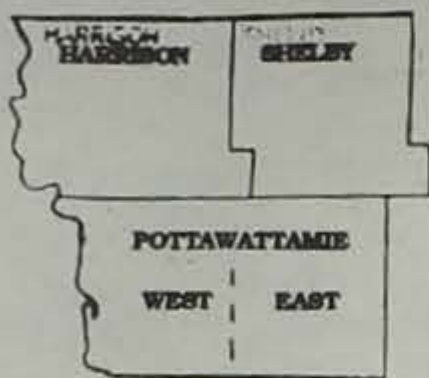




Quad-District Conservation News



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Volume 4
Issue 4

Winter
1999-2000



Mel and Jacquie Andersen in their beautiful prairie

Andersens enjoy success of native prairie stand

by Joyce Bohnker

When the first covered wagons begin crossing Iowa, those pioneers saw a tall grass prairie stretching as far as their eyes could see. There were no fields of corn and soybeans or even pastures with brome and alfalfa.

They saw warm season grasses and wildflowers. Then of course they plowed them all up and planted corn. It was an economic necessity that no one disputes. But recently there has been movement to both preserve the few remaining acres of native prairie left and to reestablish some of the native grasses in road ditches and on Conservation Reserve Program acres.

It is not always easy to reestablish what is gone. Some farmers have become discouraged with efforts to keep the weeds down on those acres. They prefer the easier, quicker bromes and other cool season grasses.

But anyone who thinks it isn't possible to get a good stand of native grasses only needs to look at Mel Andersen's CRP acres near Elk Horn to know that it can indeed be done.

Andersen planted his seven acres of CRP only a scant 15 months previous to the photo at right. He planted a big bluestem and Indian grass mix and then endured all of the frustrations known to anyone who worked with native grasses.

"I killed the brome with roundup before I planted it on May 12 last year. We thought we had a

good kill, but it came back last fall. It bothered me immensely even though I was told it was one of the better first year stands in the county."

Then in the spring he discovered thistles coming on thick and strong. "I didn't want anyone to see it the way it was then," he said. "But I sprayed for thistles and the natives came through. Now I'm just really pleased with the way it looks."

The way it looks is tall, chest high in most places and headed out in the rich hues of the natives. The bluish cast as you look up the hill attests to the strong presence of big bluestem. The deep golden stems with the seed heads reaching toward the blue sky testifies to the good growth of Indian Grass.

Mel and Jacquie Andersen have a 50 acre farm near Elk Horn on the edge of Shelby County. Andersen has been a hay broker for many years. He originally grew all his own hay, but as his children grew up and left home he found himself with a labor shortage and has cut back a little bit.

Although he is putting up less hay himself these days, he is still the hay supplier for the Henry Doorly Zoo in Omaha, a client he has served since 1979, and has many other clients he serves as broker.

It is fitting that one of his clients is the zoo. Andersen has a long-standing interest in wildlife and is currently serving on the Shelby County Conserva-

tion Board.

As he considered his CRP bid, he knew he wanted to put it in native grasses because it serves the wildlife so well. "I was really concerned, as everyone is, that it would do well. That seed costs a lot of money. You have to want it to be successful."

As part of his bid, Andersen promised to plant his CRP acres to native grasses and did not request cost-share.

Even when he wasn't 100 percent positive of the success of his big blue-Indian grass patch, he was ready to try more. This spring he seeded down a filter strip along his stream to switchgrass, another warm season native.

He did get cost-share on the switchgrass, but felt he needed more seeding than the minimum, so he added extra. The next day a downpour dropped five and one-half inches of rain on the newly-seeded plot. "I didn't know how much went downstream, so I purchased some more seed and planted it all again just to be sure," Andersen said.

The Andersens have long been conservation-minded doing what they can for the land. They planted 450 evergreens when they moved to their acreage in 1978.

"We really enjoy the birds we see out here," he said. "We've counted more than 45 different species. That's the joy of living in the country."

(continued on page 16)

Farewell, but not goodbye!

It is with mixed feelings that I step down as editor/producer of the Quad-District Conservation News. The news was my baby! I gave it birth, and nursed it through its growing pains. I experienced all the ups and downs, the frustrations, the pleasure and the pain of bringing my "offspring" to the point where I felt it could go on without me. I want to thank each staff member in the four field offices for their cooperation. We not only had a working relationship, but I came to count each one as a friend. I hope they feel the same about me, in spite of my constant nagging about deadlines! I especially want to thank Konda Slagle, my sidekick and expert proofreader, who supported me in so many ways, and Russ Kurth, who always came through with the right solution at the right time. Last but not least, I wish to thank all the wonderful, dedicated people who allowed me to tell their stories, and touched my life in so many inspirational ways. It has been a pleasure and a privilege, but the time has come to pass the torch. I have not met the new editor, but I trust the news will continue in capable hands. I'll still be around, be the good Lord willing ... just not as much. That is why I am saying 'farewell, but not goodbye'. I would like to leave you with this thought: Yesterday is history, tomorrow a mystery, but today is a gift. That is why it is called the present. Best wishes, always, and make the most of your todays. They pass by so quickly!

Lou Waite

Engineer believes in conservation

by Joyce Bohnker

Everyone knows that good conservation preserves topsoil losses and benefits farmers. But it also helps taxpayers in the here and now. Dan Ahart, Shelby County Engineer, can attest to that fact.

As engineer, Ahart is responsible for thousands of miles of roads and road ditches in Shelby County. He has seen the benefits good conservation can have. The engineer's office has a staff of 28 to 32 people, including office and field staff. "But we can never get caught up in cleaning ditches," Ahart said. "It's a constant battle. Good conservation helps us tremendously."

Ahart is an Iowa native. He grew up in Denison and his parents were farmers, but like many teenagers, he didn't take much of an interest in the mechanics of what his folks did. He admits he did the chores required of him and thought about living in the big city.

He left Denison for college and thought he'd never look back. He was wrong. He burned out on big cities and looked to move back to his hometown. He was hired as a consultant for a nationwide engineering firm and was based in Denison, but he

was spending a lot of his time on the road, traveling to other communities. When the position in Shelby County came up, Ahart was ready to stay put for a while. He has held the position since 1976.

"It's been a real education for me. Road building and farming wasn't a part of what I did before. You really gain an appreciation for what Mother Nature can do to change the earth," he said.

He also said he has gained an appreciation for how good conservation practices can slow down nature's changes.

He said he sees the positive effects of terracing in the road ditches. "You see a lot less sediment in the road ditches on those farms that have been terraced," he said.

When the ditches fill up, the county has to come dig them out or face seeing the water making big cutbacks into the roads. Every year they set priorities to see to the worst situations, but they never can get to every ditch that should be done.

The dirt is dug out of ditches and used as fill around bridges, culverts or cattle lots. "The dirt out of the ditches is usually the farmer's best dirt. A lot of the

(Continued on page 2)

Tillage survey asks 'why stop no-tilling?'

We need your help. No-till and high residue are a big part of conservation compliance. When traveling through our counties we often see more tillage than we did two years ago.

A conservation tillage survey was just completed asking NRCS District Conservationists, State Environmental Specialists and Conservation District Commissioners why producers have gone away from no-till and also reasons for staying with no-till.

Please look over the reasons and when you are in the NRCS office, tell us your thoughts on the pros and cons of no-till and high residue systems.

Some possible reasons for moving away from no-till include:

- *Two successive springs of cool, wet soils.
- *Light tillage and field cultivations are cheaper than herbicides.
- *Nice fall weather has encouraged more and earlier tillage.
- *Yields are more consistent.
- *Light spring tillage has given better stands, allowed earlier planting and apparently resulted in greater yields.
- *Genetically altered corn varieties are not accepted by large grain companies like Cargill and Continental.
- *Reduced yield.
- *Ridge till farmers could not

use grain carts to catch corn.

*Weed control was difficult with existing herbicides.

*Too much corn residue to plant beans into.

*Because RUSLE generally estimates soil erosion at lower levels than USLE, farmers are able to move away from no-till to reduced till and still have acceptable soil loss levels.

*Influence of implement dealers promoting tillage.

*Fewer disease problems.

*Nitrogen placement.

*Heavy rains caused rilling that required field leveling.

*Tradition favors more conventional tillage.

*Other farmers don't like how it looks.

*Fertilizer application is easier.

*White mold is in corn.

*Rented land changing hands.

*Ground is too rough to custom combine.

*Producers not willing to invest the time to learn the new system.

*Custom drill operators not available.

*Fewer drill teeth in compliance.

*Difficult to incorporate manure and maintain residue levels.

*Compaction.

*Residue is hard on machinery. Reasons for staying with no-till may include:

*Time savings, especially for

producers working another job or farming larger than normal acres.

*More potential for profit.

*Roundup Ready beans made weed control easier.

*To be in compliance.

*Comparable or better yields.

*Better post-plant herbicides.

*Roundup Ready corn provides clean seedbed and clean-up of weeds prior to canopy.

*Less erosion.

*Improved soil moisture.

*No-till drills are very effecting in planting beans into corn residue.

*Easy way to meet compliance.

*Lower machinery cost.

*Improved soil quality.

Quad-District Quarterly Conservation News

715 N Second Ave.
Logan, IA 51546
Joyce Bohnker, Editor
712-644-2210
FAX 712-644-3247
Published four
times yearly
USPS No. 170



Dan Ahart, Shelby County Engineer studies a road map

Engineer cooperates with NRCS

(Continued from page 1)

time it's just beautiful black dirt that doesn't work nearly as well for fill as it does for growing crops," he said.

He sees the biggest impact when farmers use tile lines to drain a wet area, but don't back it up with good conservation. He believes those farmers are shooting themselves in the foot, losing more than they gain.

Ahart's office is not directly connected to the Natural Resources Conservation Service, but there are projects that the two collaborate on.

Two of the areas where he works closely with the NRCS

are watershed projects and the Hungry Canyons project.

He said watershed projects have a big impact on his job.

"When you have dams and structures on private property and you can replace bridges with culverts you're saving a lot of money."

He added, "Culverts, compared to bridges, can cut costs by more than half. We are always maintaining bridges, but a lot of time you don't have to do anything to a culvert for more than 50 years."

Watersheds are an ongoing project and Ahart believes the work is very worthwhile. He is happy to cooperate with the NRCS to accomplish what needs to be done.

The engineer's office and the NRCS are also working together on the Hungry Canyons project. Hungry Canyons is a stream bank stabilization project designed primarily to prevent severe cutbacks around bridges caused by water erosion.

The problem he said is that each Hungry Canyons structure can cost upwards of \$100,000. The cost can be justified to save a bridge, but it doesn't help farmers who are seeing acres of land eroded away by those same streams and rivers.

The group decided to use the interest money from the funds set aside for the larger structures to encourage farmers to come up with innovative solutions to their erosion problems. "We have about \$105,000 available to use as cost share for farmers interested in developing innovative, low cost measures to stop bank erosion."

He said the NRCS is looking for landowners who might be interested. The cost-share would be 25 percent paid by the landowner, the rest with grant money for projects up to \$14,000. He said some suggestions involve using concrete blocks, cattle panels and old tires.

He said anyone interested should contact the NRCS office.

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Neal Smith is a banker in Harlan, but also keeps cattle and manages his native prairie CRP

Banker Smith helps nature with native prairie CRP plot

by Joyce Bohnker

Neal Smith is a banker by profession and a cattleman as a hobby. Now he is branching into a new venture- native prairie provider.

Smith lives north of Walnut and is vice president of the Harlan National Bank. He also keeps about 35 head of purebred Angus cows that he sells for breeding stock.

"We have the cows because we like them. It's been a family project. When the kids were younger, they showed heifers as 4-H projects," he said.

The small farm he lives on is kept for pasture. The few acres of crop ground are rented out. Then his wife, Ardythe, inherited some land from her father a couple of years ago. As the couple searched for the best options for the farm, the renter suggested some of it might be better off as Conservation Reserve Program acres (CRP).

The Smiths decided to bid 18 and one half acres into the program. Because native prairie stands receive extra points, he decided to look into the warm season grasses.

He also liked the idea of natives. "I was raised on a farm in North Central Nebraska. There are still some natives there and I was fascinated by the potential native grasses have for this area."

Although Smith isn't a hunter himself, his son is, and he was also attracted to native prairie grasses by their potential for wildlife. "It's designed to conserve soil and be a wildlife habitat. A stream runs close to the CRP acres, so I included a 150 foot wide corridor to the water to enhance the wildlife potential," he said.

The CRP acres also include a shrub plot and a food plot to enhance wildlife. The one-half acre food plot is planted annually and left for the wildlife. This year he planted sorghum.

The shrub plot is a mixture of cedars, lilac, nanking cherry and dogwood. The lack of really tall trees aids the smaller wildlife by being less attractive to hawks.

In addition to big bluestem, little bluestem and Indian grass natives, he planted some red clover and alsike clover to provide feed for the smaller song birds and small rodents.

Smith was ready to take on the additional challenge of establish-

"I was fascinated by the potential native grasses have for this area."

ing native prairie grasses. He did most of the ground preparation himself, including spraying it with round-up before the seeding.

"The round-up took care of the broadleaves, I've had very few of those," he said. "The main weed problem this summer has been foxtail. I should have clipped it one more time, but the native grasses are in it."

Smith would have liked to have ordered some Plateau, a new herbicide, safe to use on native grass plants. "I wasn't able to get any this year, but I hope to do it next year. That will be my main management practice next year. If I can get it, I'll bear the cost and do it."

The native grasses are doing best on the thin ground and Smith is confident they will survive the winter and come back strong and healthy for a good stand next spring.

The Smiths have three children, Andrea, Clint and Regina. Andrea is married and lives in Minneapolis where she is youth minister at a Lutheran Church. Regina is a sophomore at Wayne State College.

Clint is a vocational agriculture teacher at Elk Horn-Kimballton and lives at home. He is also the hunter and was disturbed when his dad took out a waterway he often hunted. Now he is waiting for the wildlife to move into the new CRP ground.

"We will control the hunting on the area," Smith said. "We're hoping it will be an excellent nesting area and a managed wildlife plot. When that area is well-established it should be 18 acres of pheasant heaven."

Continuous CRP buffers work to filter runoff

Up to 80 percent of the sediment and 90 percent of the nitrate runoff may be trapped in a buffer strip.

"When combined with conservation tillage and nutrient and pest management, buffers can all but eliminate serious water pollution and related environmental problems from farms," Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman

For certain high-priority conservation practices yielding highly desirable environmental benefits, farmers and ranchers may sign up at any time, without waiting for an announced sign-up period.

Continuous sign-up allows management flexibility in implementing certain special conservation practices on cropland. These are designed to achieve significant environmental benefits, giving participants a chance to help protect and enhance wildlife habitat, improve air quality, and improve the condition of America's waterway.

Unlike the general CRP program, sign-up for these special practices is open continuously. Provided certain eligibility requirements are met, acreage is automatically accepted into the program at a per-acre rental rate not to exceed local prevailing rental rates.

Although, some buffer options can receive a 20 percent bonus because of their environmental sensitivity.

Filter Strips

Areas of grass, legumes, and other non-woody vegetation that filter runoff and waste water by trapping sediment, pesticides, organic matter, and other pollutants.

Filter strips are planted to provide a buffer between containment sources and water.

Contour Buffer Strips

Are strips of grass alternated with cultivated strips farmed on the contour. Their purpose is to reduce sheet and rill erosion, thus reducing the movement of sediment, nutrients and chemicals.

They can provide cover for nesting and wildlife.

Riparian Buffers

Areas of trees and/or shrubs next to ponds, lakes, and streams that filter out pollutants from runoff as well as providing shade for fish and other wildlife. The vegetation's natural litter also provides food and shelter for valuable wildlife.

Riparian buffers are planted so that surface and subsurface runoff must filter through them

before it reaches a pond, lake, or stream. They can also be placed next to wetlands, such as marshy or swampy areas.

Shelterbelts, Field Windbreaks, and Living Snow Fences

Belts of trees or shrubs planted in single or multiple rows. Such tree rows and hedges reduce wind erosion, improve air quality, protect growing plants, and provide food, shelter and breeding territory for wildlife.

They can also shelter structures and livestock. Field windbreaks prevent wind erosion. Living snow fences provide similar benefits, but are specifically located to manage snow. They can significantly reduce the costs of clearing snow from public highways and improve public safety.

Grass Waterways

Channels, either natural or constructed, that are planted with suitable vegetation to

protect soil from erosion. Grass waterways can help heal gullies and washouts, and greatly reduce loss of topsoil and the sedimentation of streams, ponds, and lakes.

Attractive rental rates are offered based on soil types. To be eligible the land entered must have been farmed two out of the last five years based on FSA records. Pastureland adjacent to streams is also eligible but must be planted to trees and the maximum rental rate is \$80 an acre per year.

Cost-share is also available for seedbed preparation, planting and seed.

To obtain more information about the continuous CRP, stop at your local NRCS office. They can explain the program and answer specific questions.

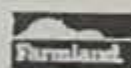
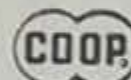


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LOST Funds used to repair dam damaged by wind

by Joyce Bohner

The sound of waves lapping on shore is one of the most peaceful, relaxing sounds in nature. There are even tape recordings available to simulate wave action and help soothe infants and adults to sleep.

But those same peaceful waves lapping at the banks of a dam over the years can cause untold damage and threaten the usefulness of the structure. That is what is happening to one watershed structure in East Pottawattamie County and Michelle Zimmerman is out to save it.

Zimmerman is the County Resource Planner for the Natural Resources Conservation Service in East Pott. About a year ago she was out inspecting dam sites and came across Site 16 in the Bee Jay Watershed. The pond, designed in 1977 and built shortly thereafter, sits on an unusually high piece of ground for a dam. The result is that wind easily reaches the water and sends endless ripples across its blue expanse, soothing for the passerby to sit on the bank in the sunshine and listen to, but deadly to the earthen structure of the dam itself.

"Left alone it would keep breaking off, eroding away the dam's structure," Zimmerman said. The structures are designed for a 30 year life-span. But the function they serve is needed for a longer time.

The Bee Jay Watershed protects land and bridges downstream and it has not outlived its usefulness.

District Conservationist Greg

Mathis said the county has no funds set aside for the maintenance and repair of watershed structures. However the East Pott. NRCS office does receive a share of the local option sales tax (LOST.) Mathis and Zimmerman decided to see if those LOST funds could be used to help repair the dam.

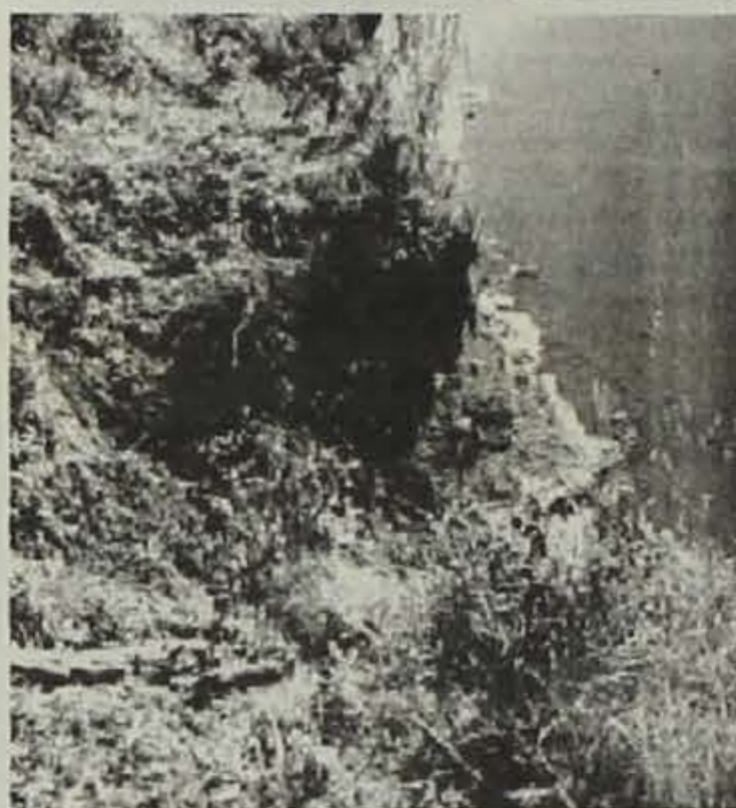
"After I saw the shape the dam was in, I told Greg (Mathis)," Zimmerman said. "The engineer came out first and gave us an assessment of what needed to be done. The landowner was informed of what needed to be done and we took the project to the commissioners for their approval."

The project will cost approximately \$20,000, more than the same cost originally to build, but much less than building a new structure with today's money. The landowner will pay 50 percent of the cost of a livestock watering system being installed on the structure. The watering system will allow the water to be used for cattle without letting the cattle on the dam itself to cause further erosion.

The rest of the repairs will come directly from the LOST funds.

"This will stop a lot of the downstream erosion that would have occurred in the next couple of years without action," she said.

Mathis is grateful that funds were available to fix the structure now before irrevocable damage was done to the water quality and roads downstream.



In top photo District Conservationist Greg Mathis and County Resource Planner Michelle Zimmerman, confer at the dam site. In photo at left and above damage to the dam can be seen.



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Envirothon question:

These are some sample questions from the test Iowa Envirothon students will take this spring. How do you score. Answers on page 16.

Soils

1. Which of the following best describes the A horizon in most Iowa soils formed under prairie vegetation:

a. The moist color consists of shades of dark gray or bluish gray. There appears to be few roots and based on texture you would judge there to be mostly silt and clay.

b. The horizon is 5-7 inches thick and the pH is acidic.

c. The color is very dark; the horizon is thick and the structure is crumbly and plant roots are abundant.

d. The horizon consists of a very hard compacted layer with spots of contrasting colors of rust, green and gray.

Burmeister works as WAE in East Pott.

by Joyce Bohnker

For years, Dave Burmeister was one of the farmer clients of the NRCS office in East Pottawattamie County. Now he finds he's on the other side of the office fence.

Burmeister, who farms near Hancock, with his brother Doug, is the new WAE for East Pott. He is working primarily with the filter strip program, encouraging farmers to plant grass strips along stream and river banks to protect water quality.

The filter strip program is encouraged by Pheasants Forever as better wildlife habitat. Burmeister believes strongly in the program, both as a benefit for the quality of water and as wildlife habitat. He is also learning more about

other aspects of conservation work, including how to layout terraces and the whys and wherefores of government red tape.

Burmeister began working the first week in August. He started working two days a week, but planned on taking time off to harvest his crops and farrow hogs when the office wasn't busy. He hopes to work more during the winter.

"I've learned there's a lot more to this than I realized. I have a lot better understanding of how things work. You can't just go out and say you want to do things this way. There are reasons for the rules as they are set up."

Burmeister and his wife, Kathi, have three children, Scott, 20;

Sarah, 18; and Skyler, 12. He farms and maintains a hog operation in addition to undertaking his new position.

He is enjoying learning more about the native grasses and helping farmers, like himself, with his new knowledge. "Big bluestem and Indian grass were new to me," he admitted, "I hadn't seen them before."

Burmeister has always taken pride in the conservation efforts on his own farm. He and his brother maintain a system of terraces, waterways and no-till. But he has seen ways to improve and plans on putting some filter strips around his own creek banks next spring.

"I'm really enjoying working here as long as I can keep busy. The people are wonderful to work with."



Dave Burmeister enjoys the field work in his new position

Iowa Envirothon:

The following is a sample question from the Iowa Envirothon test faced by high school students: Can you answer it? Answers are on page 16.

2. **Wildlife:** If the goal is to significantly reduce deer herd numbers which of the following would cause the greatest impact:
- a. Allowing hunting only of the males, since one male can mate with numerous females.
 - b. Allow hunting only of the females, since each female can bear one or two fawns each year.
 - c. Allow hunting of only the young so they do not mature and reproduce.
 - d. Prohibit hunting of any animals. The herd size will increase beyond the limit of the carrying capacity and starvation will limit the size.



Clair Acker shows Dave Burmeister the ropes in staking out a terrace.

*What's up in
soil conservation*

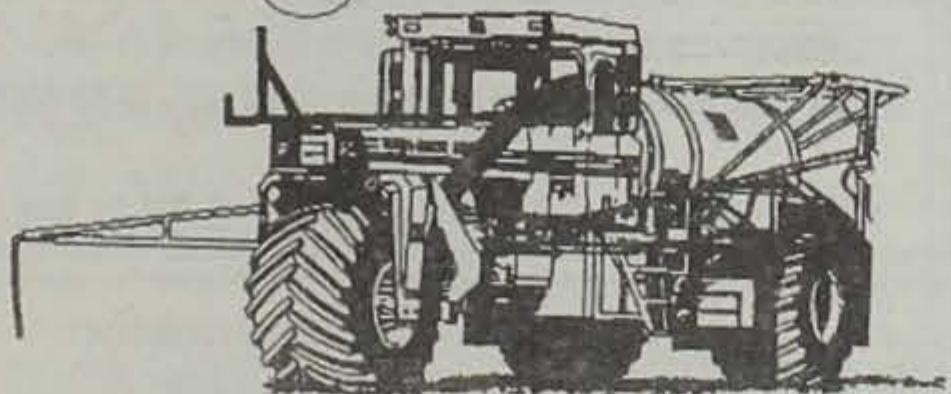
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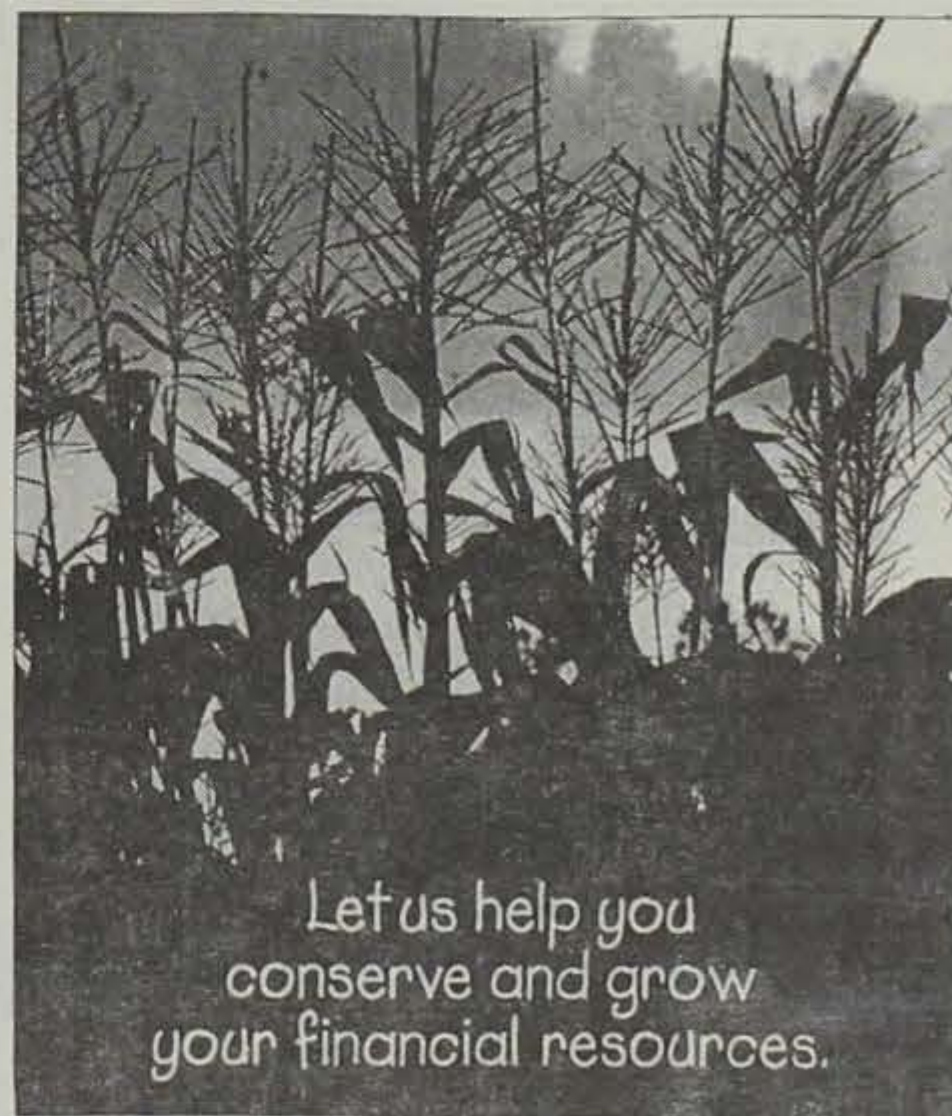


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Fabric layer at East Pott. helps establish waterways



In top photo Terry Gleaves, an East Pottawattamie Soil and Water District Commissioner, and the District Conservationist Greg Mathis show how the fabric layer held the grass in Gleaves' waterway. At right, SWCD Commissioner Russ Brandes shows the machine that lays the special fabric. The machine can be rented from the East Pott. NRCS office.

Most people are familiar with the benefits of waterways. As heavy rains hit the earth and start flowing downhill, they form big ditches in fields. Water can wash away thousands of dollars worth of corn and chemicals every year.

Waterways provide a grass strip for the water to rush down, leaving the crops where they belong.

Years ago, most farmers kept grass waterways on their fields, knowing that nature would win out. But then came terraces and many farmers dug up and planted their waterways. Now there is a new push to bring back grass waterways and it's not always easy.

The problem is usually getting them established. It seems every spring there comes a huge gully-washer of a rain. Newly planted grass waterways haven't formed deep enough roots to hold their ground and gullies form in the waterway.

A device now available at the

East Pottawattamie Natural Resources Conservation Service Office may help farmers maintain their waterways during that critical early time. The device is a fabric layer. It lays down a layer of biodegradable fabric in the center of the waterway to help hold the soil down until the grass can get better established.

Terry Gleaves is one of the Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners for East Pottawattamie County. He farms near Oakland and agreed to try the concept on his land on a waterway he was trying to get established.

The fabric was 36 inches wide. About half went into the ground, leaving 18 inches out, Gleaves said. The waterway was seeded with rye and brome last fall. The fabric layer was installed in April. Usually the fabric should be installed as soon after the waterway is completed as possible.

Then in May, Gleaves' farm received a seven and one-half

inch rain.

"The fabric held," Gleaves said. "It has filled in four to six inches, but all that would be gone without the fabric layer."

A second heavy rainfall later in the year caused a few small ditches, but nothing to what Gleaves feels would have occurred without the fabric layer.

The East Pott. NRCS office acquired the machine after another commissioner, Darrell Stamp, heard about it. He mentioned it at a commissioners' meeting and they invited someone down to demonstrate the model. They purchased it that same day.

The East Pott. office will rent the fabric layer to farmers. They are encouraging farmers to do some waterway work this fall before another wet spring.

The device is pulled behind a regular tractor. Someone must ride on the machine to control the fabric.

Cost-share is available to those who will use it on waterways. It can also be rented out for other projects at a cost of 25 cents a foot. The fabric decomposes in three years.

Gleaves said, "If you're going to put in a waterway, you might as well do it right. This really works and is no problem to mow it as I feared it might be."

Cost/share rules are announced

The East Pottawattamie Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners have finalized the policies for State cost-share funds. The Commissioners designed the Iowa Financial Incentive Program to best suit our district's needs. The following cost-share policies were drafted by the Board for 2000:

TERRACES
1) One "first priority" application per owner/operator will be allowed per calendar year.

(Ownership documented in our (continued on page 7))

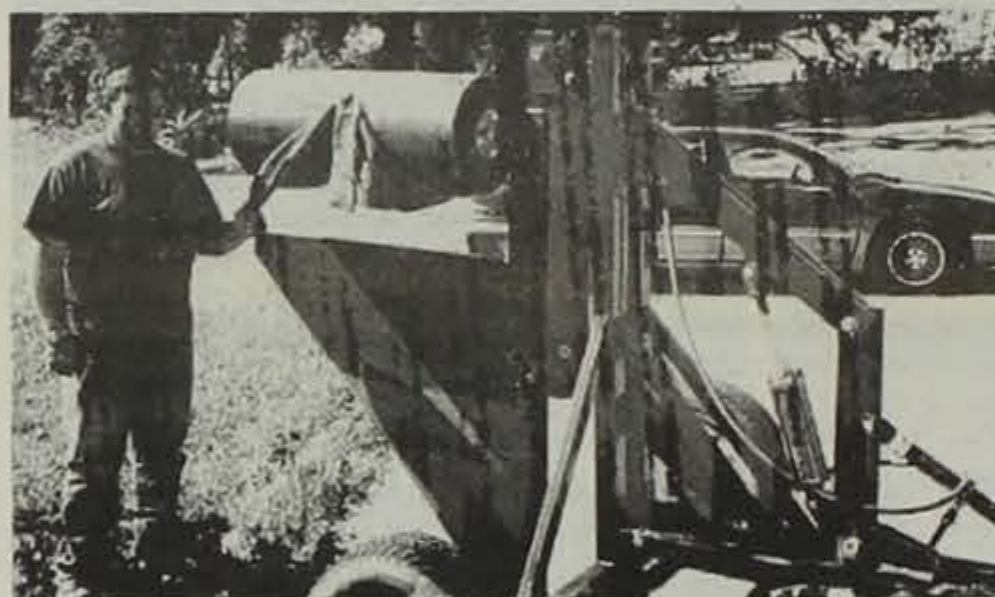
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East Pottawattamie state cost-share policies for next year announced

(continued from page 6)

office as of Jan. 1, 2000 Applications for 2000 will be accepted beginning at 8 a.m., Jan. 6, 2000 at the Oakland NRCS office.

2) Maximum terrace footage allowed will be 7,500 feet cost-shared at 50 percent, not to exceed \$.55/foot. The maximum amount of cost-share available per terrace job is \$4125 regardless of terrace type. Topsoiling will be required.

3) Tiling will be cost-shared \$300 per intake, not to exceed a total cost-share job (Terrace and tile) of \$7,000. Tiling will be cost-shared in conjunction with the construction of new terraces.

4) Sign-up will be divided into three lists: spring, summer and fall. You may choose one season. Applications will be chronologically picked up as that season's funds become available. No assurances of any fall allocation. If applicant is not ready when his turn comes around, that applicant's name will be dropped from the list.

5) Those persons receiving state cost-share the prior year (99), will be a second priority. Those applications will be placed chronologically by date of sign-up after those not receiving cost-share the prior year (99).

6) If the district still has funds after the list of first and second priority is allocated, approvals will then be granted chronologically by third priority. This priority could include applications from persons receiving cost-share earlier in 2000. These applications will be approved only after first and second priority jobs are covered. You can have one application for terraces and one application for a structure, both as "first priority."

7) For those landowners building their own terraces this year, the NRCS recommends they have access to a hand level or transit and tripod for check out.

Applications taken out of the office to be signed cannot be accepted prior to Jan. 6, 2000, nor show a 1999 date. If application is returned by mail, it should not reach us before January 6. All contractors will be spot-checked by NRCS staff.

WATERWAYS

Waterways staked and constructed to NRCS specs will be cost-shared at 50 percent not to exceed \$.40/foot up to 2,500 feet in length, not to exceed \$1,000. Please note: a 20-year maintenance agreement will be signed prior to receiving cost-share funds pursuant to Division of Soil Conservation rules in Section 27 of the Iowa Administrative Code Chapters 10, 12 and 13. Please refer to the back of your cost-share application. Tile within a waterway (available only with county funds) will be

\$.50 per foot per tile line in a waterway with a maximum of two tile lines per waterway. The maximum on the waterway would be one mile.

SUMMER INCENTIVE

1) Maximum terrace footage allowed will be 7,500 feet cost-shared at 60 percent not to exceed \$.66/foot. For terraces (not needing tiling), a maximum amount of cost share available per terrace job is \$4,950 It will be available for all types of terraces. Topsoiling will be required.

2) Tiling will be cost-shared \$300 per intake not to exceed a total cost-share job (terrace and tile) of \$7825. Tiling will only be cost-shared in conjunction with the construction of new terraces.

3) Funds for summer construction can only be obligated after June 1 and the terraces must be completed by August 15. No extensions. People receiving summer cost-share funds will need to build the terraces during the summer. Extensions will not be granted due to the operator having corn or beans to harvest. We will help you stake out areas for small grain where the terraces are to be constructed to the best of our ability.

STRUCTURES

One "first priority application per owner/operator will be allowed by per calendar year. Structures will be cost-shared at

the rate of 50 percent of the "estimated cost or actual cost, whichever is less" not to exceed \$7,000 per structure. Structures include: ponds, grade stabilization (638), earthen and non-earthen structures, cattle panels, rock chute, sheet piling, sediment basins, wetlands, etc. It is highly recommended these jobs not be "self-built."

WINDBREAKS

Cost-share at the rate of 75 percent up to \$700 per wind-break through the REAP Program. (Resource Enhancement and Protection). Individual limits of \$12/tree and \$2.25/shrub.

NO-TILL INCENTIVE ON CRP

This incentive is offered to encourage the practice of no-tilling into CRP sod. Participants need to sign an agreement of understanding that payment would not come until the spring to verify that they did no-till. Although this is a "one-time incentive payment per acre" it is hoped that the practice of no-till will continue on these acres.

The incentive payment is \$10 per no-tilled acre of expiring CRP ground. No acre limit is set or cap on total dollars per person. Application may be made by the landowner or the producer.

Once the planting is completed, participants must sign a producer certification and supply

chemical history on selected acres (to be used in future educational programs) and NRCS staff will verify no-till on CRP acres prior to payment.

WELLS

The Pottawattamie County Board of Supervisors offers a program whereby state funding can be utilized for the purpose of properly plugging abandoned wells. Cost-share on wells is available at 50 percent of the cost of the closure up to \$200 maximum on a first-come, first-serve basis. Applications are available at the Oakland NRCS office. Plugging must be completed by a certified well plugging contractor or with on-site supervision with the County Resource Planner.

REQUIRED INFORMATION

When you are in to apply for any cost-share, please bring all necessary information with you:

1) We need to know "ownership" and "tract number" where construction is planned. Do not sign up in the "operator's name."

2) Your Social Security Number (if individual) or Federal ID number (if partnership, corporation, etc.) will be required the day you sign up. A separate form for this will need to be filled out at the time of sign-up.

3) The landowner signature is required on the cost-share application. If there is more than one owner, that will result in two

(or more) checks charged to separate Social Security numbers, both signatures are required. A signature may have to be obtained ahead of time or a Power of Attorney will need to be in our file. A Farm Service Agency Power of Attorney cannot be accepted.

4) All applications must have the landowner's signature. Any person may deliver the application for the landowner if the landowner has signed an application with a 2000 date.

5) All cost-share projects must be located on land within the East Pottawattamie District boundaries. If land is located in West Pottawattamie, Mills, Montgomery, etc., you must apply for cost-share with those district offices. This is a state policy and we cannot make exceptions.

To receive cost-share, the landowner must sign a 20-year maintenance agreement.

Know your approximate footage, especially if it will amount to less than our maximum amount. (Changes in application footage will result in more paperwork for you and the office.) If you have an idea of a contractor you may use, let us know. This helps the technician with staking.

Again, know your Social Security or Federal Identification number.

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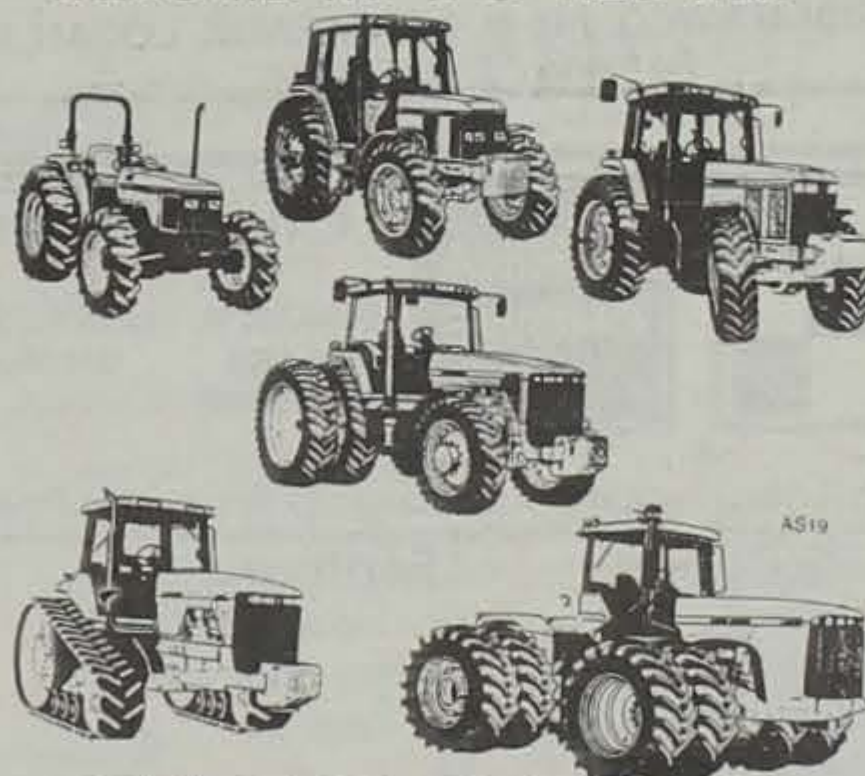


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SCOTCH PINE	18-24"	\$ 16.00	_____	\$ _____
CONCOLOR FIR	18-24"	\$ 16.00	_____	\$ _____
DOUGLAS FIR	18-24"	\$ 16.00	_____	\$ _____
COLORADO BLUE SPRUCE	18-24"	\$ 16.00	_____	\$ _____
NORWAY SPRUCE	18-24"	\$ 16.00	_____	\$ _____
BLACK HILLS SPRUCE	18-24"	\$ 16.00	_____	\$ _____
EASTERN RED CEDAR	18-24"	\$ 16.00	_____	\$ _____

BAREROOT SHRUBS:

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NANKING CHERRY	18-24"	\$ 2.25	_____	\$ _____
AMUR MAPLE	18-24"	\$ 2.25	_____	\$ _____
GRAY DOGWOOD	18-24"	\$ 2.25	_____	\$ _____
RED OSIER DOGWOOD	18-24"	\$ 2.25	_____	\$ _____

Sub Total: \$ _____

6% Sales Tax \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

A nonrefundable deposit of 50% is due at the time of order \$ _____

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As plants are at such a reasonable rate, there will be no guarantee.

Due to limited number of trees, please place your order immediately. You will be notified in late March, early April when you will need to pick up your trees.

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Russ Kurth receives a thank you plaque from student trainee Endirka Williams after she spent the summer as a trainee in the Logan office.

Trainee has educational summer

by Konda Slagle

Endirka Williams spent the summer of 1999 working as a student trainee in the Logan Field Office. She is now in her final year at Alcorn State University in Lorman, Mississippi, where she is majoring in plant and soil science, with a minor in chemistry.

Endirka and her husband, Carlos, resided in Council Bluffs during her tenure here.

While at Logan, she assisted the staff with terrace layout and checkout and assisted the Area Engineering staff by helping with the surveying of erosion control structures.

She completed engineering requests, attended a pasture

management training session, and assisted with the CRP program by reporting completed seedings and helping with status reviews. She completed rankings and developed some contracts for the EQIP program.

She also walked over farms with the District Conservationist to learn about developing conservation plans.

The staff and Harrison County Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners held a going-away party for her at the home of Russ and Peggy Kurth.

Upon her departure, she presented the staff with a plaque thanking them for a joyous and enlightening summer experience.



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Luckes practice conservation, help others

by Joyce Bohnker

Bill and Babetta Lucke started farming in 1959, soon after their marriage. The young couple didn't know a lot about soil and water conservation in those early days. They have learned a lot since then.

Their farm, located in Harrison County near Persia, is now an excellent example of many types of conservation and Babetta has taken her interest to the Soil and Water Conservation District. She has been a SWCD commissioner for five years and was recently named the Outstanding Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioner for Region 5 at the annual conference for Conservation Districts of Iowa.

The Luckes have come a long way from 1959 when as Bill says, "We used to plow everything."

For most of their married life, Bill was the farmer and Babetta worked in town as an x-ray technician. They raised four children, so Babetta was busy at home. It was Bill who ran the farm and it was he who first became interested in soil conservation.

"We have miles and miles of terraces now," he said. "I started terracing about 20 years ago when I got tired of driving through the ditches."

He started with a terrace or two and found the land much easier to farm and found his machinery repair costs started going down. "I liked not having those ditches. They're awfully hard on combines. I liked the terraces so well, I started putting more in every year as cost-share became available."

The Luckes are now almost 100 percent terraced on their farm which includes 420 acres of soybeans and 420 acres of corn. They've expanded their operation considerably from the 150 acre farm they took over from Babetta's parents 40 years ago.

Terraces aren't the Luckes only conservation effort. They also have buffer strips, filter strips, contouring, a windbreak and three watershed projects on their land. They also do some no-till.

The windbreak was planted six years ago with cost/share money from REAP (Resource Enhancement and Protection) funds. The Luckes bought the trees from the Harrison County Conservation Board.

The trees were Babetta's project. "We planted them in the spring with mats around them to help with weed control. We hauled a lot of water to them that summer and then watered them down really well for the winter. The trees just really took off. The mats finally deteriorated this summer," she said.

The Luckes also maintain three watershed projects on their land. They are in the Mosquito Creek Watershed area. One spillway project was already on the land when they purchased it.

The other two include a six acre pond and a spillway.

The pond was built about seven years ago. "I really hesitated to give up that much land," Bill said. "The year it was built, there were actually about 40 acres I couldn't farm. But we're real happy with it now that it's done."

The pond has provided a few rewards for the Luckes. The biggest joy for them is taking their two little grandsons fishing on the bank of the pond. The second reward is the satisfaction of knowing they are helping preserve the land and water resources. They are also grateful that the dam provided a crossing to connect their land.

In 1993, Bill sold off his 90 head cow/calf herd. He began

farming the ground that was previously pastured, but he put all the necessary terraces on the ground first to keep it in compliance.

Harrison County District Conservationist Russ Kurth is impressed with his efforts. He has measured the residue left on his fields several times and usually finds 20 to 30 percent residue cover for corn planted in soybean stubble and 45 to 50 percent residue cover for soybeans planted into cornstalks.

Up until 1990, Bill was the conservationist in the family. Babetta took only a casual interest in the area of soil preservation. That changed with her retirement in 1990.

Two years after her retirement, Kurth asked her if she would be willing to serve as an assistant commissioner. She accepted the challenge.

She served as an assistant for only one year before taking over as a commissioner when one of the board members retired. She was then elected to her own six year term.

"I've really enjoyed serving on the board," she said. "I've learned a lot these past few years. Before I served on the board, I wasn't actively involved in agriculture."

Babetta said she has become especially interested in water quality, a new emphasis of the SWCD.

The Luckes four children, Kevin, Gay Lynne, Craig and Ann, are all grown and living away from home, but Babetta has found retirement almost as busy as raising four children and working at the hospital.

She only recently retired from the Tri-Center School Board. Her work for the SWCD includes serving as co-treasurer,

assisting with the annual poster contest, writing articles for this newsletter, and doing watershed inspections and maintenance of structures in the Mosquito Creek Watershed. She trains inspectors for other watersheds. She also attends Hungry Canyons meetings and is a member of County Resource Conservation and Development Board.

The Luckes are also active in their church.

Babetta is happy she decided to become involved in agriculture and both Luckes have found their efforts at conservation to be rewarding, both in terms of saving their soil now and in saving resources for future generations.



In top photo are Bill and Babetta Lucke near their beautiful windbreak. In lower photo, Babetta receives her award from Bill Bennett, CDI Vice President, and Frank Holdmeyer, Editor, Wallaces Farmer Magazine

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Jim Gulliford, Director of the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship Division of Soil Conservation in Des Moines, presents Konda Slagle with the Employee of the Month award for October. Konda is state secretary at the Logan office.

Slagle receives state award

At the October meeting of the Harrison County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), Jim Gulliford, Director of the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship-Division of Soil Conservation in Des Moines, presented Konda Slagle with the Employee of the Month award for October 1999.

The awards program began in January of 1997. All Division of Soil Conservation employees in the State of Iowa are eligible to be nominated. Nominations are made by supervisors, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) employees, commissioners and peers. Award selections are based on outstanding contributions to the mission of the Division and

service to the agency and soil and water conservation in Iowa. Babetta Lucke, Chairperson for the Harrison SWCD, made the nomination.

Konda became a Division employee in April 1989. She serves as State Secretary for the Division, which includes serving as the secretary in the NRCS office and secretary and treasurer for the SWCD.

Konda and her husband, Ron, live in Woodbine. They have four children. Charlie who is a freshman at Iowa Central Community College in Fort Dodge, where he is majoring in radio broadcasting; Cynthia, a seventh grader; Courtney, a first grader and Cameron who is nine months old.

Conservation runs in Stamp family

by Joyce Bohnker

Conservation can run in the family. At least John Stamp of Persia in Harrison County believes it runs in his.

Stamp is an award-winning farmer-conservationist who learned at an early age to take care of soil resources. He figures he learned the ethic at home and some of the techniques in school.

Stamp was born in the same house he now lives in just south of Persia. He grew up during the Depression and often helped his grandfather on the farm.

"My grandfather, P.F. Stamp, always stressed when I worked for him not to plow through ditches. In other words to keep the grass in the ditches and waterways."

He said his grandfather was also a firm believer in keeping a lot of ground in pasture. He rotated oats and hay with corn and didn't plant corn in the same place two years in a row.

"One thing about my grandfather, though," Stamp said. "He was very serious about not having any terraces on his land. But I guess the way he ran his farm, he didn't really need them."

Stamp continued learning the conservation ethic from his father, F.H. (Ed) Stamp.

His dad decided to put in a few terraces on their farm in the early 1950s, despite what his own father, John's grandfather, thought about the structures. "He didn't really argue with his dad about it, but he did start putting them in. He was also the first co-chairman of the Mosquito Creek of Harrison Watershed."

Stamp said that despite the disagreement over terraces his dad followed his own father's tradition in other areas including crop rotation and not farming the ditches.

His father and mother lived in the country until they were 95 and 92 respectively. "They lived a long life on the farm and I can't remember a single year that they didn't plant trees, at

least one every year."

Stamp was born in 1930. After he graduated from Yorkshire High School in Persia, he spent a couple of years as a hired hand for various farmers and also at home.

In 1950 he signed up for the United States Navy and served in the Korean Conflict. "They call it the forgotten war, but it sure isn't forgotten by the people that served there," he said.

Stamp said he joined the Navy to see the world, but after four years, he was ready to see Iowa farmland again. In 1953 while home on leave, he married Betty Becker, nine months later, while he was still in the service, his son, Jack, was born.

Coming home to his young family, Stamp knew he wanted to farm. "If I'd known how hard it was going to be, I might not have been so eager," he joked.

He rented 160 acres and farmed part of his grandfather's ground. He started farming during one of the driest years of the 1950s, 1955.

"Betty and I were having trouble making ends meet. I decided I needed some more education, so I started night school on the G.I. Bill."

Stamp went to night school in Underwood two nights a week to attend an agricultural school taught by Eldon Ravlin. "He really got me interested in conservation. He was one of the original directors of a watershed project in Underwood and a firm believer in conservation."

In 1963, Stamp purchased his home farm from his father. He got a combination G.I. and FHA loan and one of the conditions of the loans was that he had to put in some additional terraces.

"I didn't object to it when I saw the good they could do," he said. "I continued to terrace my land until I had it all terraced."

He said the help of a good dirt contractor, Henry Griever of Neola, was very important in his early conservation efforts.

By 1972, the Stamps had completed their farm conserva-

tion work and they received the Iowa Soil Conservation Achievement Award sponsored by the Des Moines Register in cooperation with the Iowa State University Extension Service, United States Soil Conservation Service, the Iowa Association of Soil Conservation District Commissioners, Iowa Conservation Education, Iowa State Department of Agriculture and the Iowa State Soil Conservation Committee.

Today the Stamps are retired. All three of their sons are operating farms in Harrison County. Stamp continues to be active in watershed projects. He is on the board of the Mosquito of Harrison Watershed.

"We have to keep going on it," he said. "The money is set aside. Some people just need a little push to complete several more structures."

Stamp has been in on the project for a long time and seen progress take place slowly. "When we started we were run off of farms and made fun of. It took a lot of time and volunteer effort to get where we are. Sometimes we just plain had to wait until some of the owners died off or moved away, before we could get anything done."

Stamp doesn't regret the work, though. It is a project he believes in. He also doesn't regret his conservation work, especially as he sees his family take over the farm.

"Over 90 percent of the land is no-tilled now and with our terraces we lose very little soil, even with a corn-soybean rotation," he said.

He added, "I'm sure this soil will be here producing food many generations from now."

Stamp believes he passed on to his children what his father and grandfather taught him. "I was taught to leave this land better than when you got it and it will take care of you."

He added, "Betty and I have great confidence that our family for generations down the road will be able to feed themselves and many others from this land."

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John and Betty Stamp show their award-winning windbreak. Stamp has practiced many forms of conservation on his farm over the years.

Loess Hills Alliance coordinator begins work

by Joyce Bohnker

The Loess Hills. We've heard their story. How the wind formed them centuries ago, heaping layer after layer of rich loess soil that was left behind on the river bottoms after the glaciers retreated to the north.

Most of us drive through the hills on a regular basis, only rarely stopping to appreciate their unique beauty.

John Wells is the new Loess Hills Alliance Coordinator. It is his job to make us all start appreciating them a bit more often. Appreciate them enough to make sure they don't just vanish.

As geology books tell us, there is only one other spot on the globe where nature formed these mounds of rich loess soil and that is in China. As Wells points out, we can be pretty sure that not many steps are being taken to preserve those hills. So it may be up to Iowans to ensure that at least one such formation remains in the world.

Wells hopes to do just that, but he also emphasizes that he hopes to do it in an economically viable way. "The mission of the alliance is to protect and preserve the natural and cultural resources of the Loess Hills and ensure economic viability," he said.

Wells began his new job in August. He is working in a seven county area, including Harrison and West Pottawattamie to coordinate the day to day activities of the alliance. The Iowa Legislature set into law and funded the formation of the alliance. It was set up for one year, but will most likely continue for more.

Wells has several projects already in the works. He plans to have a regular newsletter sent to every landowner in the Loess Hills. That mailing list includes 6,500 people. He will also include on his circulation list others who have indicated an interest in his mission.

He is planning a logo contest

with a \$500 prize to the winner. He is hiring a part time media specialist who will specialize in news releases and public relations projects. Wells is also putting together a brochure on the Loess Hills.

He is hoping to put together a land protection packet, listing every program from every possible agency that can assist farmers looking for economic ways to preserve their land.

"I'm hoping farmers will be able to pick up a brochure and find a program to fit their needs and call that agency," Wells said.

His first priority in his new position is to educate people. He believes that once people understand the mission of the alliance and that its purpose is not to prevent people from farming their land, he will gain a lot of support and cooperation.

He hopes to be able, with the grant money from the state, to provide all seven Soil and Water Conservation Districts within the alliance with enough money to hire a part time employee. The employee's job would be to contact Loess Hills landowners and work with them to implement whole farm plans.

"A whole farm plan is a step higher than compliance," he said. "It would involve pasture management, wildlife, timber, native grasses and more, things the districts don't have time to do right now."

Wells grew up in Northwest Iowa and received a degree in biology from Northwestern College in Orange City. Before accepting his new position, he was with the Iowa Great Lakes Project in Spirit Lake.

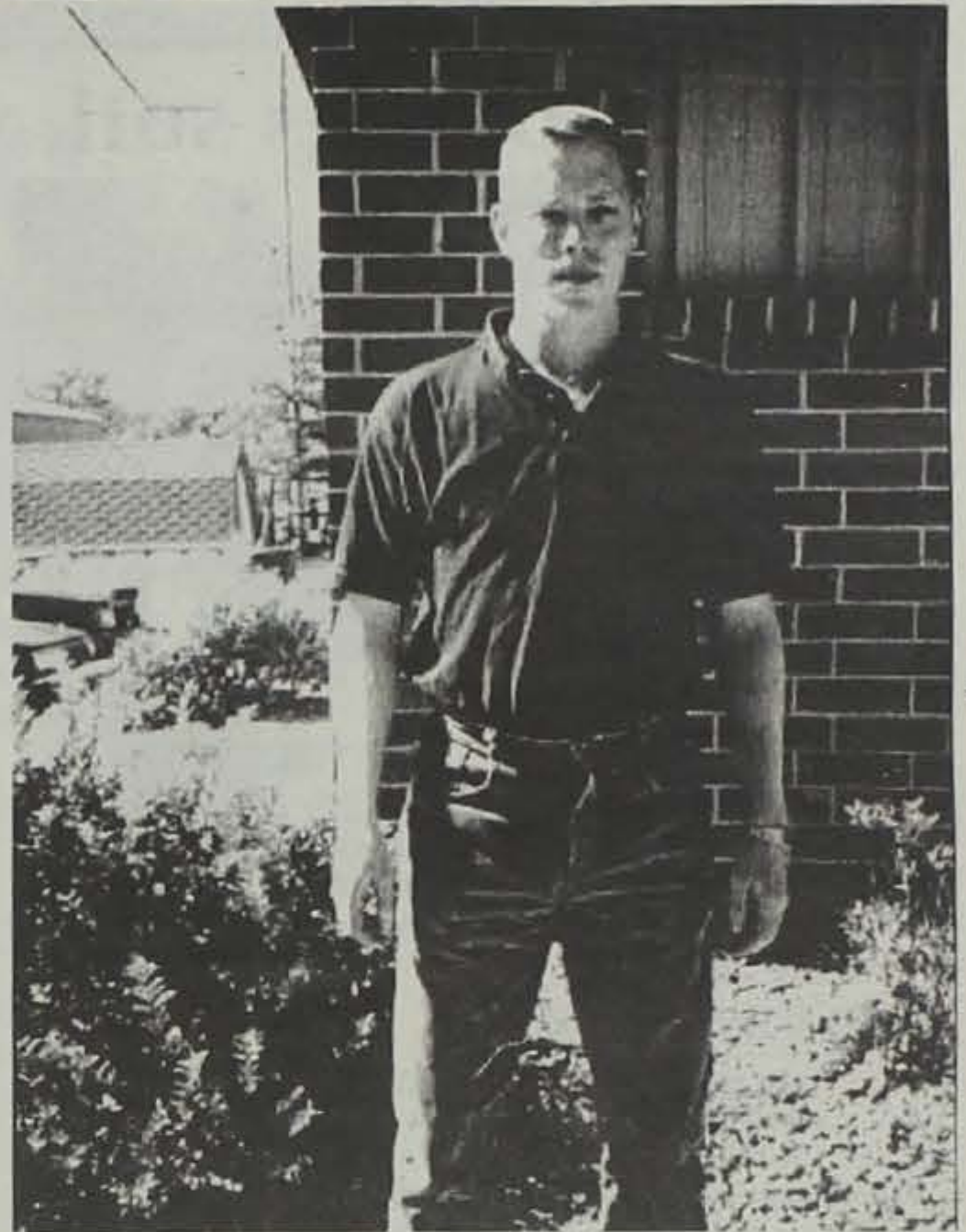
He says he drove through the Loess Hills often as a child and later came to appreciate them, especially after he studied their origins. "They grow on you," he added.

When he talks about preserving the hills, Wells admits that the textbook answer that there are only two of them in the world may not be enough to impress people of the need to preserve them.

"The more real answer," he said, "is go out and take a look at them for yourself. Drive through them, take a walk. They really are one of a kind."

He emphasizes repeatedly though that his mission is not to save the hills on the back of the farmers and landowners who depend on them for their income. "Farmers have to be able to make money. We want a happy medium where everyone wins. The land is protected and the farmers make money."

Wells is enjoying his work and looking forward to meeting more people as he gets to know the area better. "I've been here more than two months and I've had no bad days on the job," he says.



John Wells

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Iowa Envirothon:

The following is a sample question from the aquatic portion of the Iowa Envirothon test. Do you know the correct answer? If not, the answers are on page 16.

4. Which best describes an aquifer?

- It is an underground lake where water moves freely and rapidly.
- A geographic area in which all the water drains to the lowest point in the landscape.
- An underground area that contains and yields enough water for wells.
- A surface body of water that supplies drinking water.

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Rich Maaske is the urban coordinator for south-west Iowa. He brings his knowledge of conservation to the city.

Iowa Envirothon

The following question is a sample forestry question from the Envirothon competition. Do you know the answer? Answers are on page 16.

3. Which of the following are benefits of riparian buffers?

- a. They reduce erosion
- b. They improve fisheries habitat.
- c. They improve water infiltration.
- d. All of the above are benefits.
- e. a and c are benefits.

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by Joyce Bohnker

When they hear the word erosion most people around here think of corn and soybeans and good black farming dirt running down the river.

They hear Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and picture blue-jeaned farmers standing in line for advice on terracing and waterways.

But the NRCS's mission is to preserve resources off-farm too.

Say erosion to Rich Maaske and he sees beautiful new subdivisions surrounded by gullies. It is his job to prevent that from happening.

Maaske was recently named an urban coordinator in his area as an environmental specialist.

He works out of the Mills County Field Office and lives in Malvern, but he also assists the urban areas of West Pottawattamie, including the Council Bluffs area.

What kind of erosion problems do urban areas have? The same as rural areas, Maaske says, with some of the same solutions.

"A lot of what I do is help with site design. We look at storm water management and look at best management practices."

Solutions for urban run-off can include grass seedings, mulching, silt fencing, sediment basins and some traditional practices such as waterways.

"We have to talk about prevention, not restoration," he said.

"It's much cheaper to do it right. When the damage has been done, the options are a lot more costly."

Maaske can tell horror stories of sites he has seen where expensive dream homes have suddenly been surrounded by huge, deep gullies, leaving the home owners with few options

that don't involve thousands of dollars.

But he'd rather talk about his successes in building partnerships with developers, realtors, home builders and home buyers. These partnerships have prevented a lot of potential horror stories from ever happening.

"I'm very big into building coalitions and partnerships. They're essential for the success of anything we do," he said.

Maaske didn't start out as an urban specialist. In fact, he didn't even start out to be a conservationist. He graduated from Northwest Missouri State University with a bachelor of arts degree.

But he picked up surveying, while serving in the U.S. Army and was hired by the Iowa Division of Soil Conservation when he left the service.

He has now been employed in soil conservation work for 26 years. He has only recently taken on the job of urban coordinator and is finding it an exciting challenge.

"I love it. It's a new challenge and a new opportunity to work with agribusiness and other groups that are interested in preserving Iowa's soil and water resources."

He pointed out that rates of erosion are far greater in urban settings than in rural areas. Sometimes something as simple as planting grass as soon as possible after construction can be a big help in preventing soil loss.

Maaske emphasizes that he is only one person who can help. But if he can't help a developer or landowner, he can usually find someone who can. It's part of

the partnerships he believes in so strongly.

Serving in the Loess Hills area provides some special challenges for urban building.

"The problems are not unique to the Loess Hills," Maaske said. "But they are enhanced because the soils are so highly erodible."

Proper prevention, however, can stop the problems from ever happening. Maaske believes that his partnerships help spread the word, educating people on what they can do.

"I'm always looking for win-win situations," Maaske said. "They're almost always there and by talking with people you can create those situations."

The issues he deals with are water quality, water quantity, septic issues, cultural resource issues, economic development and tourism.

He believes tourism in the hills will be big in the next few years because of the upcoming bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark expedition up the Missouri River.

A whole new set of partnerships will be formed to help with the tourism. Maaske is already a part of the newly formed Loess Hills Alliance. The alliance's goal is to help preserve the hills in a way that is economically practical for the region.

Maaske believes he can help do that.

"A lot of what I do is outreach on my part, but I do have some people contacting me as well. The important thing for success in the hills is that we all work together. We need to build coalitions and work with people to form a consensus. That's the way we'll get things done."

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Clark receives award from West Pottawattamie

by Joyce Bohnker

Lester Clark Jr. is a young farmer, but he has been farming for more than 20 years and he has seen the benefits of conservation.

Clark farms near Beebeetown in West Pottawattamie County. This year he was named the Millennium Farmer for West Pott. A special ceremony was held at the Farm Progress Show to honor all the district winners who received a framed wildlife print and a jacket.

Clark was honored by the award, but to him conservation is a matter of practicality as well as ethic.

has to be terraced too.

"It seems to be a never ending job," Clark said. "We just do our biggest concerns first and then do the smaller jobs later."

Clark does not believe he is doing anything unusual. "We're trying to preserve the land the best we know how. But a lot of people do that now. It's becoming more popular."

Clark and his wife, Jeanne, have two sons, Kyle, 8 and Steven, 5.

He said, "I hope, if they want it, my farm will be there for my sons to operate."

With the future in mind, Clark hopes to continue his conserva-

"We have to leave a future here for somebody. What's going to happen if we don't?"

"It just makes good sense," he said. "No-till means less trips, less labor and those big ditches can be pretty hard on equipment if you aren't taking care of your land."

Clark began farming right out of high school. He and his dad farmed together in a 50-50 operation until his dad retired last year.

Clark said he first learned conservation from his father who believed in terracing and other conservation methods.

"Ten years ago we started no-tilling into corn. We just started no-tilling the beans, but it seems to be working well."

He added, "With the right kind of management, no-till works as well as tillage. The advances in the past few years have helped. Round-up ready beans were really great for no-till and equipment changes are good too. Planters today are more suited to no-till than they used to be."

Every year the Clarks build more terraces. They even purchased a bulldozer so they could build their own. The Natural Resources and Conservation Service comes out each year and stakes out some terraces and the Clarks build them themselves.

"We built about 6,000 feet last year. I couldn't even tell you how many miles and miles we have on the farm now," he said.

They build in the fall so it doesn't pack the ground too much. "I've signed up to do some more this fall," he said. As long as the weather cooperates, Clark can get things done on his farm.

The Clarks will keep building terraces until they're done, but as the farm expands, new land

tion efforts. He hopes to add filter strips along his creeks and put in some headlands, as well as continuing with his terracing project. He put in a windbreak around his house last year and is trying to maintain it.

"We try to do our best. I don't say we're perfect. We try to keep up with government rules and do the best we can," he said.

Their efforts are paying off in very practical ways. "We had a 10 inch rain this summer. You can see that conservation helped. We didn't have many ditches and the compaction just isn't there."

Sometimes it's a matter of overcoming tradition and learning new techniques. He said, "Conservation works. You just have to learn to do things a little differently sometimes."

If the economics of it aren't obvious, the future should be.

"We have to leave a future here for somebody. What's going to happen if we don't?"



Lester Clark, Jr., shows his newly planted windbreak. He was named the millennium farmer for West Pottawattamie County.

Does money grow on trees?

Wouldn't it be nice if money grew on trees? The next best thing is to receive money for planting trees! The West Pottawattamie Soil & Water Conservation District has cost share available for farmstead and field windbreaks.

The total cost share for a windbreak can not exceed \$700 per windbreak. Payment is based on 75 percent of actual cost, not to exceed \$12 per tree and \$2.25 per shrub. In addition to receiving cost share, windbreaks save money by reducing heating and cooling expenses, and increases the aesthetics of the farmstead.

Now is the time to start planning for a windbreak. Due to the increased demand for trees in recent years, availability of species has been limited. Plan ahead to have a windbreak that you'll enjoy for years to come.

In order to receive cost share, certain guidelines need to be followed. In order to be eligible, you must be a landowner of at least 10 acres in Pottawattamie County and produce an agricultural commodity.

If you are an eligible landowner, the windbreak needs to consist of at least three rows in order to receive cost share from the district. It is recommended

that one row consist of shrubs.

For the greatest protection, locate the windbreak on the north and west sides of the farmstead.

If you have a site that is suitable for a windbreak or would like additional information, call the West Pott. SWCD at (712) 328-2489 and ask for Julia.

Farm products are used every day

These are some of the products we use in our everyday lives which come from plant and animal by-products produced by American farmers and ranchers:

Health Care: pharmaceuticals, ointments, surgical sutures, latex gloves, x-ray film.

Manufacturing: adhesives, lubricants, solvents, detergents, polymers.

Education: crayons, textbooks, chalk, desks, pencils, paper.

Personal Care: shampoo, lotions, cosmetics, toothpaste, fingernail polish.

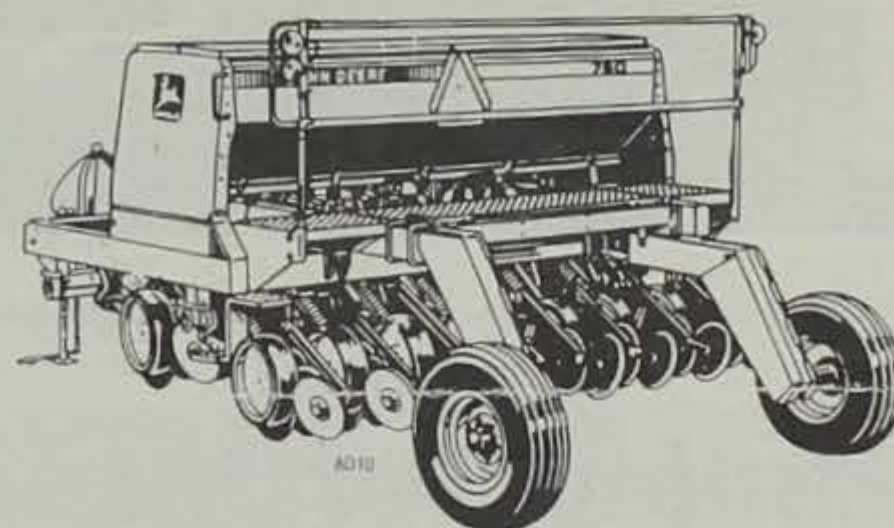
Transportation: fuel, antifreeze, tires, upholstery, packing materials.

Construction: lumber, paints, tar paper, brushes, dry wall, particle board.

The partnership continues as farmers depend on industries such as manufacturing for tools and equipment, health care for their families and livestock, construction for their homes and buildings, and computers for tracking market and weather information.

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Conservation Works!



Several Iowa farmers were recognized at the 1999 Farm Progress Show for their work in conservation over the years. In the four-county area winners included the Woosters (above left) from Shelby County, the Manharts (lower left) from Harrison County, Pete Hobson from East Pottawattamie (above) and Lester Clark, Jr. from West Pottawattamie (story on previous page). In top left photo, Richard and Vivian Wooster receive their plaque from LeRoy Brown, NRCS state conservationist and Ken Tow, an IDALS official. Shelby County soil and water district commissioners Donald Bladt, Wayne Krohn and Hans Nielsen also attended the ceremony. The Woosters have long practiced many forms of conservation on their farm. In photo at left, Eva, Dan, Lynn and David Manhart attended the ceremony and received their plaque from Brown and Tow. The Manharts are also active in many conservation activities. Pete Hobson (above) was unable to attend the ceremony. He is pictured with his combine. He encourages his landowners to implement conservation practices.

Abandoned wells need to be plugged

Many of us benefit from Iowa's groundwater. Approximately 35,000 abandoned wells have been plugged throughout the state. This is a large number, but there are two-thirds of abandoned wells that still need to be plugged.

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources has a plugging schedule that places highest priority on plugging wells that pose the greatest threat to safety and groundwater quality. All abandoned wells are to be plugged by **July 1, 2000**. Up until this date it is a voluntary program with money available to

assist with plugging costs. After the July 1, 2000 deadline it becomes a regulatory program. This means that if a landowner has an abandoned well not plugged, they will be required to plug it at their own expense if no money is available through DNR.

As a landowner with an abandoned well, it is your responsibility to do your share NOT to contaminate everyone else's water.

If you have any questions, please call the West Pottawattamie SWCD office at 328-2489 and ask for Julia.

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Compost tips offered

As more and more communities place restrictions on disposal of yard wastes, composting becomes an excellent option for many homeowners. If you have always thought that composting was too much work or too smelly, maybe it is time to reconsider!

You do not need any special equipment to start a compost pile. Simply piling yard debris in a heap on the ground will work, but it will be a much slower process. This is referred to as cold composting. No specific amount of material is needed to start the compost heap and you can add to the pile at any time. While cold composting is the simplest method, it is slow and some studies have shown that because of the low temperatures achieved during decomposition, weed seeds and disease causing organisms are not killed.

Hot composting causes the material to decompose quicker. It also has the benefits of killing many weed seeds and disease organisms. For hot composting, a pile with minimum dimensions of 3' x 3' x 3' is needed for efficient heating. Moisture and aeration are required.

Many styles of compost bins are on the market that will help contain the pile and speed up the process. Some resemble garbage cans. The new material is placed in the top and the finished compost can be scooped out of the bottom. Other bins are spherical and as

you roll the bin, the compost is mixed and aerated. Simple bins can be built from wood. A hoop of wire mesh will contain the waste and allow air to enter from all sides. Check on local regulations before building a compost bin. Some urban areas require rodent-proof bins.

Here are some tips for successful composting: 1. Choose a level, well-drained site, preferably near your garden. 2. For hot composting, mix together or alternate layers of green materials such as grass clippings and brown materials such as dead leaves.

Green materials such as grass provide a source of nitrogen while leaves provide carbon for the decomposing organisms. 3. A small amount of nitrogen fertilizer or barnyard manure can be added if needed to supply nitrogen. 4. Keep pile moist, but not wet. Soggy piles will favor the growth of organisms that can survive without oxygen and are responsible for unpleasant odors. 5. Provide aeration, either by turning pile or with bins that allow air to enter the pile. 6. Do not compost pet manure which can contain diseases or meat scraps which will attract insects or wildlife pests. 7. Be patient.

Finished compost will be pleasant smelling and crumbly to the touch.

For information on making the best of your backyard, call your local conservation district.

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Students will compete in Envirothon

How much do you know about the environment? Some Iowa high school students will have the opportunity to test their knowledge in the 1999-2000 Iowa Envirothon.

Teams of five members each compete in regional competition in March for the right to go to the state competition planned April 19 at Springbrook State Park in Guthrie Center. Cindy Blobaum is the Envirothon coordinator. Her address is 3829 71st St. Suite A, Urbandale, Ia. 50322. Phone (515) 278-5362.

High schools or other groups such as 4-H Clubs or Scouting organizations can send up to two teams to the regional competition. But all contestants must be enrolled in grade 9-12.

The competition includes information in five categories: soils, wildlife, aquatic ecology, forestry and environmental issues. Working as a team, participants rotate through stations which use a problem solving approach to test their

working knowledge and ability to synthesize and apply information in the five categories.

Prizes at the state level include plaques, t-shirts, merchandise and cash. The top team also wins an expense paid trip to Nova Scotia for an international competition. There they will compete for \$35,000 in scholarships and Canon products.

Registration forms for teams are due Jan. 30. There is a \$50 registration fee. For more information contact Blobaum.

The Envirothon provides an incentive for students to integrate and apply knowledge and skills learned in biology, chemistry, earth science, botany, zoology and other science disciplines.

The purpose is also to enhance students' interest in the environment and related careers.

The Envirothon is North America's largest high school environmental competition. It was started by the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts in 1979. The first

national competition was held in 1988 with Iowa joining in the 1995-96 school year. Currently teams representing 45 states and Canadian provinces compete at the national level.

The Iowa Envirothon is sponsored by the Conservation Districts of Iowa and their partners. The steering committee for the program consists of representatives from Conservation Districts of Iowa, Iowa Farm Bureau, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Iowa Department of Education, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship-Division of Soil Conservation, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and local chapters of the Soil and Water Conservation Society.

Local Soil and Water Conservation Districts are often happy to help sponsor a team. Call the local NRCS office for assistance.

Sample questions from the Envirothon have been placed throughout this issue. The answers are below. See how well your knowledge shapes up.

Envirothon

These are the answers to the questions on the previous pages:

1. c. The color is very dark; the horizon is thick and the structure is crumbly. Plant roots are abundant.
2. b. Allowing hunting only of the females, since each female can bear one or two fawns each year.
3. d. All of the above area benefits.
4. c. An underground area that contains and yields enough water for wells.

Hello from Joyce

You may have noticed some changes as you paged through this edition of the Quad County Quarterly. You may also have noticed the farewell from Lou Waite who has been editor and publisher of this publication since it began.

Lou has decided to retire and I am the new editor. First, let me say that although I have never met Lou, I have paged through the back issues of the Quarterly and she'll be a tough act to follow! Let's all wish her the best.

My name is Joyce Bohnker and I will be the new editor/publisher of the quarterly. I live in Crawford County with my farmer-husband and our two children, Danny, 8 and Laura, 6. I was raised on a farm in North Dakota. I attended Moorhead State University in Minnesota where I received a bachelor of arts degree in Mass Communications.

After my graduation in 1984, I wound up in Denison where I worked for the next seven years as Farm and Education Editor of the Denison Newspapers. I became familiar with the great conservation efforts of Iowa farmers in the past. Then I met one of the local Soil and Water District Commissioners, Kyle Bohnker. We married in 1989. I quit my position at the newspaper when our son was born. Now the kids are in school and I'm ready for some new challenges. In addition to taking on this position as publisher, I am also working as a WAE at the NRCS office in Denison.

I ask you to bear with me in this first issue or two. Some of what I am doing is old hat and some is new to me. I'm sure I'll make a few mistakes at first, but I hope I can get things ironed out as we go along.

I welcome reader comments. You can write to me in care of the Harrison County field office, at my home address, Joyce Bohnker, 2361 150th St. Charter Oak, Ia. 51439 or e-mail me at kylboh@frontiernet.net.

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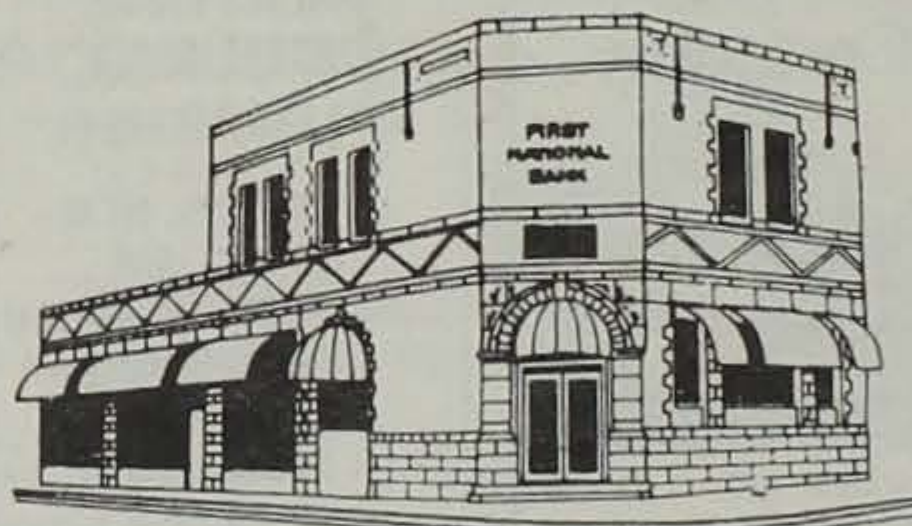
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Kyle, Joyce, Danny and Laura Bohnker

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Andersens

(continued from page 1)

The couple isn't finished yet in turning their home into a wildlife haven. He plans to add some shrubs in the near future and will put in a food plot adjacent to or accessible from the evergreen trees.

Andersen hopes that everyone will see from his experience that native grasses will grow again in this area. He especially encourages the planting of filter strips.

"The government is offering a great return as far as rental; it helps keep the water clean and as an added bonus, you can know that you are helping wildlife. It's only an opportunity to gain.

The Andersens have three children, Kent, Kathi and Kris and six grandchildren, all who live relatively nearby. They love to share the joys of wildlife with their young grandchildren, children who will have a small taste of what Iowa looked like before the pioneers.