat as well.

Not all trees in the forest are capable of producing high quality timber or lumber. That is why the identification of potential crop trees should be done with the assistance of a qualified forester. If sawlogs are desired, crop trees will be straight, well-formed, naturally pruned, and of the highest value species. Once identified, the crop trees are released of their competition by cutting or girdling unwanted trees. Trees removed can be used for low quality lumber, firewood or other products. The brush created from tree tops when piled enhances wildlife habitat for many small mammals. Other forms of TSI involve improving tree quality by pruning unwanted branches or eliminating



livestock grazing to protect them.

The costs may vary with each woodlot, but foresters generally agree that TSI costs \$50 to \$100 per acre to perform in Iowa. Fortunately, Forestry Cost-Share dollars from the Resource Enhancement and Protection Act (REAP) are available to offset 75% of the costs of TSI on a minimum of 5 acres.

Anyone interested in improving the quality of forest resources, or needing a forester to look at timber and help determine if it needs to be improved, may contact their local DNR District Forester, 712-456-2924 or their local NRCS office. They may inquire about the REAP Forestry Program, related to TSI cost-share.

Behold, a sower went forth to sow . . . and some seed fell into good ground and brought forth fruit; some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, and some thirtyfold. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear . . . He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man. (Matt: 13)

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GRAIN MARKETING - STORAGE,
FENCING SUPPLIES - REPAIRS
CUSTOM APPLICATION & GRINDING
GAS & DIESEL FUEL DELIVERY
OIL & GREASE PRODUCTS
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Annual Report

EAST POTTAWATTAMIE

SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS

Darrell Stamp, Lincoln Township — Chairman
 Russ Brandes, James Township — Commissioner
 Bernie Bolton, Belknap Township — Commissioner
 Marilyn Von Welhe, Carson Township — Commissioner
 Terry Gleaves, Center Township — Commissioner

Clifford Stille, Macedonia Township — Associate
 Robert Stuart, Layton Township — Assistant
 Bryce Gehrmann, Carson Township — Assistant
 Norma Bolton, Belknap Township — Assistant

PERSONNEL

Stan Buman — District Conservationist
 Greg Mathis — Soil Conservationist
 Leslie Cleaveland — Soil Conservation Aide
 Kevin Gee — Soil Conservation Aide
 Vic McCall — Soil Conservation Aide
 Sheryl Fritz — Volunteer
 Tom Scheffler — Volunteer
 Bruce Damgaard — Volunteer
 Oakland Volunteer Center — Volunteers

Becky Lockwood — Secretary, SWCD Treas.
 Clair Acker — Soil Cons. Technician
 Michelle Zimmerman — Resource Planner

1M AND 3M FUNDS ARE THE
 FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE
 FURNISHED BY THE DIVISION
 OF SOIL CONSERVATION,
 STATE OF IOWA.

FINANCIAL REPORT

1M BUDGET

Allocation, July 1, 95 - June 30, '96 — \$ 2,500.00
 Supplemental Allocation Oct. 27, 1995 — 670.00
 Commissioners' Travel — \$ 1,671.54
 Office Supplies, Exp. Dues — 318.68

Total expended as of 1-30-96 — \$ 1,990.22

Balance on hand January 30, 1996 — \$ 1,170.78

3M BUDGET 95-96

Allocation 7-01-95 — \$ 47,554.00
 Supplemental Allocations — 112,840.00
 Total expended
 for terraces — \$ 13,148.00
 Unobligated balance on hand
 January 30, 1996 — \$117,246.00

3M BUDGET 94-95

Allocation 7-01-94 — \$ 43,850.00
 Supplemental Allocations — 69,937.00
 Total expended
 for terraces — \$ 113,787.00
 Unobligated balance on hand
 January 30, 1996 — \$ 0.00

3M BUDGET 93-94

Allocation 7-01-93 — \$ 43,850.00
 Supplemental Allocations — 74,925.00
 Total expended
 for terraces — \$ 118,772.13
 Unobligated balance on hand
 January 30, 1996 — \$ 2.87

REAP PRACTICES '95

Allocation 9-01-94 — \$ 6,266.00
 Supplemental Allocations — 112,840.00
 Total expended
 for practices — \$ 954.00
 Unobligated balance on hand
 January 30, 1996 — \$ 0.00

REAP FORESTRY/ NATIVE GRASSES '95

Allocation 9-01-94 — \$ 1,464.00
 Total recalled by state — \$ 1,464.00
 Unobligated balance on hand
 January 30, 1996 — \$ 0.00

REAP PRACTICES '94

Allocation 9-01-94 — \$ 12,554.00
 Total expended
 for practices — \$ 11,910.00
 Total recalled by state — 644.00
 Unobligated balance on hand
 January 30, 1996 — \$ 0.00

REAP FORESTRY/ NATIVE GRASSES '94

Allocation 3-07-95 — \$ 7,688.50
 Total expended
 for practices — \$ 4,573.24
 Total recalled to state — 3,115.26
 Unobligated balance on hand
 January 30, 1996 — \$ 0.00

REAP PRACTICES '96

Allocation 9-01-95 — \$ 11,538.00
 Total expended
 for practices — \$ 7,003.58
 Unobligated balance on hand
 January 30, 1996 — \$ 4,534.62

REAP PRACTICES '96

Allocation 9-01-95 — \$ 2,693.00
 Unobligated balance on hand
 January 30, 1996 — \$ 0.00

ORGANIC NUTRIENT MGMT PROGRAM

Allocation 8-08-94 — \$ 16,566.00
 Total expended
 for practices — \$ 11,875.04
 Unobligated balance on hand
 January 30, 1996 — \$ 4,690.96

NO-INTEREST LOAN PROGRAM

1995 Obligated — \$ 18,816.00
 Terraces Completed — 12,084.00

Obligated balance on hand
 January 30, 1996 — \$ 6,732.00

POTTAWATTAMIE COUNTY FUND

Balance on hand,
 January 30, 1995 — \$ 3,390.00

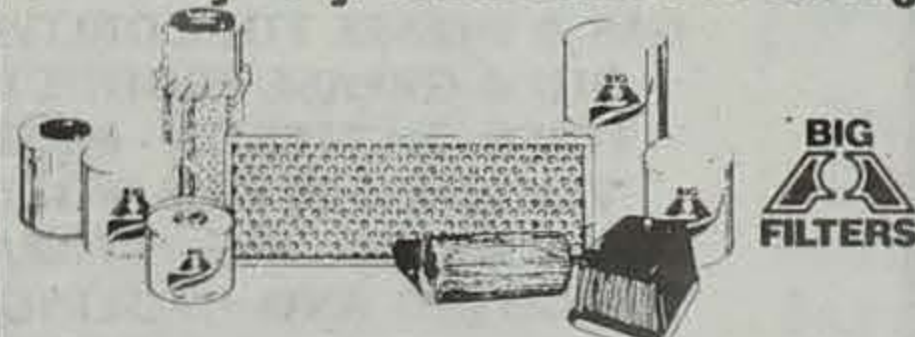
Total recalled to County
 June 30, 1995 — \$ 3,390.00
 Balance as of January 30, 1996 — \$ 0.00

POTTAWATTAMIE COUNTY LOCAL OPTION SALES TAX FUND

Quarterly payment August 31, 1995 — \$ 16,504.90
 Quarterly payment November 22, 1995 — 19,692.49
 Total expended for practices — \$ 513.43

Balance as of January 30, 1996 — \$ 35,683.96

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1995 Annual Report

DISTRICT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Practices Applied with District Assistance
October, 1994, to September 30, 1995

	Practice Codes	No.	Acres
New Cooperators	100	19	2,728
Individual & Group Assisted	102	393	
Individuals Applying Practices	106	213	
Conservation Plans	173	32	2,146
Conservation Plan Revisions	173cc	41	5,869
Contour Farming	330		4,033
Conservation Tillage	329		6,717
Cropland Protected	901		14,673
Terraces	600		561,690
Field Borders	386		142,484

We would like to thank the Pottawattamie County Board of Supervisors for their far-sighted support of soil conservation. The dollars they have invested in soil conservation these passed years will pay off in benefits to county improvements and in protecting productivity of our soils.

The District would also like to thank the rural landowners and residents for voting yes to the 1% local option sales tax. A portion of these funds will go towards soil conservation on your farms.

The East Pottawattamie Soil & Water Conservation District thanks the Department of Soil Conservation and the Iowa Legislature for making these funds available. We always attempt to use the money most effectively, and hope you agree we have done so again this year.

The District also has a revolving fund made up of contributions from those who want to assist in conserving our soil.

BOOSTERS TO OUR EDUCATION FUND

We would like to thank and acknowledge each and every one who has contributed to our District's efforts either through time, money, etc. Monetary donations are used to fund educational materials for schools, soil stewardship materials for schools and churches, scholarship funding, and office expenses not eligible for reimbursement by State.

If you would like to contribute to our cause, please stop at our office or mail a check to East Pottawattamie SWCD, P.O. Box 217/321 Oakland Ave., Oakland, IA 51560

Thanks again to the following who contributed with a check to the District last year:

Delmar Petersen
Snapp Farms
Ervin Koos
Eugene Gleaves
Elmer Von Weihe
Pilling Arms
H. R. Farms
Diane Eggers
Edwin Nihsen
Eugene Sorensen

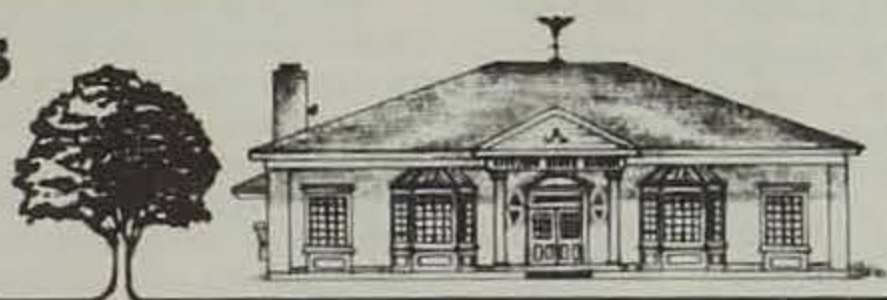
Newsletter receives
national top honors

By: Michelle D. Zimmerman
East Pottawattamie County Resource
Planner

Great news! The East Pottawattamie Soil and Water Conservation District was one of seven in the nation to receive recognition for their newsletter, the "Conservation Quarterly," during the 50th Anniversary Annual Meeting of the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD). The theme of the meeting was "Conservation Leadership" 50 Years Strong. The convention was February 4th-7th, 1996 at the Riviera Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada.

The awards luncheon was February 6th to honor the best of the best in conservation. Emmett Barker from Equipment Manufacturers Institute, Chicago, IL, presented the newsletter award. Since 1957, NACD and the Equipment

Manufacturers Institute have sponsored this contest to encourage conservation districts to publish top quality newsletters. The contest is open to all districts. Judges review the entries for readability, distribution, and subject matter. Terry Gleaves, Michelle Zimmerman, and Darrell Stamp were present to accept the award on behalf of the East Pottawattamie Soil and Water Conservation District.

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1995 Annual Report

3-M STATE COST SHARE-BUDGET

1993-94 LEDGER

Total Allocation	\$142,821.00
Total Spent	\$128,964.77
Released to DSC	\$ -0-
Balance Unobligated	\$ 1,356.23
Balance Obligated	\$ 12,500.00

1994-95 LEDGER

Total Allocation	\$107,522.00
Total Spent	\$ 79,881.39
Release to DSC	\$ -0-
Balance Unobligated	\$ 7,088.33
Balance Obligated	\$ 20,552.28

1995-96 LEDGER

Total Allocation	\$90,760.00
Total Spent	\$16,764.52
Released to DSC	\$ -0-
Balance Unobligated	\$14,984.48
Balance Obligated	\$59,011.00

95-REAP (Practices)

Total Allocation	\$6,266.00
Total Spent	\$5,808.38
Released to DSC	\$ -0-
Balance Unobligated	\$ 457.62
Balance Obligated	\$ -0-

95-REAP (Forestry)

Total Allocation	\$3,198.00
Total Spent	\$1,455.00
Balance to DSC	\$ -0-
Balance Unobligated	\$ 343.00
Balance Obligated	\$1,400.00

95-ORGANIC NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT

Total Allocation	\$16,566.00
Total Spent	\$ -0-
Release to DSC	\$ -0-
Balance Unobligated	\$ -0-
Balance Obligated	\$ -0-



'95 1M BUDGET COMMISSIONERS AND OFFICE SUPPLIES EXPENSE

Allocation	\$2,500.00
Supplemental Allocation	\$ 715.00
TOTAL	\$3,215.00
Released to DSC	.90c
95-1- M Balance	\$ -0-
Commissioners Expense	\$919.15
Office Supplies Expense	\$1,644.95
Printing Expense	\$ 150.00
State & National Dues	\$ 500.00
TOTAL	\$3,214.10

Commissioners

John (Mike) Dea, Chairman
Dan McGinn, Vice Chairman
and co-Treasurer
Clint Goos
Mark Schnepf
Randy Williams

Assistant Commissioners

Robert M. Jensen
Gary Gelse

Office Staff

Lyle C. Peterson, District Conservationist
Lois Crawford, Soil Conservation
Technician
Tom Bottoms, Soil Conservation
Technician
Dawn Brittain, District Secretary
Nancy Schnepf, WAE, Jan. - June '95
Michelle Zimmerman, CRP, Jan.-June '95
Julia Gubbels, CRP - June - Dec. '95

Volunteers

Thelma Turpin, Jan. - Dec. '95
Jim Cloutier, Apr. - May '95
Mona Mackey, May - July '95

1995 West Pottawattamie SWCD Report By Lyle Peterson, DC

The reorganization this past year has brought about some changes locally. When you call our office and hear "Natural Resources Conservation Service", don't hang up. Yes, we have changed our name from Soil Conservation Service, to what you now hear.

What does this mean to West Pottawattamie residents and landusers? It more accurately tells what we are here for. We have concentrated our efforts since the passing of the 1985 Food Security Act (FSA) on applying soil conservation practices on highly erodible land.

In the future, we are going to assist West Pottawattamie County residents conserve ALL their natural resources. We will help landusers develop conservation plans that not only look at their soil resources, but also water, air, plant and animal resources.

Our continued purpose is to help our cooperators conserve all natural resources. West Pottawattamie farmers have been actively applying conservation practices for the past years. They have been making adjustments in their tillage programs to leave more crop residue on soil surface, protecting land from erosion.

They have been building terraces, shaping and seeding waterways and replacing up and down hill endrows with grassed field borders and turn strips.

In the last six years, farmers in the county have built 3.1 million feet or 581 miles of terraces. This is an average of 97 miles per year.

Conservation tillage areas have increased from 34,000 to 100,000 acres. This represents more than 50% of the rowcrops in the district. This is a very substantial soil savings effort.

Farmers have met the conservation compliance challenge. They have greatly increased the amount of conservation on the land.

This past year, the district adopted the Iowa Construction Site Erosion Control Manual as its guide for reviewing development plans. During the year, 3 new plans were reviewed.

In 1995, the county passed the "local option state tax". A small percentage of these funds is passed on to the district to be used for conservation efforts. West

Pottawattamie commissioners have chosen to use these funds for terraces and structures that have an impact on the county road system.

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District Accomplishments

by Dawn R. Brittain

JANUARY - The first annual Farmer Appreciation Day was held. Richard J. Hansen was nominated for the 1995 Good Year award.

FEBRUARY - Bob Schulze, teacher at the Iowa School for the Deaf, was selected for the Teacher of the Year award.

MARCH - The Poster Contest award ceremony was held at the UMBA Hall in Underwood, with 230 people in attendance. John Tlarks was nominated for the 1995 Soil and Water District Commissioners Auxillary Scholarship award. Thelma Turpin began work in the field office through the Senior Aide program. The commissioners drafted a policy for the local option tax use.

APRIL - The annual Arbor Day presentation was held with the district's first grade students. Each received a tree to be planted. Owen Darrington was chosen as the 1995 Owner-Operator award winner. The Iowa Construction Site Erosion Control manual was adopted as criteria for development plans addressing soil loss in the West Pott district.

MAY - The district received a check for NACD for the "Habipak" tree sales. Winner of the Landlord-Tenant award for 1995 was Darlene Kay, landowner, and Everett Gunderson, tenant. John Tlarks placed second in the state scholarship contest, and is to receive \$400.00.

JUNE - The annual district picnic was held in the Treynor park.

AUGUST - Clint Goos was chosen the 1995 Outstanding SWCD Commissioner in Region 5.

SEPTEMBER - The commissioners attended the 49th Annual Conference in Des Moines. Julia Gubbels worked with the Tri-Center and Lewis Central Middle School in the outdoor classrooms projects.

OCTOBER - Makayla King was the District 4 regional poster winner for 1995.

NOVEMBER - Lewis Central School was selected as an Iowa Farm-City award winner in the community category, presented by the Iowa Farm Bureau.

DECEMBER - All the district business for 1995 was completed.

Attitude by Chairman Mike Dea

The other day I picked up the Iowa Farmer Today and the headline read: "Attitude Key to No-Till Success". I thought, "how true". Attitude is probably the most important aspect of soil and water conservation. Our success at farming in the future more and more depends on our attitude toward soil and water conservation. As environmental problems abound and governmental regulations swamp us, our attitudes toward no-till and soil and water conservation become increasingly important in a successful farming operation.

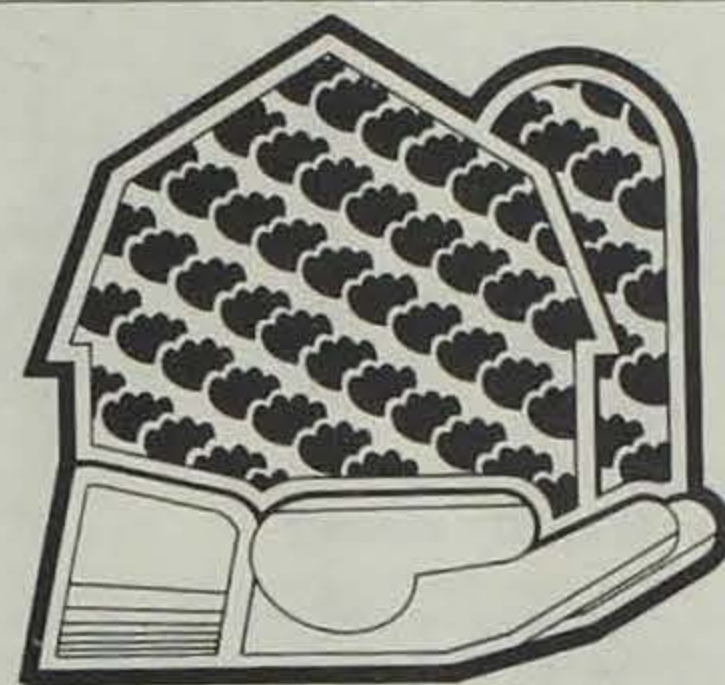
The technology is in place, the economics have been proven time and again. Attitude holds us back more than anything else. Just because Dad didn't do it, just because the neighbors pooh-haw it in the coffee shop, just because it's different doesn't mean it is not right.

Sometimes when I am out at the back of my farm, I am standing in the dead furrow and looking across about 2-feet of headland. I am staring at the bottom of fence posts in a fence that was built maybe fifty years ago, and I see about five feet of dirt gone. This was good dirt that I now wish I had to work with.

How much easier it would be to raise corn and beans. If someone had had a different attitude generations ago, how much easier it would be for coming generations. How much easier it will be if we develop the right attitude toward farming --toward soil and water conservation --toward no-till today.

Let's leave our kids something better than we started with. Let's work on our attitudes. It makes everything else easier.

Who says conservation does not pay? Conservation tillage can reduce out-of-pocket expense. Lesser tillage can lead to more money left in-the-pocket!



Are you in harmony with the environment?

The music on radio stations is great largely because it is sung in harmony. The natural world around us can be great. But only if we learn to live in harmony with it.

We are surrounded by an environment rich in natural resources. How we care for the soil, water, plants, and animals around us makes a difference.

Conservation districts work throughout the year to assist farmers, as well as the urban population, to conserve our natural resources.

For assistance or information regarding conservation issues, contact your local Soil and Water Conservation District.



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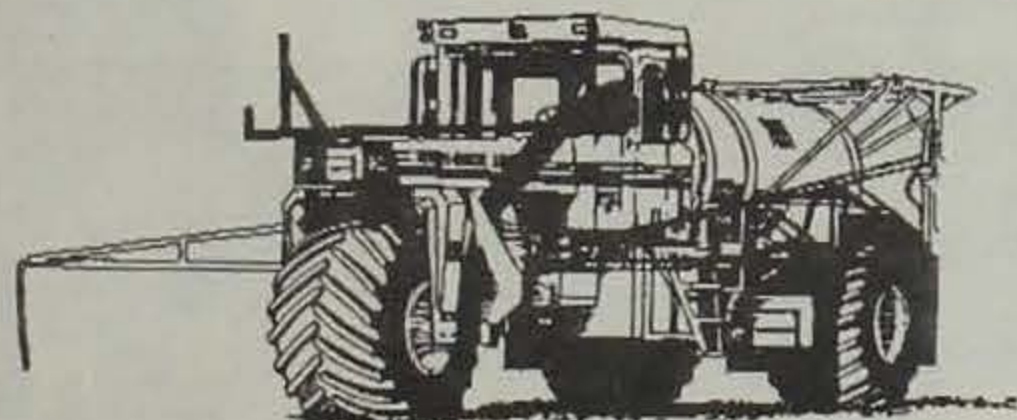
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Wildlife habitat? What does it really mean?

The term "wildlife habitat" simply means a good home in which wildlife can live.

Good habitat has three essential ingredients: food, shelter and water. These ingredients must be within normal daily range of various wildlife species. Bobwhite quail will travel one-eighth to one-fourth mile per day. Cottontail rabbits will range over about three acres.

Many species prefer what is called "edge". This is the area where cropland and brushy cover meet.

Diversity of plants is also important to attract a variety of wildlife. A mix of trees, shrubs, grasses and forbs is preferred.

Landowners can attract wildlife to their farms by planting odd areas to native grasses or trees and shrubs. They can also help by excluding livestock, placing bird houses, providing brush piles and planting food plots for winter use.

It doesn't take a large area to provide a good habitat or "home" for wildlife.

Windbreaks valuable in more than one way

Is it worth taking an acre of cropland out of production to put in a windbreak? A field windbreak half a mile long and 30 feet wide is about an acre and a quarter in size.

Research shows that, economically, the average profits from a typical continuous corn or corn-soybean rotation in Iowa is about \$33 per acre. How does this dollar amount compare with the many benefits -- wildlife habitat, crop and farmstead protection, wind reduction, shade and beauty -- an acre of windbreak can provide?

Fields can lose 1 bushel of soil for every bushel of corn harvested. A cubic foot of soil weighs about 90 pounds. This means that a ton of soil is equal to 22.2 cubic feet in a bushel, which leaves 17.9

bushels of soil per ton.

In Iowa, the average cropland erosion rate by water is 6.5 tons per acre, per year. Multiply 6.5 by 17.9 and the sum is 116 bushels of soil lost per acre in a year's time. If a farmer's yields are close to that figure, a bushel of topsoil would be traded.

Let us introduce ourselves!

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Joann Schulte, Secretary
Gayland Hall, Soil Conservationist
Jeff Darling, Technician
Joni Schwery, Technician
Donna Arkfeld, Technician

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Donald Bladt, Chairman
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The earth needs you! Join the team today!

Imagine how you would feel if you knew you were doing your part to help take care of the Earth. Now, imagine how you would feel if you could do something to make the environment a little bit healthier for you and for generations to come.

These emotions aren't just from dreams. They are felt by the people who form the USDA-National Resources Conservation Services' (NRCS) Earth Team. They are a group of concerned men and women who are volunteering to help NRCS provide leadership in the wise use of our nation's soil, water and related resources.

The Earth Team began in 1982 as a provision of the 1981 Farm Bill, and serves two purposes: it helps both NRCS and local soil and water conservation districts put more conservation on the ground; and it helps keep down federal costs.

Earth Team volunteers work with paid employees on conservation issues, such as helping farmers and other landowners reduce wind and water erosion, conserve water, enhance wildlife habitat, reduce upstream flooding, and keep streams clear. They achieve this by doing everything from surveying, to computer data entry, to typing and filing.

An Earth Team volunteer can help NRCS personnel with programs such as public information and education by going to schools and explaining the importance of conservation. They can help teachers plan outdoor classrooms where students have the opportunity to learn about natural resources.

Volunteers come from all kinds of backgrounds and with varying degrees of education. They share one important factor: they all care about what happens to our soil and water resources.

Anyone wishing to become a member of the Earth Team may call their local Natural Resources Conservation (NRCS) office. The Shelby County office is 755-2417.

Manure management ; it's a good business

Handling, storing and application of manure can be environmentally and economically sound. Choosing the right system for each operation and using proper management are keys to being satisfied with a manure management facility.

A free booklet is available at your NRCS office: "Manure Management for Open Lot Livestock Production". This provides information about components of manure management systems for open feedlots. It is designed to help choose a manure management system that is effective for storing, handling and making the best use of animal manure.

Using the nutrients from animal manure is good business. Monitoring the amount of nutrients being put on the land and taking credit for them by reducing the use of commercial fertilizers takes full advantage of the manure management system. Taking full advantage of the nutrients makes the system cost-effective and will help the environment.

Proper manure management can go a long way in improving water quality. Manure that isn't retained generally has the potential to reach a water body unfiltered.

With a well-designed manure management system, there is more opportunity to properly apply and use the waste product. Such a system can also help reduce odor.

Legislation is another consideration in manure management. Check state and federal regulations which may apply to each operation. Technical and financial help is available for designing and building these facilities. Call the local NRCS for assistance.

It's time to check those waterways!

While out in the field this year, take some time to check waterways. Waterways should be used where gully erosion is a problem. Usually, this is in draws between hills and other low-lying areas on a slope where runoff water concentrates. Even under the best of conditions, grassed waterways tend to either silt-in or cut into gullies.

Proper maintenance will protect the investment in a grassed waterway. The following tips will help insure longevity of them:

1 - Lift implements out of the ground before crossing the waterways.

2 - Bring row-crop pattern into the waterway nearly level, or use it as the turn area. Don't plant end rows along the side of the waterway -- they contribute to failure.

3 - Inspect the area frequently for places needing to be reseeded, and for eroding areas. Repair minor rills or gullies by reshaping and reseeding.

4 - Don't use the waterway as a road. Vehicle tracks can lead to the formation of a gully.

5 - Don't let herbicide spray continue into the waterway.

Those having questions concerning waterways on their farm may contact the Natural Resources Conservation Service for information and assistance.



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Woodbine students go worldwide with sesquicentennial project



First row, left to right: Chad Steinkuehler, Alex Oliver, Brenton Dunlop, Emily Craft, Kassie Rath, Jamie Tremel, Ryan Coenen, Joe Smith.
 2nd row: Shea Thompson, Adam Dickinson, Todd Walte, Kyle Kaufman, August Barry, Brice Farley, Briana Farley, Sarah Dolan, Katie Dickinson, Mindy Helstand, Chris Morrison, John Corbett.

by Lou Walte,
SWCD Tech Aide

When Don Groff and a selected group of fifth and sixth grade students at Woodbine Community Schools discussed a project which would emphasize Iowa's special interests in celebration of the state's Sesquicentennial celebration, they formulated something unique and unusual.

"We know that Iowa's rich farmland is probably its biggest asset," said Groff, "and the students also are aware that loess soils found in this region exist only here and in Manchuria. The Loess Hills are a part of Iowa's heritage, so what better subject could we choose in spreading the word to the rest of the

world?"

The method being used to "spread the word" is perhaps not as unique in today's rapidly advancing communication technology as it would have been just a few years ago. The students are using the Internet to contact schools across the country and the world, requesting the students there send the results of soil tests from their own particular area. These results are then compared with the loess soils predominant in western Iowa.

The project is being funded through a \$2,000 grant from the Harrison County Sesquicentennial Commission, a part of a U.S. Department of Energy grant of \$40,000 through Ames Laboratories at Iowa State University.

In return for each school's agreement to

participate in the study, the Woodbine group decided to send a packet including information about Iowa, a video tape of the Loess Hills, a calendar with scenes of the hills, and instructions for soil sampling and testing.

"The results have been fantastic," Gross said. "We have thus far heard from schools in every state, as well as Germany, Australia, Canada, Russia, Thailand, Israel, France, England and the U.S. troops in Bosnia."

"This project, while admittedly a public relations ploy to promote Iowa," said Groff, "has also opened up a whole new concept for the students. They have learned to use the Internet and travel the World Wide Web. They are communicating by computer with students around the world, and receiving letters from some of them as well. They are also advancing their science skills comparing the soils test results and analyzing them. It's just phenomenal that a school of 550 students in this community of 1500 people could be sending messages on the net to the far corners of the world."

The project is listed on the Global School Net Foundation and entitled, "Soils Tests, History of the Loess Hills and Iowa's Sesquicentennial."

The school has set up its own home page on the Internet, and the students have their own e-mail addresses. "I am amazed at how these kids have developed their computer skills," Groff remarked, then added with a somewhat rueful chuckle, "They are better at it than I am."

The computer room is used mainly by high school students during the day, so the twenty or so fifth and sixth graders work after school three days a week, and sometimes early in the morning before school begins. The fact that they are willing to do this is evidence of the interest and enthusiasm generated by the project.

Along with the high-tech methods being used, the students have not forgotten how some low-tech capabilities can benefit their cause. Almost every newspaper in the area has featured them in print. They have appeared on a number of TV networks, been interviewed by representatives of radio, magazines and almost every other news media.

Members of the group have spoken before various clubs and civic organizations. They have persuaded several supermarkets to place sesquicentennial logos on their grocery bags. They have also convinced truckers to place sesquicentennial bumper stickers on their semis, and are proud that Terry Branstad, Iowa's governor, purchased bumper stickers from them.

"I would like to continue with the project this summer," Groff confided, "for we are also promoting Iowa's 150th year. We will still make contacts and mail information, at least until we run out of money. The National Geographic World will do a feature later, as well as some other magazines we have contacted, so we will still be getting exposure, and telling people about what is happening in Iowa."

Groff noted that the students would "love to go to Des Moines" and tell the Iowa legislature about the project.

"If anyone can help us achieve that, we would surely appreciate it," the project mentor said, and then with a raised eyebrow and a grin, he added, "and that goes for anyone who can help us contact other national magazines, or even tell us how to get on Good Morning America! These kids have done a great job, and I would like to see them get the kind of credit they deserve!"

This is not the first project Groff has directed which attracted attention. His efforts to teach the importance of preserving natural resources have brought him a number of honors and various district awards, such as being selected the Harrison SWCD Conservation Teacher of the Year in the recent past.

And, for those interested, the Woodbine students may be contacted on the Internet as follows: groff@chaos.k12.ames.ia.us

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Clinton signs Farm Bill; several changes noted

President Clinton signed a seven-year Farm Bill on Thursday, April 4, 1996. This bill makes radical changes in government supply-management policies which date back to the 1930's.

There is one thing that did not change, however. Producers must comply with the conservation compliance and wetland protection requirements for the farm to maintain its eligibility.

Beginning in 1996, target prices, deficiency payments and acreage reduction programs are replaced by a fixed but declining annual payment which will not change when the market changes. Eligible acres of contract commodities may be enrolled under 7-year Production Flexibility Contracts for the years 1996-2002. A one-time signup will be held to enroll farms for the 7-year period. Producers who miss this one signup will not be eligible to enroll the farm at a later date.

The new law also allows farmers to plant any crop on unlimited acreages, removing regulations that had required corn, wheat, cotton and rice to be planted year after year on acreages designated by the government.

The new farm bill has provisions to extend the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) through 2002, with an upper limit of 36.4 million acres. The Wetland Reserve Program will be extended through 2002 with a minimum of 975,000 acres.

A new program called Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) is created, with annual funding of \$200 million for 1996-2002. Half of the funding is directed to livestock producers for technical and financial assistance in addressing environmental improvements on the farm.

Confused about conservation agencies? This may help:

If you are confused about conservation agencies, you are not alone. The following may help:

Local level: Soil and Water Conservation District: There are 100 districts in Iowa (one per county) and two in Pottawattamie County. Each district is governed by five commissioners, elected at the general election and serving without pay. Office staff and technical personnel are provided by the Division of Soil Conservation, the federal NRCS and in some instances, the county supervisors.

County Conservation Board: These boards are established at the discretion of each county by authority of state law. A board of five members is appointed by the board of supervisors to oversee the operation of the program and its staff. County boards are authorized to levy up to 1 mill property tax for acquisition, development and management of county parks, museums, wildlife areas and other natural areas.

State Level - Department of Natural Resources: This agency provides parks, lakes, recreation areas, wildlife areas, forests, natural and cultural preserves and associated user facilities and services. The department regulates hunting, fishing, boating and other outdoor recreational activities and helps coordinate activities of the county conservation boards.

Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship - Division of Soil Conservation (IDALS) is the state agency which assists soil conservation districts with local resource management programs, allocates state financial incentive program funds and assigns state technical and clerical employees to SWCD's.

Federal Level - The Farm Service Agency (FSA), formerly ASCS, administers federal funds for the basic cost-share program with farmers, forestry incentives, emergency conservation funds and special projects. Other programs include commodity loans and price support, crop disaster, rural clean water and production adjustment. FSA is guided at the county level by three member county committees. The ag-lending portion of the former Farmers Home Administration is now part of FSA's program.

National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) - Formerly USDA Soil Conservation Service. The NRCS is the technical agency of the US Department of Agriculture which helps land owners and operators plan and apply soil and water conservation practices to the land. The NRCS personnel work through the local districts.

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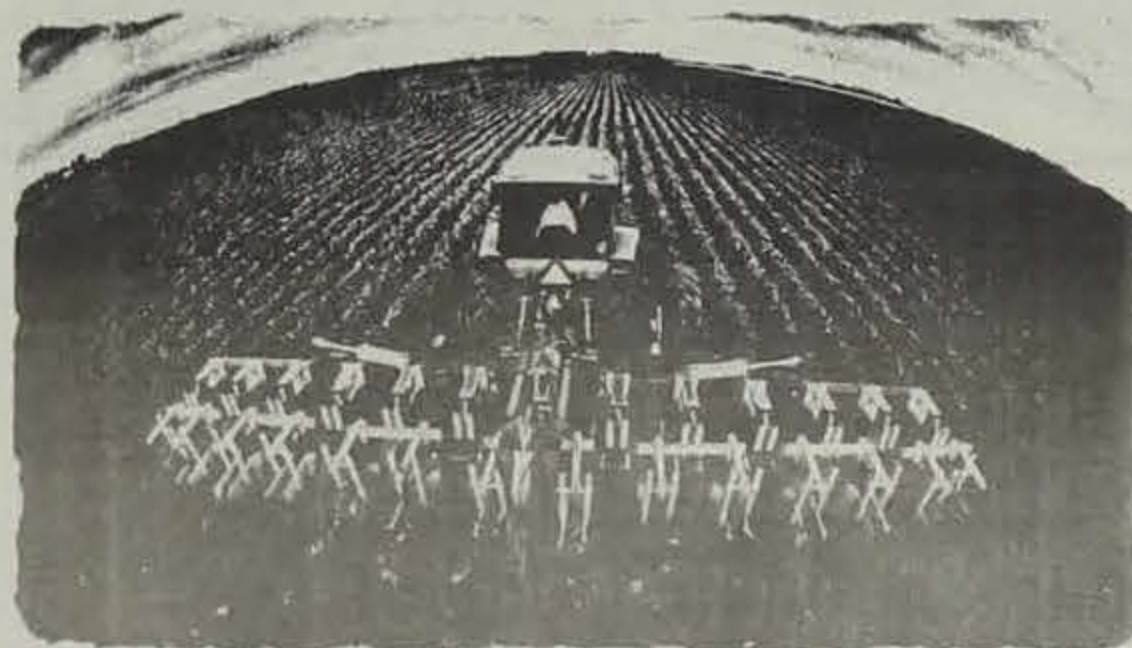


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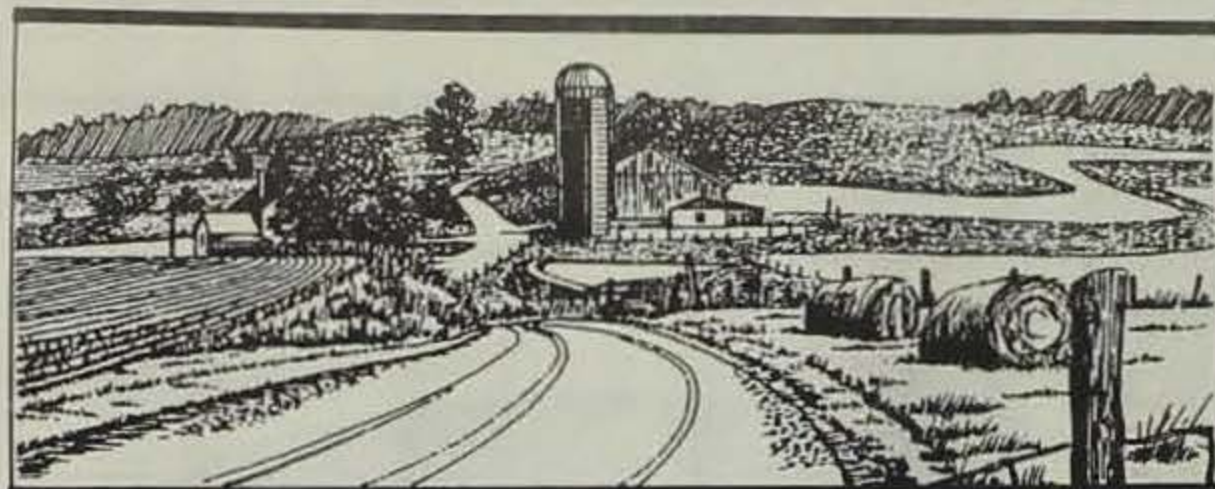


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