

Hardin Producers Meeting

6-Hardin County Index, Friday, March 31, 1995

Recognized For SCS Service

Knutson, Walters

GARY L. HILLMER
District Conservationist

I want to take this opportunity to thank a couple of farmers in our community - Caleb Knutson of Radcliffe and Gary Walters of New Providence - for their many years of public service.

These gentlemen have given of themselves to assist our county producers. As conservation leaders they have helped shape and guide a soil and water conservation program that promotes responsible and reasonable resource management. Hardin county farmers apply a very strong land ethic in their operations.

As Gary and Caleb end a 20 year plus position on the district board, Mark Bal-

vanz of Eldora and Mark Seward of New Providence are beginning. Welcome and thanks for accepting the call to service.

The district board is dedicated to assisting the public over and above federal mandates. However, we need public input. I would ask the citizens of Hardin county to talk to any one of the district commissioners or field office staff members. Tell us what you would like to see in the soil and water conservation arena.

When early conservation leaders first envisioned local conservation districts, it was to satisfy the needs of local citizens by their own people. As a board and field office staff, we are ready, willing and able. Please help us.

Improved Profitability

Goal Of Pine Creek Water Quality Project

ROGER WOLF
Environmental Specialist

Beginning in the fall of 1993, twenty-eight farmers agreed to begin the individual planning process for the development of comprehensive farm/site specific Water Quality Resource Management Plans (WQMP).

Through the planning process, each WQMP was designed with input from the farm owner and operators. Also, on-site visual walk-overs were made. The walk-overs were done to evaluate current physical characteristics and identify the

resources available to work with.

The WQMP process, from a project planner's standpoint, has the primary objective of protecting the water resource base by reducing pollutant loadings. Improvements in the water resource begin when problems have been identified and corrective solutions are implemented. From a farmer's standpoint, the WQMP is a schedule and selection of guiding ideas or practices to not only protect the resource base but also to maintain and hopefully improve the profitability of their farming operation.

Multi-Species Riparian

Buffer Strips Functional

MARK BALVANZ
Commissioner

Last August, I had an opportunity to visit a multi-species riparian buffer strip located on Bear Creek in Story county. The twilight tour started by showing pictures taken in March, 1990.

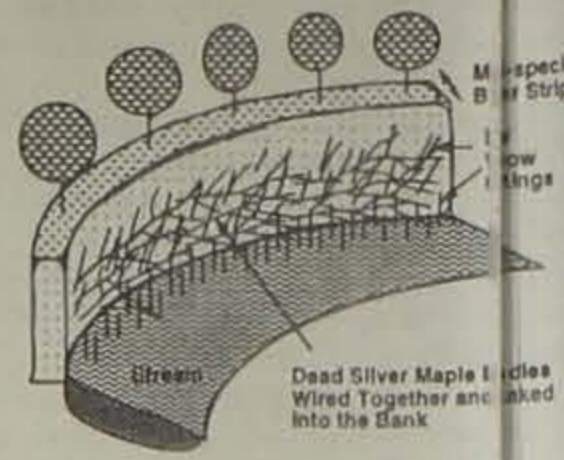
These pictures showed an over-grazed blue grass pasture with a few trees, mostly dying, and sluffing creek banks, some that had tried to be repaired with rip-rap. There were also eroded gullies leading to the adjacent cropland.

What I saw that evening was a beautiful multi-species buffer strip. Starting from the stream bank were five rows of trees, followed by two rows of shrubs, then a strip of switchgrass.

The first zone (trees) consisted of one-three rows of fast growing riparian species such as willow, cottonwood, hybrid poplar and green ash. The next two rows were more moderate growth species such as hackberry, hickory, white oak and pin oak.

Zone two (shrubs) also showed a mixture of species. They included chokecherry, ninebark, redosier, gray dogwood. Species are selected for their specific wildlife benefit and adaptability to different sites.

Zone three (grass) functions to dissipate the surface runoff, trap sediment and ag chemicals. Switchgrass was used because of its dense cover and stiff stems. Others such as Indian grass and big or little blue stem could be used along with



switchgrass. The final option would be to stabilize the actively cutting streambank using a combination of willow posts and anchored dead tree revetments. Cost estimate to install a buffer strip is \$10-400 per acre.

Seeing this buffer strip nearing the end of the fifth growing season showed how beautiful and functional it can be. One more added benefit would be to harvest the grass and trees.

This riparian buffer strip research is being conducted by the Iowa State University Agroforestry Research Team: Dick Schultz, Joe, Colletti and Tom Ishenhart.

With some luck this spring a couple of these buffer strips will be started in the Pine Creek area. If you have more interest, the Natural Resource Conservation Service office in Eldora has publications on how to design and make a multi-species riparian buffer strip.

Recognize 217 Hardin County Farmers

Two hundred seventeen farmers from Hardin county were publicly thanked for their soil and water conservation efforts in a first-of-its-kind effort. These farmers have made substantial progress in caring for our soil and water. It was time to say thank you.

You can see the results as you drive across the county. The use of heavy crop residue, newly seeded waterways, field borders, strips of grass and roadside management practices help prevent erosion and improve the land.

The Hardin County Soil and Water Conservation District commissioners and staff hosted a "conservation appreciation event" in December. Lee Kline, WHO radio farm director, was the keynote speaker. Staff and commissioners prepared and served an omelet brunch to those in attendance.

Those selected to be honored were nominated by commissioners and county farm organizations. The honorees were:

George Ackles, James Amundson, Lee Amundson, Velma Arnold, Dale Bahr, Harold Bahr, Jim Bahr, Robert Bahr, Jeanette Baker, Margaret Lundy Baker, Mike Baltes (Farm Manager), Don Balvanz Farms, Andy Balvanz, Mark Balvanz, Scott Balvanz, Steve Balvanz, Jim Bartling, Lloyd Bates, Don Beach, Ed Bear, Loyd & Rexine Beecher, Paul Binder, Bob Blome, Robert & Roberta Boeke, Linn Bollinger (LinMar Farms), Mike Bostrom, John Bradley.

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Louise Cobb, Bryce Coburn, Leland Coburn, Kim Collins, Frank Cook, Ken Cook, Lisle Cook, Rick Cook, Robert Cook, Bob Crosser, Curt Crosser, Gary Crosser, Richard Crosser.

Robert DeNeui, Leota DeVries, Diamond Brothers, Tony Doolaard, Gordon & Mary Dreier, Gene Dubberke, Lloyd Eckhoff, Dennis Eller, Kent Eller, Kurt Eller, Elvern Ellwood, Roger Englekes (Manager), Dennis Faris, Kim Faris, Jon Faust, Curt Ferris, David Fischer, George A. Folkerts, Bill Follett, Darrell Freese, Steve Frerichs, Wayne Frerichs, Howard Frey (in honor of), Dennis Friest, Ronald Galloway, Laverne Gast, Bill Gelhaus, John Gilbert, William Gilbert.

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Jessie Lu Hopkins, Gary Houck, Calvin Hyland, John Jaspers (Manager),

Jeff Jeske, Mark Jeske, Robert Jeske, Allen Johnson - Johnson Ag Farms, Marcella Jordening Trust, Allen Kadolph, Georgia Keller (in honor of), Duane Klosterman, Caleb Knutson, Kenneth Kramer, Norm Kulow, Don Kumrow, Dale Landt, Rick Landt, Steve Landt, Dale Lauenstein, Brian Lauterbach, Charles Lawler, Marty Lawler.

Rex Lawler, Richard Lawler, Bill Lawless, Dale Lawless, Harry Lawless, Harold Lloyd, David Lloyd, Marvin Luiken, John Lundy (Elco, Inc.), Delmar Magnuson, David Mannetter, Marvin Maronn, Bob Martin, David Martin, Jim Martin, Jon Martin, Ralph Martin, Wallace Martin (in honor of), Mike McCartney, Willard (Butch) McCartney, David McClellan, Ray McDowell, Meckley Farm Corporation, Dennis Meints, Larry Meints, Richard Meyer, David Minter.

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Salute Appreciation Event Donors

Thank You

The Hardin County Soil and Water District commissioners and staff would like to offer a special thank you to the following organizations, businesses and individuals who donated funds, door prizes and time to sponsor the "Conservation Appreciation Event" recognizing Hardin County conservation producers.

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Marvin Veld



Two hundred seventeen persons from Hardin county were recognized for their soil and water conservation efforts during a Conservation Appreciation Event hosted by the Hardin County Soil and Water Conservation District commissioners last December.



During the appreciation program, hand crafted pewter ornaments sculptured by internationally-known pewter artist Michael Ricker were presented to the honored farm cooperators. In left photo, Agnes Mary Oppold receives an ornament on behalf of her late husband, Melvin Oppold, from Commissioner Jim Martin. And, at right, Harry Lawless (seated) is presented his award by Commissioner Gary Walters.

We Can Be Thankful!

GARY D. WALTERS
Past Commissioner Chairman

Many thanks to the voters that allowed me to be their commissioner of the Hardin County Soil and Water Conservation District for the last 20 years. It has been a rewarding experience in the educational scope as well as personal friendships acquired during those years locally and state-wide.

Over the years, many talented and conscientious NRCS and DSC staff members have done their best implementing federal, state and county soil and water conservation programs along with the commissioners. Their technical expertise made it a privilege for the commissioners to approve the plans put before them at our monthly and many special meetings.

Natural Resource Conservation Service Change In Focus

CARROLL J. HOBSON
Commissioner

There have been many rewards in the nearly 30 years I've worked with soil and water conservation. Among the finest rewards was meeting so many high quality people and seeing miles and miles of terraces built in this county, particularly around the Pine Lakes. If terraces are maintained they will last a long time.

Many other practices like grassed waterways, full flow structures, concrete outlets, ponds and several others are all work to be proud of. Erosion tests made by the Agricultural Resource Service in the 1960's and 70's on the Ray McDowell farm were fundamental research made available for all time in colleges around the United States. I am especially proud of that work.

The Soil Conservation Service, which once did everything they could to help farmers save soil and water, are no longer the Soil Conservation Service. They are now the Natural Resource Conservation Service headed by Paul Johnson from northeastern Iowa. Mr. Johnson has long been associated with environmental, biological and preservation interests. His organization reflects his views.

Frankly, I liked the Soil Conservation

Service much better. I think a substantial turnover in soil commissioner in the state of Iowa is apparent. Not every soil commissioner can adjust from being a farmer friendly helper to a bureaucrat intent on finding new wetlands, laws in farm relations, and recommendations to withhold farm program payments, etc., which would also destroy farmer's abilities to buy crop insurance. The farm family livelihood can be put at risk.

Instead of withdrawing, I have determined to work with what we have in hopes to improve it. I hope we can improve staff work as well as our relations with farmers. I intend that we do our best, both staff and soil commissioners, to improve office efficiency, to exercise reasonable tolerance and if all else fails, to complain to Washington, D.C., domain of Mr. Johnson, where there is a chance to make our weight felt.

Natural Resource Conservation officials and staff are trying to do what they are told to do, which is not always easy. Superimposed over all these problems are the various personalities of both staff and farmers; both of them overstressed at times. I will look forward in 1995 to hearing compliments for our soil and water conservation district and honest complaints as well.

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