

Croxell Seeks Another Term On Conservation Commission

After eight years as an Ida County Soil and Water Conservation commissioner, Holstein's Bob Croxell is in the running, unopposed, for another six-year term.

"I have more time to put into it. I kind of enjoy it," says the retired Holstein farmer of his reason for running again.

He filled out the term of office for another commissioner and then completed one full six-year term.

The native of the Cushing and Correctionville areas has farmed for over 30 years in Griggs Township. He retired three years ago and moved to Holstein two and a half years

ago.

Croxell and his wife, Joan, have two sons, Michael of San Francisco, Calif. and Mark of Vandalia, Ohio.

The soil commissioner says he would like to see the district commission continue with projects to save the soil while also "trying to get more farmers educated as far as conservation practices."

Conservation tillage is one area where education is still needed, Croxell says.

"We've made a lot more progress than a lot of counties in the state," the Holstein resident adds of overall

soil conservation measures.

Croxell, 63, is expected to attend monthly meetings of the commission as well as an annual meeting in Des Moines, a regional meeting and a short course.

"It would be nice if more people would get involved," Croxell says as he anticipates what he would like to see accomplished during his next term of office.

That first involvement can come for Ida County residents when they mark their choice for soil conservation commissioner at the Nov. 6 election.



BOB CROXELL



Ida County Pioneer Record
Ida Grove, Ia. Nov. 1, 1990

Ida's

Conservationists

Keeping a close watch on Ida County's soil and water are, from left, Don Kauffman, district soil and water conservationist, and Rhett Leonard, parks director for the county. Both reside in Ida Grove.

Ida County Soil & Water Conservation District Fiscal 1989 ANNUAL REPORT



COMMISSIONERS: Seated, L-R: George Hartley, Daniel Snyder and Wilbur Rohik. Standing: L-R: Everett Still, Marelle Knudsen and Robert Croxell.

PERSONNEL

COMMISSIONERS

Wilbur Rohik, Chairperson - Ida Grove
Daniel Snyder, Vice-Chairperson - Arthur
Robert Croxell - Holstein
Marelle Knudsen - Ida Grove
Everett Still - Cushing

Lou Collins, Dist Sec/Treas to January 1990
George Hartley, Temporary Dist Sec/Treas
Arils Bahnsen, Dist Sec/Treas, March 1990

STAFF

Donald G. Kauffman, Dist Cons - SCS
Jerry S. Sindt, Soil Cons - SCS
Randall F. Sohm, Soil Cons Tech - SCS
Carl S. Lee, Soil Cons Tech - IDALS
Shawn Dettmann, Soil Cons - SCS
Transferred to Woodbury County, July 1990
Steve Sholly, Soil Cons Tech, part time - SCS
Transferred to Cherokee County, August 1990
Lou Collins, Dist Clerk to January 1990 - IDALS
Mike Jensen, Soil Cons Tech, part time - SCS
Arils Bahnsen, Dist Sec - IDALS

AREA STAFF

David W. Beck, Area Conservationist
Richard W. Hall, Area Engineer
John P. Vogel, Area Resource Conservationist
Melvin D. Brown, Area Soil Scientist
Patricia M. Boltz, Computer Specialist
Margaret L. Walker, Administrative Management Assistant
Judith R. Rathel, Area Secretary



TREE PLANTING PROGRAM TAKES ROOT

Providing financial assistance to encourage farmers to plant trees is a goal of a new state program funded through the local Soil Conservation District Office.

"Trees help prevent soil erosion, protect water, improve air quality and provide wildlife habitat and beauty," Don Kauffman, District Conservationist of the Ida County Soil Conservation Service said. The local Soil Conservation District will provide financial assistance for reforestation project and for windbreaks.

The Resource Enhancement and Protection Program, known as REAP, provides up to 75 percent cost-share assistance for planting of windbreaks, establishing woodlands and native vegetation, or improving tree stands. More than \$1.3 million has been budgeted for reforestation in Iowa in 1990. Ida County has been allocated \$10,415.00.

New tree plantings are the most popular state cost-share program. "Only \$450,000 was available for reforestation assistance last year and demand was so great that the funds were allocated in just two weeks," Kauffman said. "This year we are drawing special attention to the need for more trees in Iowa."

Only farmers who produce crops for commercial use are eligible to receive funds for tree planting. District foresters provide technical assistance to farmers and Soil and Water Conservation districts in selecting appropriate tree types and approving reforestation plans.

Ida County's allocation must be obligated by December 31, 1990, so it is important for interested landowners to sign up by November 30th. Unobligated funds will be returned to the state after January 1st.

ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

IDA COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

JULY 1, 1989 - JUNE 30, 1990		
1M BUDGET (STATE APPROPRIATED)		
1989-90 Allocations		\$3,150.00
Expenditures:		
Commissioners' expense	\$1,347.73	
Office supplies & expense	601.70	
Printing & printed material	345.77	
NACD dues	500.00	
	2,795.20	
Total returned to state	\$354.80	
3M BUDGET (STATE APPROPRIATIONS)		
1988-89 Additional Allocations	18,915.00	
Funds obligated	18,560.45	
Unobligated funds	\$354.55	
1989-90 Allocation	56,899.00	
Funds obligated for conservation	56,899.00	
Unobligated funds	.00	
Additional Allocation	56,806.19	
Funds obligated for conservation	56,875.75	
Overobligated funds	(69.56)	
REAP Allocation	13,095.00	
Funds obligated for windbreaks	10,989.18	
Unobligated funds	2,105.82	

TOTAL STATE ALLOCATIONS		
1973-1990	1,043,650.70	
Returned to date	11,287.07	
Funds spent on conservation practices	\$1,032,363.63	

GENERAL FUND

Cash on hand, July 1, 1989	\$327.05
Receipts:	
Flag sales	\$168.00
Level sales	153.84
Tree Sales	170.00
Equipment sale	25.00
Sales tax collected	12.84
1 M reimbursements	1,745.29
USDA reimbursements	147.45
Miscellaneous reimbursements	16.00
Interest	2,691.66

Transfer from savings	1,500.00	
Close Coop account	2.71	6,632.79
Expenditures:		
Commissioners' expense	197.63	
Office expenses	1,678.81	
Equipment purchase	1,020.00	
Equipment repair	563.04	
Newsletter & annual report	430.10	
Soil stewardship material	153.87	
Prizes & awards	121.80	
Level purchase	495.00	
Sales tax paid	12.42	
Tree purchase	164.00	
Dues/publications	1,566.95	6,423.62
Cash on hand, June 30, 1990		\$536.22
HiFi Account		\$2,045.04
Time Certificates		\$37,300.00

WATERSHED MAINTENANCE FUND

(Held in trust by the District for maintenance of watershed structures)

Cash on hand, July 1, 1989	\$697.63
Receipts:	
Interest	\$4,122.65
Maintenance payments	1,429.40
Expenditures:	
Office expense	30.00
Watershed repair	1,030.79
Transfer to savings	4,000.00
Cash on hand, June 30, 1990	\$1,188.89
HiFi Account	\$17,302.16
Time Certificate	37,000.00
Money Market Certificates	22,000.00

1990 FISCAL YEAR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

INDIVIDUAL FARMER CONTACTS	549
FARMERS APPLYING PRACTICES	310
TERRACE CONTRACTS COMPLETED	150
FSA PLANS COMPLETED	8,491 Acres
LAND TREATED OR BENEFITED	12,393 Acres
CONTOUR FARMING	18,742 Acres
TERRACES	149.2 Miles

Ida Lakes Receive Protection

Crawford Creek Lake's future should be more certain, thanks to a dam which has been constructed just south of the lake to prevent siltation of the recreational lake.

Funding for the dam, constructed recently on property owned by Lou Dale Sales of Battle Creek, comes from a voluntary cost-share lakes program of the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship.

Wilbur Rohlk, chairman of the Soil and Water Conservation Commission, said the funds will be used to cost-share conservation practices directly above both Crawford Creek Lake and Moorehead Lake in Ida County.

Each area will receive a maximum of \$26,606 each of two years for the specific goal of lake protection.

The Department of Natural Resources designs the siltation ponds. Larry Wallace of Battle Creek built the dam south of Crawford Creek.

The major purpose of



PROTECTOR -- A dam constructed south of Crawford Creek Lake serves as a protector against siltation of the lake. The small pond

which has formed is on property owned by Lou Dale Sales of Battle Creek. Sales also installed terraces on the land adjacent to the lake.

Crawford Creek's new sister pond is to intercept sediment from cropland. Because the pond is too small for stocking and is located on private land, it will not be open for public use.

Don Kauffman, district

soil and water conservationist, said work also will be done at the entrance to Crawford Creek Park east of the road to prevent siltation. He noted that the new standing pond south of Crawford Creek Lake will improve the

water table in the area.

This fall, work is planned for the north and east sides of Moorehead Lake.

Landowners in both areas are building terraces and water and sediment control

basins. "We are very pleased with the cooperation we are getting from the landowners," Rohlk said. "The practices installed will certainly help prevent silt deposition in the lakes and extend their life considerably."



CAT WORK -- Bob Ruser of Ida Grove and Sonny Krambeck of Galva work east of Ida Grove

to build terraces. This year's fall weather has brought ideal conditions for terrace work.

Keep Up
Your Efforts,
Ida Soil
Conservationists!

Farmers Gear Up For FSA Compliance

Indian summer weather means the big cats are on the move in Ida County, not for Halloween but for soil stewardship.

A sincere effort to meet compliance requirements of the Food Security Act of 1985 is much in evidence in Ida County, according to Don Kauffman, district conservationist for the Soil Conservation Service in Ida Grove.

Earth-moving contractors are taking advantage of ideal fall weather by working 60 to 75 hours per week to build terraces on Ida County farms. Currently, 12 contractors are operating 25 to 30 earth-moving machines to build terraces.

Terraces are one of a number of conservation practices needed to reduce soil losses to acceptable levels on highly erodible land in Ida County by Jan. 1, 1995. Ida County has 196,000 acres classified as highly erodible. Jan. 1, 1995 is the deadline for compliance established by the Food Security Act of 1985.

"At the present rate of construction, we can theoretically meet compliance requirements of the Food Security Act (FSA) by Jan. 1, 1995," Kauffman said. "I emphasize 'theoretically,' since there are many factors that will influence the rate of implementation."

The Feed Grain program is a major factor influencing compliance. If the economic benefit of the Feed Grain Program is reduced to a point of no economic advantage, farmers may abandon FSA compliance. Eligibility for Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) storage loans, Federal Crop Insurance and federal disaster payments are also potential benefits farmers would forego if they choose not to comply with FSA, Kauffman noted.

Continued availability of cost-share assistance to build terraces will be a major fac-

tor. Presently, Ida County farmers receive approximately \$400,000 annually from state and federal sources to build 150 miles of terraces which cost \$800,000.

Still other factors influencing the implementation are crop yields and drought. Excellent yields in Western Iowa during recent years have contributed much to a strong recovery of the farm economy. Implementation will continue as long as Ida County farmers get good yields and make money.

According to Kauffman, these are the factors that will determine the degree of compliance with the Food Security Act of 1985.

"The next four years will definitely be an interesting challenge," he said.

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Dec 1: Date For Tax Credits

Some Ida County farmers have until Saturday, Dec. 1, to apply for new property tax credits approved this year by the Iowa legislature, according to Ron Parker, Ida County Farm Bureau action committee chairman.

The legislature, in approving property tax relief, allowed tax credits on family farms, homestead credits for family farm corporations and a property tax credit-reimbursement.

Applications for the cred-

its, which are funded by the state, are available at the county assessor's office. Due to the complexity of the application process, persons should call the Ida County assessor's office at 364-3622 for an appointment.

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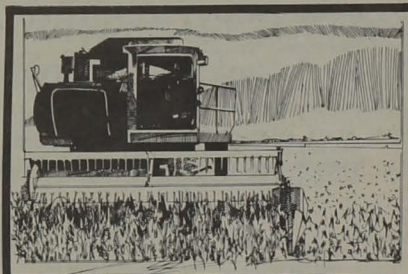
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Windbreak Winners Make Conservation A Way Of Life

If she looks around at all the trees at the Ehlers' Grant Township farm, Cathy Ehler can almost imagine she is back in her native Arkansas.

"I miss the trees so much from Arkansas," she says. But through the years, the Ehlers have planted nearly 100 trees around their farm home, not counting a windbreak which won them an award.

Cathy and her husband, Orlan, live on a hill in Section 19 of Grant, where their tree-planting efforts show for miles around. Recently, they received the Ida County windbreak award from the Ida Soil and Water Conservation Service.

Their windbreak not only has been a haven for birds, squirrels and deer and a protector for their farm yards, but it also has been a source of Christmas trees for the Ehlers each year.

Christmas trees were responsible for the addition of the windbreak. Chester Burton, who resides five miles west of the Ehlers, was selling Christmas trees, and the Ehlers would go there to select a tree. "That's what started us thinking about the windbreak," Cathy says. "We would stand behind his trees, and there wouldn't be any wind blowing."

In 1980, the Ehlers decided to plant a windbreak west of the house. Today, the windbreak contains approximately 200 trees along with honeylocust. There are scotch pine, Austrian Pine, white pine, Montana fir and Eastern red cedar. Some of the trees came from Chester Burton, and some of the Ponderosa pine came from Lester Burton of Ida Grove.

The Ehlers double-planted one row of trees so they could have a source of Christmas trees.

Orlan, who had been feeding cattle, planted the windbreak at a southwesterly angle to protect the feeding area. "Before that, it took a day to scoop the snow before we could feed anything," the windbreak definitely changed that, he says.

The Ehlers moved to their farm on Feb. 18, 1953 after being married in the fall of 1952. The first year they were hailed out. They recall being dried out a few years.

Orlan is now in his fourth year of retirement. They rent their 330-acre farm to Cordell Knudsen.

Orlan grew up two miles to the southeast on a farm; Cathy is from Arkadelphia. She has taught in Arkansas, Oklahoma and Iowa. Beginning in 1947, she began teaching home economics and general science in Schleswig. She was a lab technician at Anderson-Erickson in Des Moines before becoming a farm wife in Ida County.

High on the Grant Township hill, the Ehlers reside in a remodeled home which was built in 1916. They have fed cattle, raised hogs and chickens and milked a few cows through the years. Although their livestock has changed, their concern for conservation has remained steady.

Orlan says conservation of the land and water has been especially important on the hill farm since little water drains from other areas. "One reason we started contouring and conserving water was that this part of the farm sits right on top of a hill.... My best bet was to conserve our own water that the good Lord gave us."

The first year on the Grant farm, he farmed the land as it was. Soon, he began contour farming. In 1954, he put in 10,000 feet of terraces. Tiling of the valleys followed. A dam and pond also became a part of the conservation picture.

"Orlan has spent many hours building the soil," Cathy says of her husband's conservation bent. "It needed it when we got here. It needed a lot of tender loving



WINDBREAK WINNERS -- Orlan and Cathy Ehler of Ida County's Grant Township stand in front of their winning windbreak, which contains approximately 200 trees.

care." After living in Iowa for more years than in Arkansas, Cathy says Iowa soil feels like home, especially on the hill farm. "We're just about as safe as Noah was," she laughs.

Orlan Ehler grew up along the Soldier River. "I remember going to some meetings with my father when conservationists were trying to get farmers started on conservation." That was back in the late 30's.

The effort at good conservation continues. The Ehlers did terracing in the fall of 1986 and this past spring. Each year, the Arbor

Foundation sends the Ehlers 10 seedlings to plant. Just prior to retirement, Ehler began no till minimum farming.

Cathy insists her husband is fond of "anything that grows" outside.

The Ehlers have a son, Paul, of Hutchinson, Kans. and a daughter, Ann Lohmeier, of Ankeny.

Four grandsons and one granddaughter, ranging in age from 1 to 10 years, delight in a visit to the Ida County farm where trees and other conservation measures have become a way of life for their grandparents.



ANGLE OF PROTECTION -- A windbreak which is planted at a southwesterly angle offers protection for the farm of Orlan and Cathy Ehler.

'Orlan has spent many hours building the soil.'

-- Cathy Ehler

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