

1996

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Fayette SWCD Annual Report



Albert and Rick Matt, who farm north of Clermont, are pictured with Rick's son, Damian, beside a refurbished 18-inch row corn head that has become a part of their conservation program.

Below, Louis Christen's pond, as it looks this winter. The rural Wadena farmer expects the new pond to control erosion, improve water quality and offer recreation for himself and others. The engineering was completed by NRCS Area and Field offices.

Zone tillage experience proves profitable

By Wayne Schmitt
Soil Conservation Technician

Rick and Renee Matt are part of a farm operation north of Clermont. They farm with Rick's parents Arthur and Fran Matt. The Matts farm about 1000 acres of cropland which consists of corn, beans, oats, hay and rotational grazing. They have a stock cow herd. They finish 400 feeder calves, 200 of those being custom fed. They also finish 7500 feeder pigs annually.

The Matts started farming in the 1960s. They began using minimum tillage at that time and continued to look for ways to reduce tillage further. By 1991, they were using wide rows with 36 inch spacings. Their tillage consisted of one pass with a field mulcher using three inch sweeps. Doing this just before planting.

In 1992 they learned about Zone Till through farm magazines and equipment dealers. Zone tillage is a form of strip tillage in an 8" bank in front of each row unit. This is done by action of three coulters and residue managers (row cleaners) working ahead of each row unit.

They liked the idea of zone tilling so they jumped in head first. Their results soon exceeded their expectations. They began working with a local implement

dealer from whom they bought Rawson zone tillage equipment. Rick and Art did most of the conversion work themselves converting a JD 7200 planter to zone till, using zone till coulters with row cleaners. They have seen consistent improvement in yields. Soil fertility and earthworm activity has increased dramatically. Rick and his Dad are always trying to find a new and better way to do things. Their planter is set up for liquid 28 and starter application along with planting. Their herbicide program depends upon the year and weather conditions.

In 1996 they wanted to go with 22" rows. It was not possible to convert the JD 7200 planter to zone till. So they sold the planter and purchased a JD 7240. With the help of Clermont Implement they were able to convert a six row thirty inch JD 7240 planter into an eight row with 22" spacing zone tillage planter. They were very pleased with their results. Yields didn't change noticeably. A few of their advantages were, quicker canopy and plant standability.

They still use liquid 28 and starter on the planter all in one pass. They may use either pre or post spraying depending upon the year and field conditions.

For the first time in 1995 they experimented with zone tilling beans. Planting 30 acres of beans, they used an early preplant herbicide for weeds before planting. Rick notes the weed control was good in the early stages of plant life, but midway through

the season they saw the chemicals run out of gas. The yield was still satisfactory. In 1996 they planted 100 acres of beans using the same chemical program as the year before. Unfortunately the weed pressure increased about midway through the season. Their yield still held a satisfactory average due to weed pressure. This coming year they plan to try something different still searching for new ways and technology.



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FAYETTE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION District Commissioners

pictured at a recent meeting, include, from left- Paul Nuss, Hawkeye; Matt Stewart, Oelwein, secretary; Bill Bennett, Elgin, chairman; Richard Jensen, West Union, vice chairman; John Grafenberg, West Union.

Soil conservation is in everyone's hands

Since the Dust Bowl days, America's agricultural producers have met our nation's natural resource challenges - convincingly. They have enhanced their cropland for wildlife habitat and began using a number of practices to improve water quality. They have adopted tillage methods on millions of acres of cropland that left residues from the previous year's crop on the soil surface to protect the land from soil erosion. In the last ten years alone, they have built the most impressive record for natural resource care on agricultural land of any period in history.

The 1996 Farm Bill puts natural resource care more squarely on the shoulder of agricultural producers than previous farm bills. Your local USDA

Service Center, conservation district, and Extension Service will be there to help, as in the past. But the primary responsibility to

New commissioners sworn in at SWCD

The Fayette SWCD has one new commissioner and two new assistant commissioners. John Grafenberg signed his oath of office for a four year term Jan. 2, 1997. John and his wife Jan live north of West Union and have a dairy farm. They have also recently started a bed and breakfast business in West Union.

Duties of a commissioner include directing programs of the

make and carry out decisions to care for the land and water rests with farmers and ranchers.

We believe that voluntary

district, approving cost share, approving conservation plans, educational programs, plus many other activities and programs.

We are also happy to welcome two new assistant commissioners; Jodie Jeanes of Westgate and Karen Smith of Arlington. Assistant commissioners help with all district activities and are appointed each year by a vote of the commissioners.

conservation, with incentives, is the best approach to widespread use of conservation measures by farmers in this country. The 1996 Farm Bill offers us the opportunity to prove that. We've shown over the years that we are the responsible stewards of the land and water. We need to keep demonstrating that those of us

closest to the land, those of us who farm it, have the greatest stake in caring for it.

When this farm bill expires, we'd like to look back with satisfaction that we sustained the gains made in natural resource care over the years, and, better yet, improved on that record. It's in our hands.



Karen Smith,
assistant commissioner



Jodi Jeanes
Asst. commissioner &
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Carl Nus
Retired commissioner

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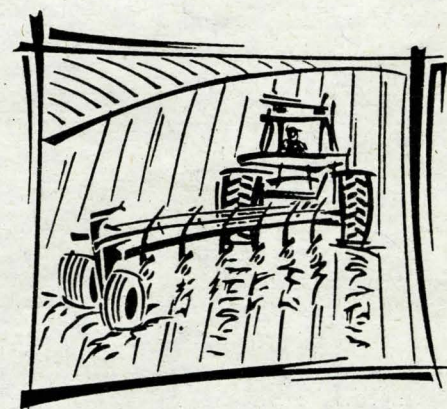
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Soil Conservation Service changes to Natural Resources Conservation Service

By Pat Hunziker

When settlers first arrived in what was to be known as the United States, the land was fertile and plentiful. America had such vast amounts of rich soil that mistreatment would not pose a problem until nearly a century later.

As the fertility of the land diminished, early settlers chose to move inland; these migrations caused wind and water erosion by clearing of the land; flooding also became a major problem. Land was left to be blown away and later washed away.

The disappearance of fertile land was gradual, with the Great Depression and the subsequent drought of the 1930s causing alarm as farmers watched their land being blown away. The Dust Bowl Days emerged as one of the nation's most devastating ecological disasters, caused by the destruction of native grasses on the plains.

As the soil was blowing out of the plains, the Soil Erosion Service was established in 1933 as an emergency agency. Standard erosion control measures were useless; each farm was different and a plan was needed that was tailored to fit the requirements of each farm.

In 1935, the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) was conceived by Congress as a successor to the Soil Erosion Service, and as a permanent agency of the United States Department of Agriculture.

The first soil conservation districts were formed in 1937 and shared information with a variety of sources, including the Forest Service, Farmer's Home Administration, and others. Their purpose was to carry out conservation programs authorized by Congress.

In the late 60s, the goal of the SCS was to work with landown-

ers and persuade them to stop wasting land and water resources; to provide on-site assistance and urge farmers to adopt practices that would significantly reduce erosion.

The priorities for the SCS in the early 90s were conservation plan compliance, CRP (Conservation Reserve Program), wetlands, and water quality.

The SCS mission included: soil and water conservation, natural resource surveys, and resource protection and management. That mission continues today.

Iowa's total land comprises 35.4 million acres: cropland, 81%; pastureland, 12%; forest land, 5%; and other land uses, 2%. Almost half of Iowa's 26 million acres of cropland are considered to be highly erodible land, with about 240 million tons of soil eroding each year.

Conservation practices are being implemented in Iowa at a record pace. Contouring, grassed waterways, and terraces are showing marked increases; in addition, no-till is becoming increasingly popular as farmers learn that no-till results in less soil compaction and an increase in energy savings.

So why the name change? The name "Soil Conservation Service" implies "soil" conservation; when in fact, the SCS encompasses so much more. All natural resources are considered by the NRCS, as they are all linked: soil erosion may result in poor water quality. A properly maintained grassed waterway may provide habitat for a variety of wildlife.

Conservation challenges are many: maintaining a limited supply of agricultural land; meeting the agricultural needs of many people; conserving and pro-

tecting not only the soil, but water, air, plants, and animals; and devising new techniques for predicting soil erosion and water pollution.

The name change occurred in 1994, and recognized the fact that the Natural Resources Conservation Service has always been a natural resources conservation service. The name change in no ways diminishes the importance of the nation's soil resources. The NRCS stresses a total resource management plan to landowners that considers all the resources on land they own. The goal of the NRCS is to provide information and assistance to help landowners make educated decisions regarding management of natural resources and at the same time, to maintain a high level of agricultural productivity. In addition, the NRCS are advocates of land stewardship and will provide the most up-to-date technological assistance available and will support voluntary solutions to natural resource problems.

To provide the most current information possible, the NRCS works closely with other government agencies, with state and county agencies, and with industrial, agricultural, natural resource, and professional organizations.

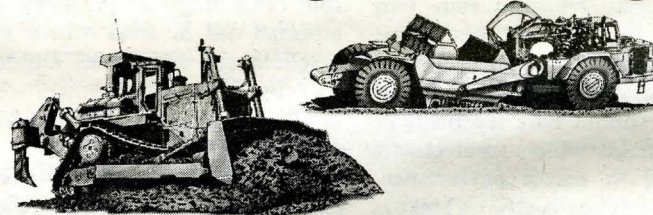
The NRCS has a substantial amount of printed material; booklets, pamphlets, and fact sheets to answer many conservation questions. Audio visual materials are also available for public and school use on a vast array of subjects; slide presentations and video tapes. For a complete listing of resource materials, contact your local NRCS office.

The NRCS is for everyone, to produce a healthy land for all inhabitants, both now and in the future.

Conservation accomplishments 1996 fiscal year

Practice	Number	Acres (ac) Feet (ft)
Conservation District Cooperators	13	
Individuals and Groups Assisted	664	
Followup on HEL Plans	469	
Individuals and Groups Applying Practices	164	
Resource Management System Planned		3,832 ac.
Tracts/No Highly Erodible Land	53	
Tracts with a Completed Conservation Compliance Plan	283	12,788 ac.
Conservation Tillage		570 ac.
Contour Farming		1,689 ac.
Grassed Waterway		23 ac.
Contour Stripcropping		600 ac.
Terraces		19,199 ft.
Current Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) 1-13 Sign-Up	433	14,830.7 ac.
Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Extended	182	6,695.1 ac.
Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Expired	97	3,139.5 ac.
Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Early Released	90	2,435.8 ac.
Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Continuous Practices	4	10.2 ac.

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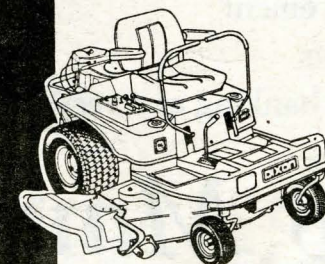
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NRCS FIELD OFFICE EMPLOYEES pictured at the counter of the new office just south of West Union, include, from left- **Lavonne Koch**, federal technician; **Alan Crowe**, state technician; **Julie McCready**, part-time employee; **Wayne Schmitt**, federal technician; **Lori Kohlmeier**, state secretary; **Jerry Muff**, district conservationist.

Continuous CRP - one great deal with many benefits

By Jerry Muff

The Conservation Reserve Program has recently been changed quite substantially. For one, it has branched into two separate programs. The CRP most people are familiar with is the general CRP in which landowners submit bids for fields or partial fields which meet criteria designed to enroll environmentally sensitive areas. This is similar to past sign-ups. Landowners may have to bid less than the bid cap (the maximum rental

rate based on the productivity of the soil types) to get their land enrolled in the CRP. However the continuous CRP aims to enroll only eligible practices in cropland and in areas where the practices are considered eligible by NRCS.

The range of CRP rental payments for Fayette County is \$63 to \$167 per acre depending on the productivity of the soils. Most of our alluvial soils along streams and rivers are very productive and therefore have rela-

tively high CRP rental payments associated. Filter strips or riparian areas are one of the key practices that landowners should consider for water quality improvement, fantastic wildlife cover, possibly bank stabilization and also for a very respectable financial return for the acres enrolled. For example, soil type 158 Dorchester silt loam is a common soil type along drainageways, has a bid cap of \$155 per acre. If enrolled in the CRP as filterstrip, the owner would expect to receive

an additional 20% or \$186 per acre for 10 to 15 years. Not a bad deal!

Once determined eligible by FSA and NRCS, the owner will automatically be enrolled into the CRP. As in the example above, the participant will receive the bid cap amount plus for some practices there is an annual bonus added to the rental payment. There is NO competitive bidding procedure for the continuous CRP. The practices eligible for the continuous CRP are:

* **Filter Strips.** Grass or tree cover strips 66 ft. to 99 ft. wide along rivers, streams, ponds or sinkholes. 10-15 year contract, plus an annual 20% bonus payment.

* **Field Windbreak.** 1 or 2 rows of trees or shrubs established around a field. This is a 10-15 year contract, plus an annual 20% bonus payment.

* **Farmstead Windbreaks.** Multiple rows of trees/shrubs around a farmstead or feedlot. This is a 10-15 year contract.

CRP Cont. to pg. 5

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New grassland conservationist

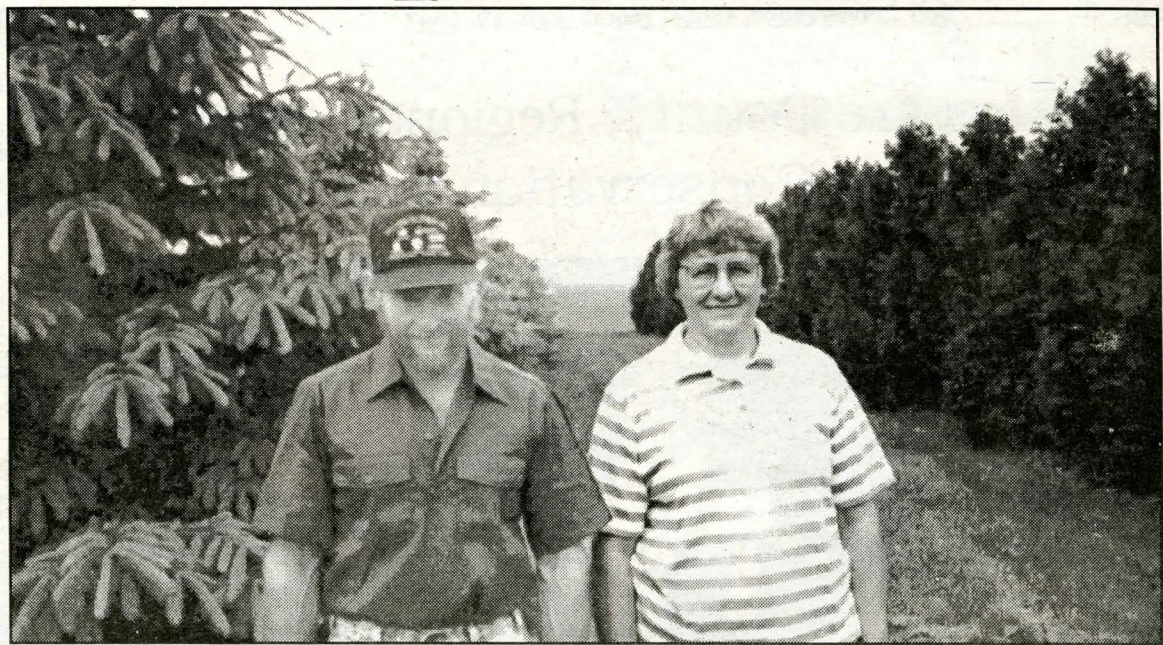
James Ranum has been recently hired as a Grassland Conservationist to assist Allamakee, Clayton, Fayette, Winneshiek, Dubuque and Jackson counties. NRCS State Conservationist, LeRoy Brown, has made a commitment to increase the emphasis on pastureland. He created three positions in Iowa for grassland conservationists to assist local Soil and Water Conservation Districts develop programs to assist landowners increase the use and productivity of grassland.

Ranum will assist landowners

develop pasture plans for fencing, watering systems, forage seedlings and existing forage stand improvement.

The current farm bill requires that the livestock industry be targeted for cost share funding. Under the new Environmental Quality Incentives Program, EQIP, which replaces the old ACP program, producers will be given funding to increase the productivity and profitability of existing grasslands.

Any interested producer can contact the District office at 568-2246 to set up an appointment to develop a plan for grassland improvement, cost estimates and cost share assistance.



Pictured are 1996 Fayette County Izaak Walton Windbreak Award winners, David & Mary Keppler of Lamont.

CRP

cont. from page 4

* Grassed Waterways. Established grassed waterway where needed. CRP waterways must meet NRCS specifications which means that construction may be required. Cost share would be available at 50% level if project is approved. This is a 10 year contract.

* Shallow Water for Wildlife. A shallow water structure to be constructed which has 50% of the pond 3.5 ft. of depth or less. This is a 10 year contract.

* Living Snow Fences. Rows of trees/shrubs along roads, lanes, etc. designed to drop snow.

Contact the NRCS or FSA office at the USDA building in West Union for assistance with this program.

Conservation compliance and wetland conservation provision still in place

NRCS District Conservationist Jerry Muff reminds producers that conservation compliance plans and wetland provisions are still in effect. Publicity regarding the 1996 farm bill stresses flexibility for producers. Muff feels that it would be easy to misinterpret "flexibility" to mean conservation compliance is no longer in effect. It is true that the farm program offers more flexibility in terms of meeting FSA (formerly ASCS) cropping requirements. However, it has NOT changed the fact that

on HEL fields, the compliance plan must be followed (and cropping sequence as noted) or an equivalent conservation system applied to each field to be eligible to receive farm program benefits. Therefore producers need to be aware of required residue levels and plan accordingly, especially if crop residues are removed. Waterways, headlands and other practices called for in compliance plans also need to be installed and maintained as planned.

We are also finding a signifi-

cant number of producers installing tile or land shaping in or around possible wetlands. Converting wetlands cannot only make a producer ineligible for farm program benefits, but can be in violation of the Clean Water/Air Act sec. 404.

Producers are urged to contact the FSA (formerly ASCS) or the NRCS (formerly SCS) office at the USDA building south of West Union BEFORE completing drainage projects. While the definition of a wetland has not

changed, the rules have been modified recently which provides alternatives to land users in dealing with wetlands.

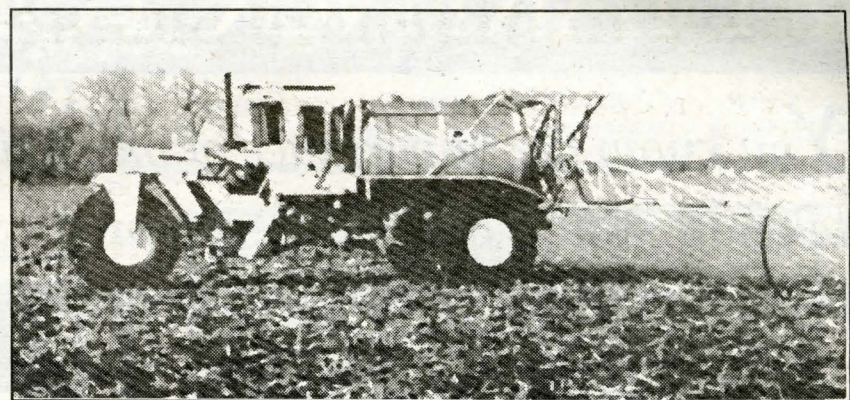
We are not trying to alarm producers but simply encourage producers whenever unsure of the compliance or wetland rules and regulations to contact the NRCS (formerly SCS) 1-319-422-3868 at the USDA office in cooperation with the Fayette SWCD (Soil and Water Conservation District).

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Wagners are County, Regional, State Outstanding Conservation award winners



Kenneth and Doris Wagner, rural Castalia, are the winners of the Fayette County, Northeast Iowa regional and statewide outstanding conservation award - owner/operator division. They are shown receiving their state award in Des Moines, at the IASWCDC Annual Conference.

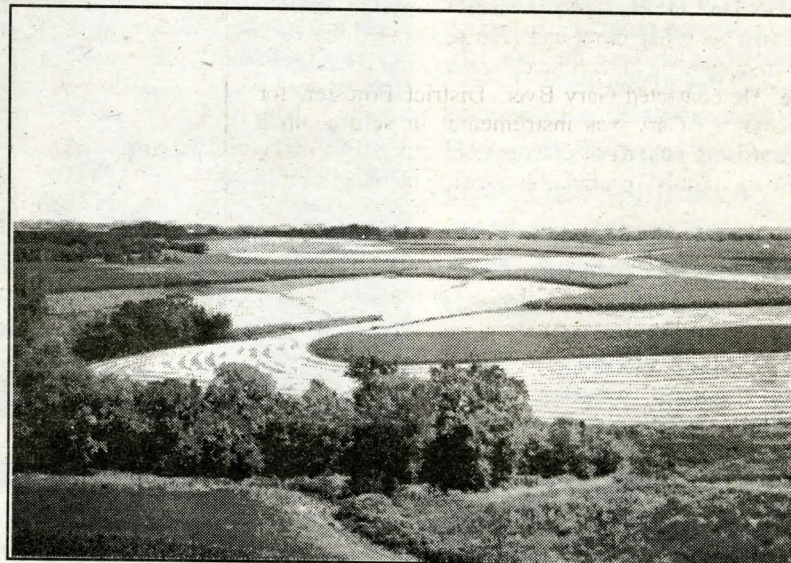
Wagners receive outstanding conservation award

Kenneth and Doris Wagner farm north of Clermont and have been exemplary in their stewardship of the land.

Conservation practices include: contour strip crop; conservation tillage; grasses and hay in rotation; grassed waterways;

grassed field borders; and water and sediment control basins.

They received an award at last fall's regional IASWCDC meeting in Epworth, and will receive the Fayette County award at our districts recognition banquet in February.



Contour strips of corn-oats and hay on Kenneth Wagner farm.

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Sieck is Fayette County 1996 Woodland Owner of the Year

By LaVonne Koch
Soil Conservation Technician

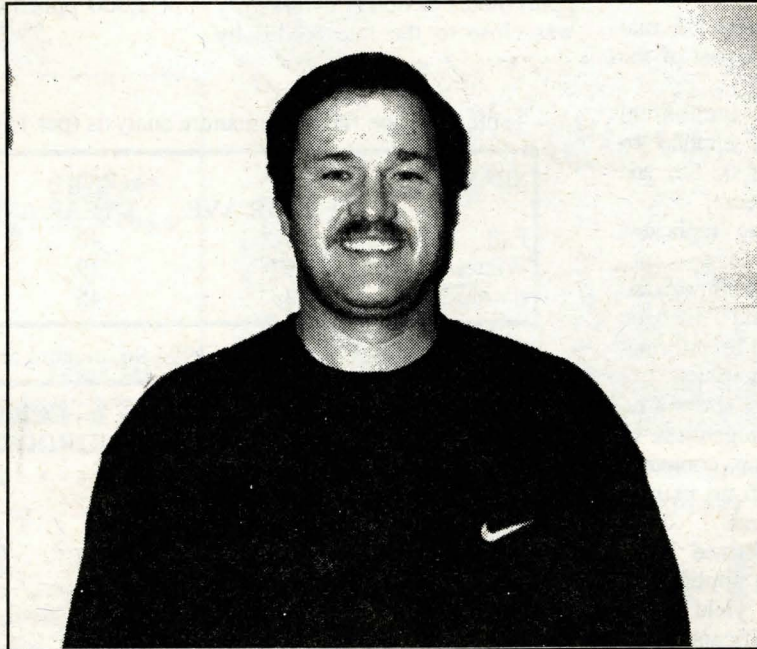
Don Sieck, Jr., lives at 8681 Hemlock Rd., Fayette, and farms 800 acres with his brother and has a hog and beef cow/calf operation.

In 1994, Don purchased 40 acres of pastured-off timber land in Westfield township. These timbers had just been harvested and Don recognized the need for management if the land was to remain productive. He contacted Gary Byer, District Forester, for assistance. Gary was instrumental in setting up a stewardship plan to meet Don's objectives of quality hardwood timber production, wildlife habitat and recreation.

That same year, Don participated in a 32-hour Iowa Woodland Management Program at Mason City where he received hands-on-training and a wealth of technical information.

The Woodland Management Program is a joint effort between Iowa State University and the Department of Natural Resources. The only cost for the program, is that the participants are asked to share their learned knowledge with the public. Just contact Don and he will be very happy to share his knowledge.

The most important implementation of Don's plan was to fence the cattle out of the timbers, kill



Don Sieck, Jr.
Woodland Owner of the Year

the undesirable trees and release the chosen crop trees.

As the plan progressed, Don involved his family to help in hand planting several thousand oak and walnut seedlings along with many bushels of walnut seeds. Weeds will now have to be controlled around the young trees for up to five years.

Most recently, Don, with the help of One Stop Forestry at Postville, experimented with several broadcast seeding plots. These plots are open areas that were tilled and planted with high population of walnut, oak, ash and maple seeds that were worked into the ground. The theory of broadcast seeding is to crowd the young trees to development of good form and quicker formation of a canopy to reduce weed pressure. Replanting stress is also eliminated.

Don feels this is another way of farming many farmers overlook. He says there is no better time to get started on a forestry project. Technical assistance is available through knowledgeable staff at Natural Resource Conservation Service, Iowa Department of Natural Resources and Iowa State University, Extension Service, and District Forestry. Cost share may be available to cover some of the cost.

Don most likely will not see the end results of his project but feels it is very rewarding to be responsible for the development and quality of a woodland that will benefit future generations.

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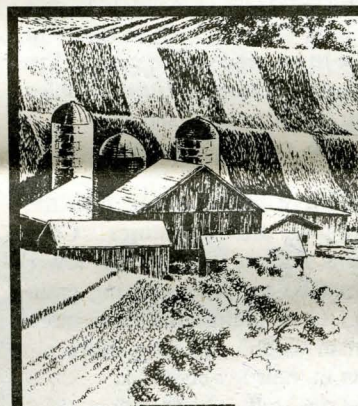
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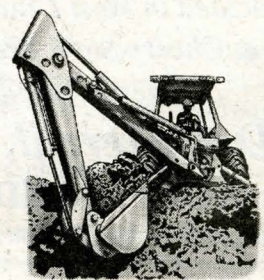


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Third year of data from multi season manure demonstration

Many livestock producers haul manure several times a year. Tom Hayes, a Fayette County producer and a three-year cooperator with the Northeast Iowa Demonstration Project, is no exception.

Since he has limited manure storage on his farm, he spreads manure from his hog confinement operation during the fall and spring, and occasionally during the winter. Like many other producers, he's questioned whether the manure he spread in the winter had the same nitrogen fertilizer value for the following crop as the spring-applied or fall-applied manure.

Hayes follows a no-till corn-bean rotation on his farm, with manure surface-applied to the soybean stubble. He already knew he could take at least one pound of nitrogen (N) credit for each bushel of beans harvested per acre, but he wasn't sure of the true fertilizer value of manure in the various seasonal settings.

A demonstration comparing the time of manure application has helped him refine his crop nitrogen management to eliminate over-applying commercial nitrogen fertilizer to manured fields.

The demonstration goes back to the summer of 1993, when Gina Hanson, NEIDP manure management specialist, suggested to Hayes that he become a cooperator in a demonstration on his farm. While the replicated demonstration would focus on his concerns, the results would be of interest to other producers in northeast Iowa, she explained to Hayes.

The plot design included the following:

- * The manure spreader was calibrated at 3,000 gallons per acre, the manure sampled and sent to a lab for analysis after each application to confirm nitrogen credit value.

- * Manure applications were made late fall (typically Novem-

ber), winter (February) and spring just before planting.

- * A check area with no manure applied was made part of the demonstration.

- * Commercial ammonium nitrate fertilizer was applied to treatments at rates of 0, 50, and 100 pounds of N per acre.

- * Each plot was replicated three times.

- * The late spring nitrate and fall cornstalk nitrate nitrogen tests were used to add to information obtained from the plots.

"The tables clearly show a response to manure, regardless of the time of application, compared to the check area with no manure or nitrogen fertilizer. Fall-applied manure performed better than winter or spring application, but on average the yield differences were not "significant," says Hanson.

"In most years, the time of manure application is not the most important issue. When spring temperatures are warm, organic nitrogen is released quickly from manure so the crop can use it. However, if spring temperatures are cool and wet, organic N from winter and spring applications of manure may not be fully or completely released in time to be used by the crop. The cornstalk nitrogen nitrates tables also confirm this," she says.

The cornstalk nitrate test is relatively new, and measures the amount of nitrate nitrogen in the corn plant after it matures. Corn plants remove N from the lower cornstalks and leaves during grain fill. Corn plants that have more N than needed will have more nitrate in their lower stalks.

Low stalk nitrate levels (less than 250 parts per million, or ppm) indicate that additional nitrogen would have been likely to increase yields. The marginal range (250-700 ppm) indicates a level very close to the minimal amount needed by the crop, but grain yield may not be reduced.

The optimal range (700-2,000 ppm) indicates that N availability was close to the rate needed by

the plant, while levels in excess of 2,000 ppm indicate that there

was a high probability that there was more than needed.

Table 1. Swine finishing manure analysis (per 1,000 gallons), average of data for 1994-96.

SEASON	N 3-YEAR AVE.	P ₂ O ₅ 3-YEAR AVE.	K ₂ O 3-YEAR AVE.
Fall	48	40	24
Winter	56	29	21
Spring	52	45	19

Table 2. Average corn yields, 1994-96, manure and nitrogen treatments.

MANURE APPLICATION TREATMENTS	CORN YIELD, Bu/A NITROGEN TREATMENTS, lb.A.			
	0 N	50 N	100 N	Average
No manure	143	163	165	157
Fall applied	159	163	168	163
Winter (snow)	155	161	164	160
Spring applied	155	158	165	159
Average	153	161	166	160

Table 3. End-of-season cornstalk nitrate nitrogen analysis, 1994-96

MANURE APPLICATION TREATMENTS	NITROGEN TREATMENTS (lb/A)			AVERAGE NO ₃ ppm
	0	50	100	
	----- NO ₃ ppm -----			
No manure	686	2,096	3,091	1,957
Fall applied	1,211	4,171	5,882	3,754
Winter applied (snow)	160	1,420	3,811	1,797
Spring applied	716	2,508	4,293	2,506
Average NO ₃ ppm	716	2,508	4,293	2,506

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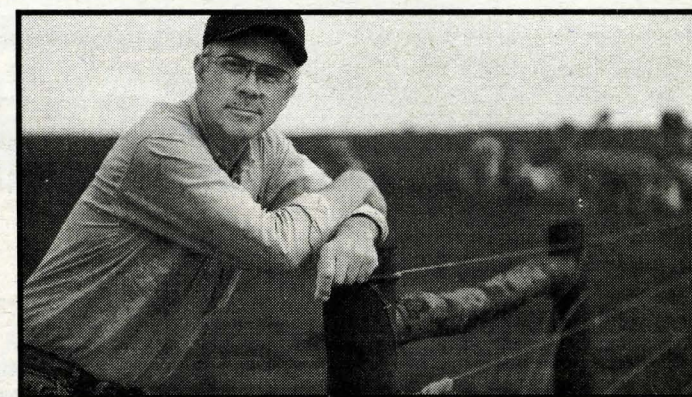
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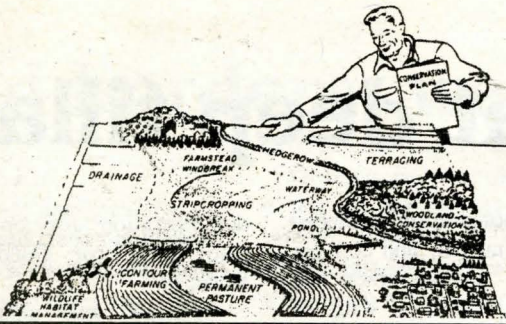
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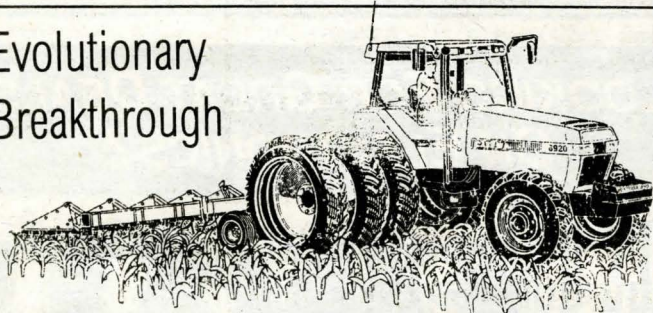


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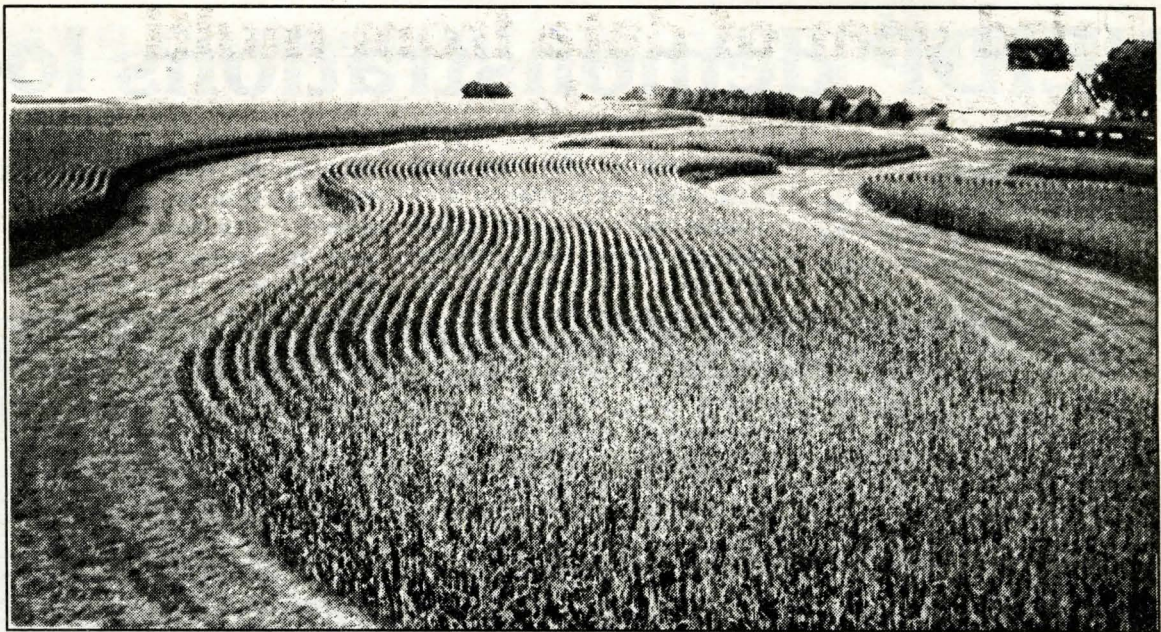
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West Union farmer pleased with terraces; row crops

By Russell Guyer

I own a 205-acre farm in the rolling hills four miles north of West Union. Currently, I have an operator on the land who has a dairy herd and is in need of row crops.

I recently have 10 terraces that I have placed throughout my fields in the last three years with a total of 7,215 feet. I have signed up for a long Term Agreement (LTA) that puts me on a plan to continue to have terraces constructed for the next ten years. What is nice about

the LTA program, is that the Natural Resource Conservation Service will cost share up to 60 % of the cost of the terraces.

Overall, the terraces have solved our erosion problem and have been working great for us. We have had no negative outcome with the terraces. However, the main reason that I chose to have the terraces put in, was because I am going to be building a pond that will be near by the fields. In the long

run, I don't want the pond to fill in with silt and placing terraces in the nearby fields will help prevent that from occurring.

There are three types of terraces in my fields. they are: broad-base, grassback and narrow-base. I have found that I like the broad-base terraces the best because you can plant over the top of them and not lose any of the corn rows. The grassback terraces were used in steeper areas of my field. One thing that is really nice about terraces, is that it eliminates the need to leave grass waterways.

Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) designed our terraces and did a very good job of laying them out. They are very knowledgeable of what needs to be done and I am very pleased with them. The terraces were designed so the corn rows would come out even.

I was also pleased with the work of the contractor who constructed the terraces. Not only did he do them in a timely and efficient matter, but he was conscientious about saving the top soil, stockpiling it, and then covering the terraces with the stockpiled topsoil when he was finished. He puts at least a foot of topsoil back on the terraces. With that, we hardly saw any yield loss as far as production from the terraces after the first year when constructed.

The tiler was fast, efficient and guaranteed his work as far as the inlets washing out. I also liked the fact the inlets stayed dry because of the channel tile that he installed.

Altogether, I am very happy with my decision in having the terraces put in. I look forward to having more terraces put into my fields and the production they can bring me. I would recommend anybody to take advantage of the LTA program to have terraces put in their fields.



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NEIDP demonstrations look at deep tillage

By Charles Wittman

Soil compaction and the perceived need for deep tillage has been a very common discussion topic in recent years, and especially during the wet years of 1992 and 1993.

In 1994 and again last year, the Northeast Iowa Demonstration Project, Postville, conducted tillage demonstrations in the project area to look at specific aspects of tillage treatments.

The earlier demonstration was conducted on the Cloy Kuhse farm northeast of Postville, in a field with Downs soil. After

corn harvest in 1993, two areas of the field were compacted with multiple passes of a fully-loaded, three-axle chopper box containing corn silage. Total weight of the box and loan was 10-1/4 tons.

Alternate areas were not driven on except for normal corn silage harvest to represent non-compacted areas.

Two weeks later, deep tillage (down to 14 inches) was done with a subsoiler, traveling in directions perpendicular to the compaction passes. There were six replications of each of the treatments.

"There was a consistent corn yield response to deep tillage

only on the compacted areas," says John Rodecap, project coordinator. "The demonstration results are consistent with Iowa State University research findings which show that deep tillage can only be justified in areas of extreme compaction, like traffic areas."

Last year, a nitrogen-tillage demonstration was conducted at Gilbertson Conservation Education Area east Elgin. The soil type was Dorchester silt loam, and the field nearly level. Nitrogen, in the form of anhydrous ammonia (NH₃), was applied at a rate of 160 pounds of sidedress nitrogen per acre.

The demonstration included zone builder, no-till, and conventional tillage. Conventional tillage, however, was done with 28 percent nitrogen disked in, using a different - though similar - hybrid.

"The plan for the 1997 crop year is to compare tillage systems - moldboard plow vs. deep tillage vs. conventional tillage vs. no-till - on a Fayette soil

demonstration site on the Bill Eno farm near Gunder," says Rodecap.

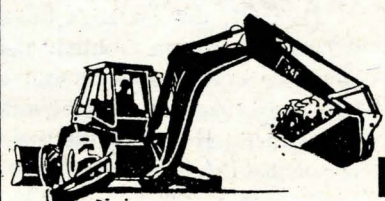
"NEIDP will also have a demonstration at the Dale Green farm near Castalia, looking at fall deep tillage vs. conventional tillage," he says. Deep (20-plus inches) tillage was completed on alternate portions of the field in fall of 1996. The site is Dorchester soil.

The results were as follows:

Treatments	Continuous corn yield, bu/A
Fall zone builder, sidedress N	149
No-till, sidedress N	133
Conventional tillage (fall chisel, spring disk)	178

The results were as follows:

Compaction and tillage treatments	corn yield, bu/A
Normal silage harvest, no deep tillage	167
Normal silage harvest, deep tillage	168
Compacted (traffic area), no deep tillage	160
Compacted (traffic area), deep tillage	168



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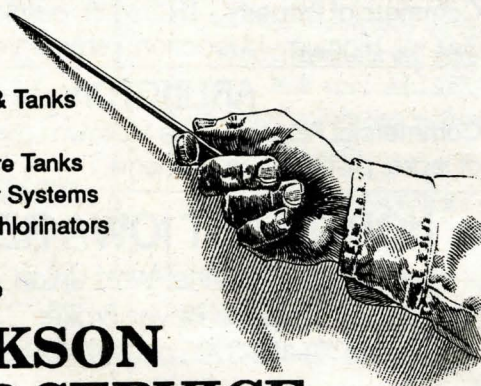
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Field borders, waterways conservation compliance

by Alan Crowe
State Technician

Over the past few years a great number of producers have made the switch from straight row farming to contour farming. This change has resulted in a tremendous reduction in sheet and rill soil erosion. However, if this practice is not used in conjunction with grassed field borders, gully erosion would most likely occur in the end row areas.

Whenever your conservation compliance plan requires a contour type practice, be it simple contours, contour buffer strips, contour stripcropping, or terracing, grassed field borders are required in lieu of end rows on slopes of 5% and greater.

One reason field borders are so important is that in many cases a contour row pattern will lead much more water into the end row areas than would occur with straight row farming. Without the protection that field borders provide, severe gully erosion might result. Secondly, field borders provide a turning area to facilitate staying on the contour.

Many producers have been asking if they can plow up their existing field borders and plant to corn for a year and then seed down the following year. In most cases the answer is yes. If the borders have been seeded down for at least three years, the producer can plow the sod, plant one year of corn, and mulch till the corn before seeding oats and alfalfa. I would suggest that a producer contact the NRCS office first so that we can document that the borders

have existed long enough.

Grassed field borders are an important part of any contoured system, and must be established and maintained before the NRCS will verify the contour practice is applied.

Grassed waterways are also an effective means of controlling gully erosion. Most conservation plans require producers to establish waterways and/or critical area plantings in areas where concentrated flows of water may occur.

Status reviews (spot checks) conducted by the NRCS during the past few years have shown that some producers have not established waterways where needed. If it is noticed that a planned waterway is not existing, and that is needed, the producer may be required to construct a waterway that meets NRCS specifications.

I believe a good way to approach conservation compliance is to check over your plan closely, both narrative and the plan map.



CONTOUR BUFFER STRIPS on the Robert Claussen farm, operated by Four Strong Inc. in Illyria township, six miles northeast of West Union on Highway 56, and two and one-half miles south on Empire Road.

Recycling today...for tomorrow

By Jodi Jeanes

Fayette County Recycling Coordinator
Assistant SWCD Commissioner

The Fayette County Recycling Center has gone through many changes in the past six months. This is largely due to the ban of commercial cardboard at the Fayette County Landfill. The cardboard ban has been in effect since Nov. 1, 1996. This ban was put through by the Fayette County Solid Waste

Commission in order to help meet the county's reduction rate, mandated by the state. The rate has been set for a total of fifty percent reduction as of July 1, 1996. This is a positive thing for the people of Fayette County because it will help increase the life span of the landfill and to also encourage citizens to recycle as much of their waste as possible. This ban has increased the activity at the recycling center

but haulers bringing in all of the commercial cardboard pick ups on their routes and by the bins located throughout Fayette County being very full. A helpful hint to recyclers, please flatten all cardboard boxes that are placed in the roll off bins. This is done to save room for our neighbors and to keep the cost down due to extra pulls.

The most frequently asked questions for the recycling center are, "Do we take magazines, phone books, hard cover books or Reader's Digest?" The answer is yes. We do ask that you please place all magazines, white paper, and hardcover books in separate

bundles. This can be done with twine string, placing in a separate bag with the handles tied, or in a box clearly marked with what it contains and placed in the section marked newspaper in the roll off bins. The phone books and Reader's Digest may be placed in among the newspaper. The recycling center also requests that all recyclable material please be cleaned and placed into the appropriate section of the roll off bins. If you have any questions pertaining to the recycling center, please call Jodi Jeanes, Recycling Coordinator, at 319-422-3712.



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current crop production program. The FS GREEN PLAN/GIS is designed to manage and analyze GPS/GIS information from most sources. This flexibility allows you and your Crop Specialist the freedom to draw from the latest advances in technology. And with its ability to accurately layer data, the FS GREEN PLAN/GIS allows for comprehensive

evaluation and recommendations on a site-specific basis - making the FS GREEN PLAN/GIS measurably better field by field. So if you're looking to solve the puzzle of precision farming, contact the people who are putting the pieces together - the people of FS.

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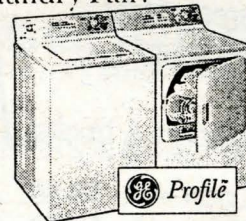
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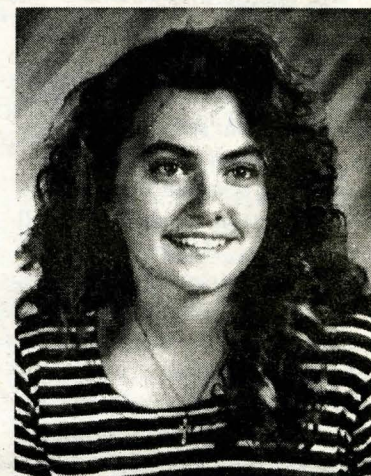
Pictured above, is a fine example of a shelter belt. This one is on the Wayne Bicknese property, rural West Union.

Miller awarded SWCDC scholarship

The 1996 Scholarship Contest, sponsored by the district and the Iowa Association of Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners, had 20 entrants.

Susan Miller of West Union was the recipient of the \$100.00 scholarship. She is the daughter of Henry and Barb Miller.

Applicants were evaluated on the basis of scholastic performance, service, character, leadership, and financial need. The commissioners appreciate the interest shown by all the applicants.



USDA - changes taking place

By Mark Habiger
Area Conservationist
NRCS - Area Office
The new 1996 Farm Bill,

Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act (FAIRA) leads USDA into the next millennium and introduces new wrinkles into the way we will address resource concerns. Although conservation compliance, sodbuster, swampbuster and highly erodible land are still a crucial part of program eligibility, new methods of program administration will make it easier for farmers and land owners to participate in USDA programs.

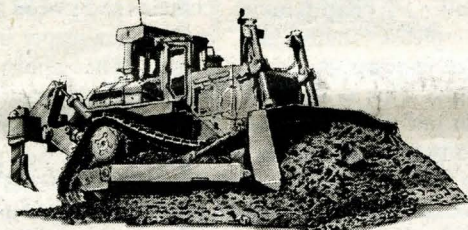
Several changes will have occurred by Oct. 1, 1997. One major change will be in the way program enrollment is handled. Farmers can now sign up for the

USDA programs at the local Soil and Water Conservation District office, NRCS or as usual, at the FSA office. A second change places control of the conservation programs in the hands of the local Soil and Water Conservation District and FSA County Committee. Although this change will be implemented over the next year or so, it is an important step in making USDA programs responsive to the needs of the people. An additional change is the elimination of the Agricultural Conservation Program (ACP), the old stand by cost share program. Replacing ACP is the new Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). The new EQIP combines the benefits of the old ACP with other similar conservation programs to form a total resource conservation program.

We at USDA are excited about the prospect of implementing these new changes. But what is even more exciting is placement of responsibility of identifying priorities for these programs in the hands of local farmers and ranchers. Yes, this will be a new way of conducting business for USDA. However, these changes will make our programs much more flexible and more effective in addressing local concerns.

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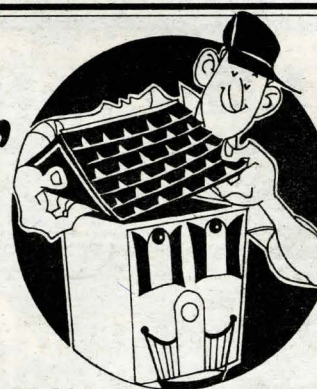
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Supporter Club 1996

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Soil Conservation annual report Feb. 13, 1997

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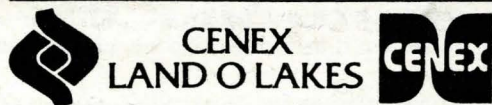
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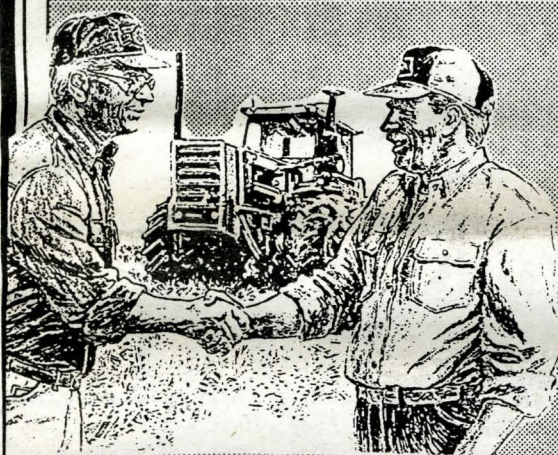
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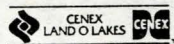


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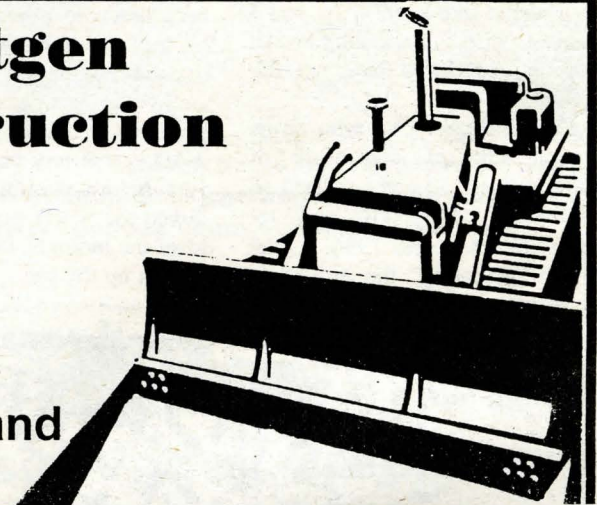
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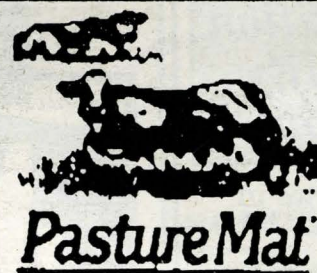
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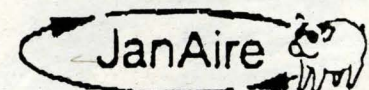


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No till drilling soybeans into CRP...can it work?

By Alan Crowe

With a lot of CRP contractors expiring, producers are looking for economical, yet productive ways of returning CRP ground to cropland; without undoing the benefits that the 10 year rest from production has created. There is no question that soil tilth and organic matter has increased while in CRP. These benefits can perhaps be best preserved by no tilling into CRP.

I would like to relay to you a "success story" concerning no till drilling soybeans into CRP ground.

Mr. John W. Orr, who farms several acres of land north of Fayette, had 130 acres of land in CRP which he opted to "early release" for crop year 1996. John began "preparing" the ground in

September '95 by applying a low rate of Roundup and 2-4D. Mr. Orr noted that the vegetation did not turn brown as quickly as he had expected. In an effort to control the gopher problem, John, in the spring of '96, rented a gopher "machine" and injected poison pellets into the sod. The cost was \$40/day plus the cost of the poison, and it took one and a half days to cover 130 acres. John mentioned that it might have been better to poison in the fall so that any gophers that moved in could be trapped in the spring.

In the spring of '96 John again sprayed with Roundup and 2-4D to kill any new vegetation. Just before planting he lightly disked the worst gopher areas to level the mounds, but not enough to turn up the sod. Then on May

31 and June 1, John no till drilled soybeans on 7 1/2 inch rows. After the beans got 4-5 inches tall, he hired the co-op to spray the beans (using the floater) with Pursuit and Select. As Mr. Orr put it "the beans were virtually weed free at harvest time, and yielded between 48-55 bu./acre, depending upon the variety".

It is interesting to note that John did plant some beans on 36" rows and they did not yield as well. Because of the wet conditions, he had to work up the sod in an effort to dry it out. The row beans yielded between 33-35 bu./acre.

John admitted he was hesitant to try no till drilling soybeans into CRP, but he received information and encouragement from Dan Burkhart of the Extension Service in Fayette and Jerry Muff of the NRCS in West Union. When I asked John if he would recommend this to other producers, he said "definitely - - I only wish I had more CRP ground to do it on."

I want to commend John Orr for having the courage to try an alternative approach to mold board plowing CRP, and to thank him for taking the time to provide this information to all of us!



Pasture walks designed to explain managed grazing

Submitted by Mark Stewart
Fayette SWCD Commissioner

For the past two years, John Rodecap and the Northeast Iowa Demonstration Project have sponsored a series of pasture walks throughout the four counties of northeast Iowa. These field days give neighboring farmers the opportunity to see what grazers have done to get started and what management techniques have been tried.

In northeast Iowa, some pastures are used as part of the feeding system of traditional, high producing dairy herds. Others are used for low-input, grass-based dairies. Still others are used in stocker and cow-calf operations. All have a similar goal - to increase the amount of gain or milk per acre.

Most permanent pastures in this part of the state are a combination of bluegrass, fescue and bromegrass. Most have some clovers or trefoil present, but these legumes do not get a chance to grow unless the pasture is either understocked or rotated.

Most land that could be tilled has been, since previous pasture management did not yield as well as corn, soybeans, or alfalfa. The advent of the reliable, low-impedance electric fencer and the success of grazing in New Zealand, combined with the increasing cost of machinery, seed, fertilizer, fuel, and labor, have created new interest in grazing.

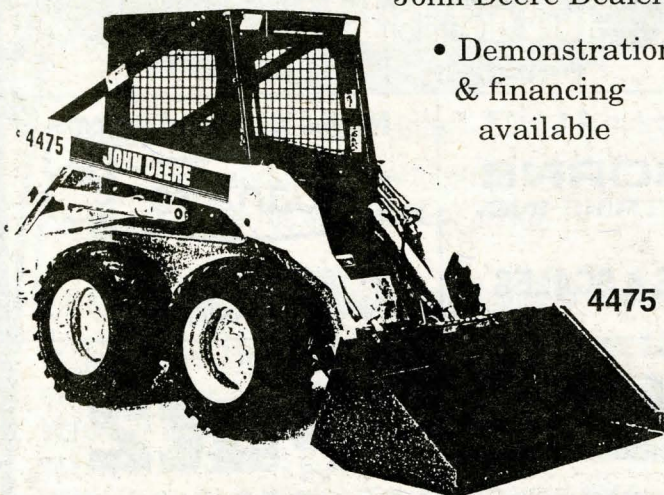
Grazing studies in southwest Wisconsin started in the mid 1980s have shown that managed pastures can easily yield over six ton of dry matter per acre. Perennial pastures producing six ton of high quality forage annually without fertilizer, seed, fuel, machinery and labor costs of conventional hay and silage systems offer more profit potential than row crops or alfalfa. It may take 3-6 years to get to this level of production, but most grazers see managed pasturing as best opportunity to hedge their farms against the constantly increasing cost of inputs.

Our interest at NRCS is obvious. As a land use, no other cropping system compares to the soil-building capacity of managed grazing. Contact Jim Ranum at the NRCS office in Elkader (319) 245-1048 or John Rodecap at the Northeast Iowa Demo Project in Postville for more information.

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Heavy rains cause serious erosion in Fayette County

The area most affected by the June 16, 1996, rainstorm was north of Hawkeye stated Jerry Muff, DC, with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Reports of three to seven inches of rain fell late that afternoon and evening. Muff reported to the NRCS Area Office that approximately 15,000 acres were affected by only 8,000 acres suffered severe soil loss levels of 20 tons per acre or more.

Field observation has shown that fields with conservation treatment were very effective in reducing soil erosion. While a lot of crop residue washed downslope,

Muff was impressed with how erosion was held in no-till or ridge-tilled fields where residue was still anchored to the soil. However, even in these fields residue and soil moved in the draws where the grassed waterways were not present.

The NRCS Field Office has found only one case where a terrace over topped and caused some damage. We also noted that the intake areas were silted in somewhat, but for the most part terraces did an exceptional job in controlling erosion. He noted severe gullying where there were either no waterways or the existing

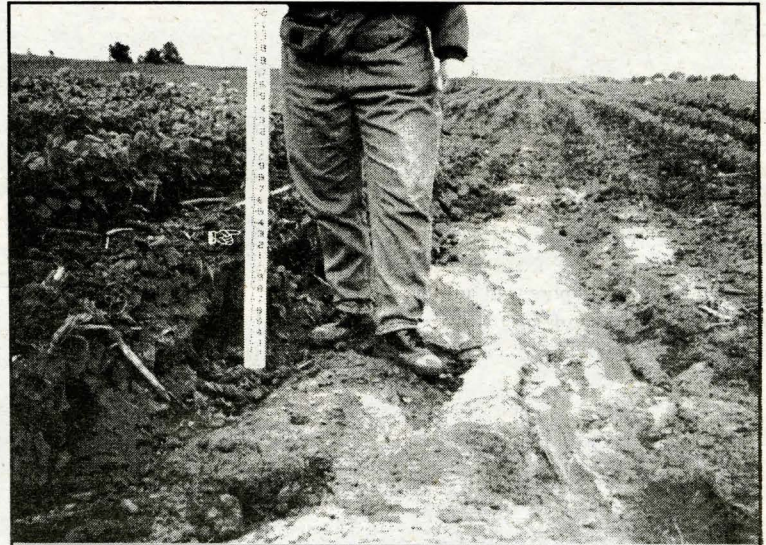
waterways were too narrow to handle runoff. A few areas will require shaping to be able to cross with farm equipment.

Muff noted that while most of these fields were classified as not highly erodible (NHEL) by NRCS, it is obvious that more conservation is needed in the prairie area or Kenyon-Floyd-Clyde soil association area of Fayette County. The relatively thin layer of good dark topsoil overlies an unproductive light colored till which makes this topsoil very valuable. The Hawkeye area has been nailed by heavy rains about four of the last five years.

We have already been contacted by some of the producers in this area requesting technical assistance for conservation projects. State and federal cost-share funds at the 50% cost-share rate will be made available in the near future for conservation projects. State and federal cost-share funds at the 50% cost-share rate will be made available in the near future for conservation projects. Contact the NRCS office at (319) 422-3868 or the FSA office at (319) 422-5770 for more information.



Gully erosion was a common occurrence from the June rain.



Five inches of rain within a few hours last May, wreaked havoc in Hawkeye area field. Over one foot of topsoil was lost in this drainageway, and was common for the area.

Soil Conservation is Our Concern!

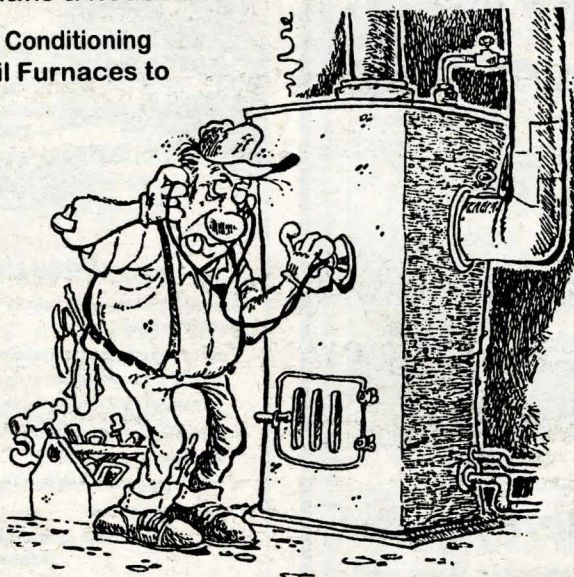
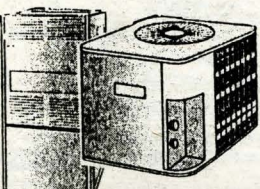
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4th annual third grade field day Sept. 17-19



Dawn Amundson, Environmental Education Coordinator for Fayette County Conservation, is pictured at the wildlife station of the third graders' conservation studies.



At right, Jodi Jeanes, Fayette County Recycling Coordinator, explains a demonstration in proper recycling, to third graders.

The 4th annual 3rd grade Conservation Education Field Day was another great success! Over 400 children from 11 schools in Fayette County participated this year. The entire event coordinated by the Fayette SWCD is made possible by all the volunteers who operate stations, provide food, equipment and give so generously of their time for the three day event.

The Fayette County Pork Producers donated and cooked pork sandwiches for each of the three days and Doug Easton-Culligan Water donated the drinking water for the event.

The Fayette SWCD would like to thank everyone who makes this event possible!

The eight stations featured at our field day for 3rd graders were: Bob Vobora - Soil Scientist Area Office, "Soil Station"; Tom Baker - Earth Team Volunteer, "Pond Station"; LaVonne Koch - NRCS Soil Conservation Tech., "Lines On the Land"; Julie McCready - NRCS - WAE, "Bee Station"; Dick Jensen - SWCD Commissioner, "Erosion Station"; Jodi Jeanes - Fayette County Recycling Coordinator and Fayette SWCD Assistant Commissioner, "Recycling Station"; Dawn Amundson - Fayette County Environmental Education Coordinator, "Wildlife Station"; and Tom Brown - Resource Conservation and Development for Northeast Iowa, "Forestry Station".



LaVonne Koch, NRCS technician, talks to youth about "Lines on the Land," at the 1996 field day.

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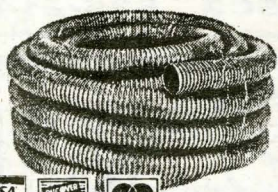
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Manure nutrient management workshop set for March 14

Dan Burkhardt, Fayette County Extension Education Director, announces that a Manure Nutrient Management Workshop for livestock producers in the West Union area will be held March 14.

The West Union Vet Clinic is cooperating with Iowa State University Extension to make this workshop available to the first 20 producers that sign up. Registration deadline is March 3 at the Fayette County Extension Office at 319-425-3331.

Farmers will get the following from attending the workshop: A working manure nutrient management plan for your farm; A digitized ISOIL field map (in color) of a field on your farm (or whole farm if it is located in the same section) with soil types and corn yields for each soil type and land capability class; An understanding of how to integrate fertilizer recommendations with manure nutrient values; Potential

cost savings in purchased commercial fertilizer; and A procedure for calibrating manure application equipment.

Brian Lang, ISU Extension Crop Specialist; Dan Meyer, ISU

Extension Ag Engineer; and Paul Brown, ISU Extension Farm Management Specialist; will be the workshop leaders.

Contact Dan Burkhardt at 319-425-3331 or Jerry Muff at 319-422-3868 for more details.

Wetland reserve program

Sign-ups are presently being taken for the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) at NRCS. The 1996 Farm Bill renewed provisions for technical and financial assistance to landowners to restore cropland areas to wetlands. The program emphasizes restoring habitat for wildlife and migratory birds, as well as protecting and improving water quality and reducing flood stream-flow.

The Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) provides for two types of

easements or a restoration agreement. The easements are either permanent or for a 30-year period.

Under the permanent easement, landowners receive appraised agricultural value of their land and NRCS pays 100% of the restoration costs and assumes long term management responsibility. Permanent easements require that the land remains a wetland forever and is passed on to the next landowners or deeded to conservation organizations.

For 30-year easements, landowners receive 75% of the appraised agricultural value of the land. NRCS pays 75% cost share for the restoration and assumes long term management responsibility.

Landowners may sign a restoration agreement to restore wetlands for a minimum of 10 years (after restoration is complete). NRCS pays 75% cost share for restoration and the landowner assumes long term management.

50% of an area to go into WRP must be cropland with hydric soils (soils where wetlands can be created or restored). The other 50% can be non-cropped areas, or cropped areas without hydric soils.

Check on wetland status before tiling

Anyone planning to do tile or ditch drainage should contact our office to see if wetlands exist in the area proposed for drainage. If wetlands are converted by drainage, filling, removal of woody vegetation or other alteration USDA farm benefits could be lost. Contact your office if you need to know how close you can tile to a wetland.

If you are outletting tile into a wetland, non-perforated tile must be used. It is the responsibility of the owner and operator to abide by the rules affecting USDA program eligibility. Also some wetland determinations and appeals take a considerable amount of time to complete.

Contact us well ahead of when the drainage work is planned. Minimal effect and mitigation agreements are available also. Minimal effect agreements allow alterations of wetlands if it is minimal. Mitigation agreements allow a wetland to be destroyed if a new wetland is created elsewhere or if an existing one is enhanced.



The Fayette County SWCD celebrated 50 years with an open house for the public, last August.

1997 tree seedling and transplant sale

The Fayette SWCD (Soil & Water Conservation District) is once again sponsoring a tree seedling and transplant sale. The trees are hardy, bare root seedlings with healthy root systems from Cascade Forestry Service, Inc. Prices shown are per bundle of 25, except the evergreen, nut tree, shade tree packages, and the individual trees.

The sale is open to anyone interested in planting trees. All orders must be received in our office no later than March 7, 1997. We will notify you in mid-April as to when your order can be picked up. Trees must be paid for when ordered. We do encourage early ordering, as we do sell out of the more popular species.

NAME: _____
ADDRESS: _____
CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____
TELEPHONE: _____ (home) _____ (work)

Species	Cost Per Bundle		Number Of Bundles	Total Cost
American Arborvitae (12-18")	\$35.00	x	_____	= _____
American Arborvitae (18-24")	\$45.00	x	_____	= _____
Black Hills Spruce (12-18")	\$35.00	x	_____	= _____
Blue Spruce (12-18")	\$35.00	x	_____	= _____
Cranberry Highbush (6-18")	\$35.00	x	_____	= _____
Red Osier Dogwood (2-3')	\$35.00	x	_____	= _____
Honeysuckle (18-24")	\$35.00	x	_____	= _____
(Arnold's Red aphid resistant)				
Lilac (2-3')	\$35.00	x	_____	= _____
Red Maple (2-3')	\$35.00	x	_____	= _____
Sugar Maple (2-3')	\$60.00	x	_____	= _____
Norway Spruce (12-18")	\$35.00	x	_____	= _____
Red Oak (2-3')	\$35.00	x	_____	= _____
Scotch Pine (12-28")	\$35.00	x	_____	= _____
White Pine (12-18")	\$35.00	x	_____	= _____

	Cost Per Package			
Native Nut-Tree Package	\$35.00	x	_____	= _____
3 Butternut, (18-24")				
3 Shagbark Hickory, (4-10")				
4 American Hazelnut, (6-12")				
4 Black Walnut, (12-18")				
4 American Chestnut, (6-12")				
Evergreen Package	\$35.00	x	_____	= _____
4 White Pine, (12-18")				
4 Blue Spruce, (12-18")				
4 Norway Spruce, (12-18")				
Shade Tree Package	\$35.00	x	_____	= _____
3 White Ash, (2-3')				
3 Sugar Maple, (2-3')				
3 Red Oak, (2-3')				
3 Bur Oak, (2-3')				
3 Swamp White Oak, (2-3')				

Individual Trees	Cost Per Tree		Number Of Trees	Total Cost
Blue Spruce (18-36")	\$5.00	x	_____	= _____
Norway Spruce (18-36")	\$5.00	x	_____	= _____
White Pine (18-36")	\$5.00	x	_____	= _____

Total of Above. = _____
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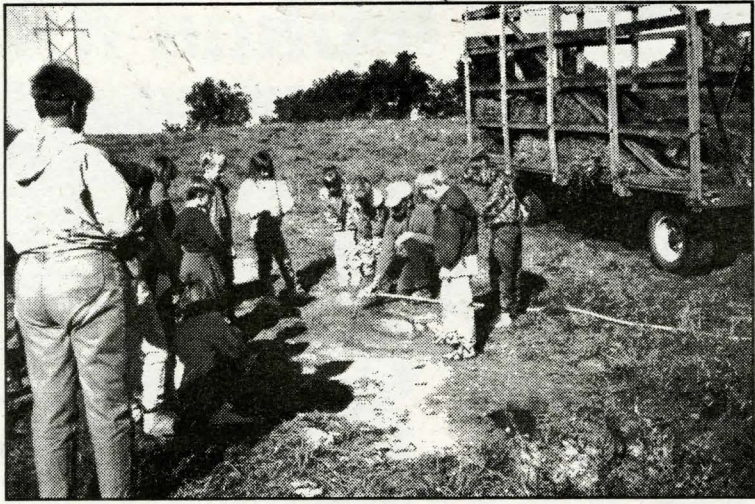
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Conservation plans on CRP

By LaVonne Koch
Soil Conservation Technician

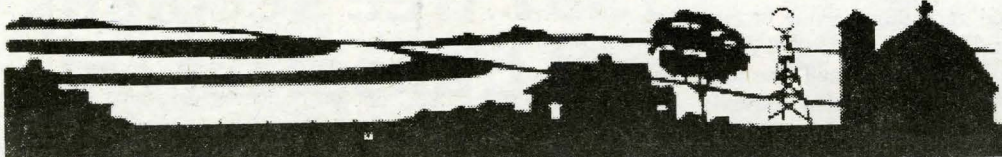
The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) has given millions of acres a rest from crop production. Soil erosion has been greatly reduced, saving precious top soil and protecting water supplies. While under this protective layer, the soil has had time to recover, resulting in increase of organic matter and increase biological activity.

Many CRP contract holders have already made a few assumptions about converting CRP acres into crop production. It is a fact that you can undo ten years of gained soil and environmental benefits in just

a year or two with poor management.

As you come to the end of the CRP contract, landowners need to remember to develop a Conservation plan, with the Natural Resource Service, on the fields that are considered HEL (highly erodible land).

The Conservation plan is the most important management tool that's going to make farming successful in minimizing soil erosion. The technology is there. The equipment is there. It's a matter of putting the pieces together. It's once in a lifetime opportunity to save the soil. Contact the Natural Resource Conservation Service for your conservation plan.

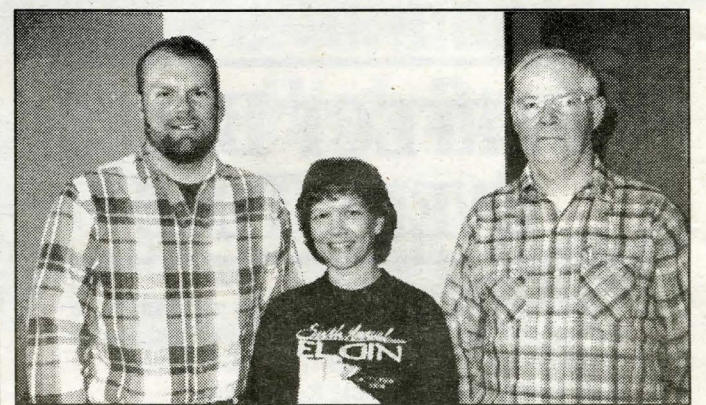


Bob Vobora, Soil Scientist with the NRCS - AO discussed soils with youth participating in the '96 Conservation Field Day.



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From left, Curt & Celeste Strong, Duane Strong. Not pictured, Duane's wife, Sara.

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Pictured: Curt & Celeste Strong, Duane Strong

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Cost-share money is now available for shelterbelt plantings

With cold temperatures, winds and snow of the winter season upon us, now is a good time to think about planting a shelterbelt to protect your home or farmstead. A shelterbelt is an area that has been planted to trees and shrubs. It is also a good time because the Iowa Department of Natural Resources is offering to pay 75% of the cost of planting a shelterbelt with at least eight rows of trees and shrubs.

Because of prevailing winter winds, shelterbelts are most beneficial to landowners when planted on the north and west sides of homes, farmsteads, or feedlots. Throughout the year, the shelterbelt benefits people and wildlife in a variety of ways. Tree and shrub plantings can reduce home energy consumption by up to 36 percent in the winter. It can increase feed conversion by livestock and greatly reduce snow accumulation around buildings. In summer, shelterbelts provide beauty to the home or farmstead area while enhancing property values. Throughout the year, shelterbelts provide countless forms of wildlife with critical winter shelter and breeding habitat.

In Iowa, planting a shelterbelt is one of the most effective ways

to restore winter cover for pheasants and other wildlife. Funds for this program come from the Chickadee Checkoff, a voluntary contribution for wildlife from Iowa income taxpayers, and from wildlife habitat stamps which are purchased by hunters and trappers. Under this program, landowners can receive 75 percent of the cost of planting a shelterbelt, not to exceed \$1600, if planted according to DNR planting specifications. Expansion of existing windbreaks to at least eight rows can also be cost-shared. The shelterbelt program is available in all Iowa counties.

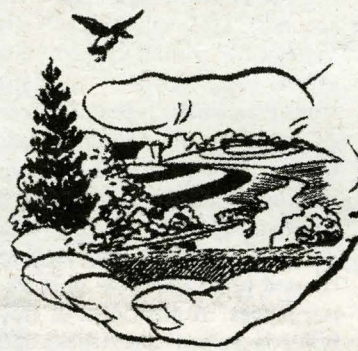


For additional information or a Shelterbelt Cost-Share Application contact; Robert Dolan, Wildlife Biologist, 501 17th St. SE, Independence, IA 50644, ph # 319-334-9191. Information and applications are also available at County NRCS offices and County Conservation Board offices.

Natural resource care in the hands of private landowners

When the 1985 farm bill was passed, many people doubted whether America's farmers could meet the challenges posed in the bill's conservation provisions. Among other things, those provisions called on producers to develop and carry out a conservation plan to protect all highly erodible cropland against soil erosion, in order to stay eligible for U.S. Department of Agriculture programs.

Iowa's agricultural producers passed that test—convincingly. They adopted tillage methods on millions of acres of cropland that left crop residues from the previous year's crop on the soil surface to protect against erosion. They established grasses and trees, on thousands of acres of the most erodible and fragile croplands. They established wildlife habitat, and began using a number of practices to improve water quality. Iowa landowners have reversed the trend in wetlands losses, and become the nation's leaders in wetlands restoration



programs. They cut soil erosion by more than a third. In short, in the past decade, Iowa farmers built the most impressive record of natural resource care on agricultural land of any period in history.

Now, 11 years later, another farm bill has been passed, and there are again doubts about the agricultural community's commitment to conservation. The 1996 farm bill puts natural resource care more squarely on the shoulders of agricultural producers than the previous bills. The USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, conservation

districts, state conservation agencies and others will be there to help, as in the past. But the primary responsibility to make and carry out decisions to care for the land and natural resources rests with farmers.

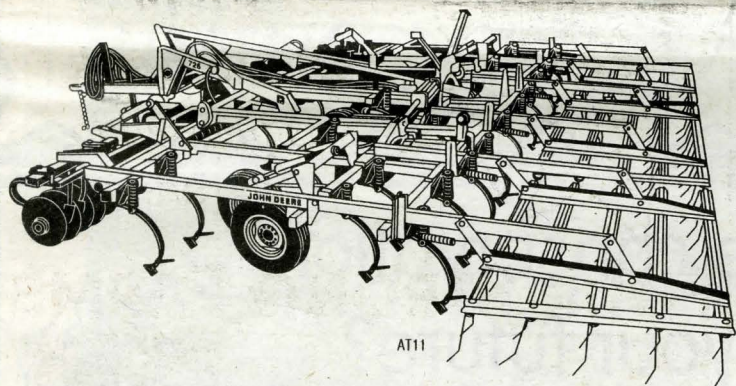
The 1996 farm bill keeps the conservation compliance provisions of the 1985 and 1990 bill, but offers more flexibility in which crops can be grown and in the protection of the resources used to grow those crops. It's been dubbed the "freedom to farm" bill; it's a freedom and responsibility that most farmers wanted.

Voluntary conservation, with incentives, has worked well to promote widespread use of conservation measures by farmers in Iowa. The 1996 farm bill offers the opportunity to prove that it will continue to work.

Iowa landowners have proven over the past 10 years as a group to be very responsible stewards of the land. But caring for natural resources is a never-ending task. It will be up to those closest to the land, those who farm it, to continue to take the lead in caring for it.

Which segment of the population can do the most for the future of our natural resources? In Iowa, there's no question. There is financial and technical help from a handful of state and federal agencies, and private groups, but by and large, the care of natural resources is in the hands of the thousands of private landowners, most of whom are farmers.

When this farm bill expires, I hope farmers across the state will be the first to look back with satisfaction that we sustained the gains made in natural resource care from 1985 to 1995, and better yet, improved on that record.



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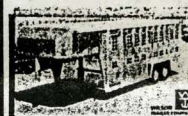


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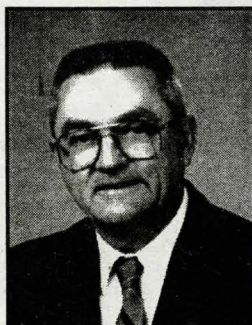
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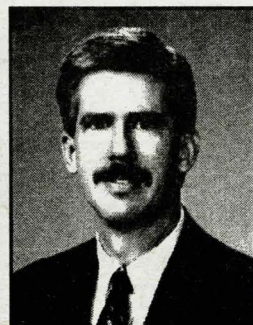
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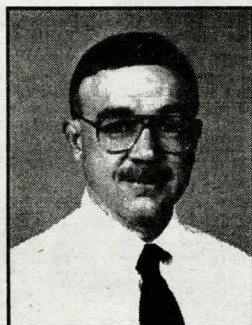
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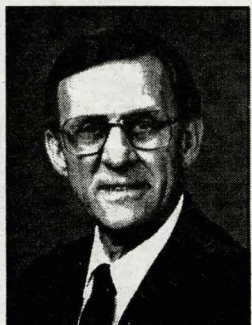
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Advanced technology results in better pasture production

By James Ranum

Advanced technology in fencing and water supplies provides the basis for improving pasture production. Pasture production is determined mainly by the amount of forage produced and the amount which is actually harvested by the livestock. Grazing patterns and the length of grazing periods have a major impact on the annual production from a pasture. Fencing and water supplies allow a producer to increase the amount of forage produced and utilized.

New fencing technology centers around the development of low impedance electric fences. These fences can effectively charge miles of fence when prop-

erly sized, installed and grounded. Low impedance works by limiting the pulse to less than .0003 seconds. This maintains effective voltage for animal control under much more adverse vegetative loads than earlier types of fences. Along with the low impedance fences hi-tensile wire provides fencing which can be installed for less than half the cost of a barbed wire. Polywire or polytape can be used to provide low cost interior fences. A great deal of flexibility is gained since these interior fences are rapidly installed and can be readily relocated.

Water location plays an important role on grazing patterns. The closer the water supply the better the pasture utilization.

When the distance livestock travels to water exceeds six to eight hundred feet pasture utilization and manure distribution decrease. Several innovative options for watering livestock in grazing systems have been developed.

With adequate fencing and water to each pasture, production and utilization is increased by al-

lowing the pasture adequate time for regrowth between grazing events. Total pasture production often will increase 25%. Along with the increased production utilization will increase depending upon the grazing duration. A continuously grazed pasture will have a utilization rate of around 35% of the available forage being

consumed. This can be increased up to 70% for intense rotations with daily moves.

Cost share programs are available to develop pasture systems. Contact your local NRCS office at 568-2246 to set up an appointment to develop a pasture improvement plan or to get additional information.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT JULY 1, 1995 TO JUNE 30, 1996

IM BUDGET

1994-1995 Allocation	\$ 2,500.00
Supplemental	1,400.00
Total Allocation	3,900.00
Commissioner Expenses	1,973.70
Office Supplies and Expenses	1,990.36
Returned to State	\$ 5.94

IIM BUDGET COST-SHARE PROGRAM

1995-1996 Allocation	\$ 34,453.00
Supplemental	9,500.00
Total Allocation	48,863.00
Spent	19,573.73
Obligated	16,436.00
Unobligated	\$ 12,853.27

1994-1995 Allocation	\$ 34,453.00
Supplemental	17,330.50
Total Allocation	51,783.50
Spent	34,453.00
Obligated	17,330.50

REAP PRACTICES

1996 Allocation	\$ 11,538.00
Spent	5,200.57
Obligated	6,066.12
Returned To State	\$ 271.31

REAP FORESTRY/NATIVE GRASSES

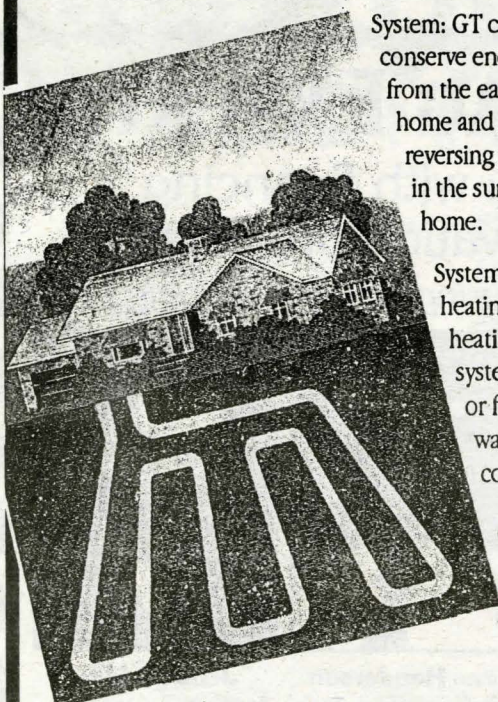
1996 Allocation	\$ 7,820.00
Spent	2,204.13
Obligated	4,809.50
Returned To State	\$ 806.37

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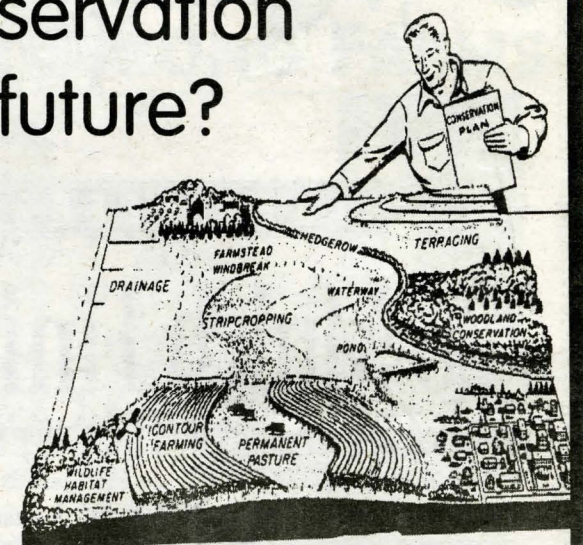
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