

Opening grain prices on Friday, Jan. 18, 2008: Heartland Co-op, Traer, corn \$4.46, beans \$11.46; Tama Benton Co-op, Dysart, corn \$4.42, beans \$11.52; Werner's Grain and Feed, Tama, corn \$4.35, beans \$11.43.

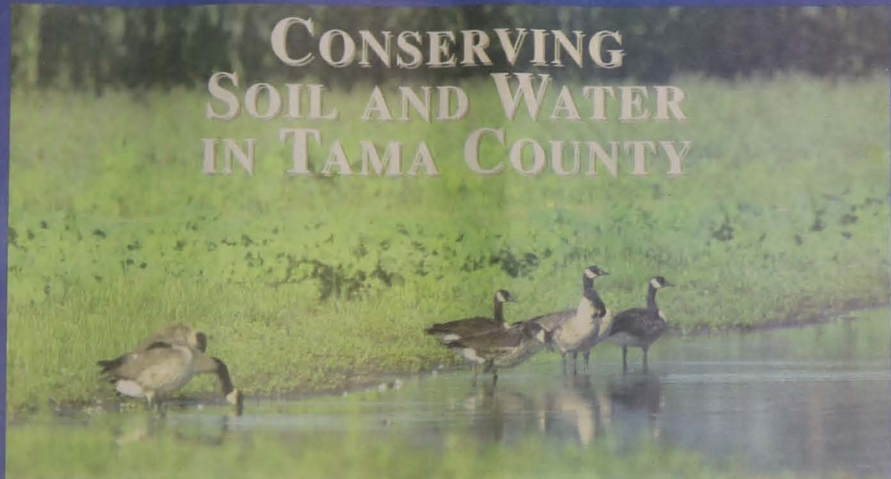
INSIDE IOWA TODAY

Thursday,
January 24, 2008

For the DYSART REPORTER, GLADDBROOK NORTHERN SUN-PRINT, REINBECK COURIER, TAMA NEWS-HERALD, TRAER STAR-CLIPPER

2008 Annual Report

CONSERVING SOIL AND WATER IN TAMA COUNTY



Tama County

If you would like more information on any of the topics found in here, please contact the Tama County NRCS/SWCD office. We are currently located at 203 W High Street in Toledo, and can be reached at (641) 484-2702.

Larry Jones,
District Conservationist
Clint Miller,
Soil Conservationist/ Tribal
Liaison
Chester Worden,
Soil Conservation
Technician

Tama County office staff:

Cliff Foster, Soil
Conservation Technician
Mark Pokorny,
District Employee
Melody Bro,
District Employee
Angi Walker,
State Secretary

Commissioners:
Jody Kasal, Chairman;
Mike Snider, Vice Chairman;
Jan Wobetter,
Dean McKenna
Jeff Bruene

Assistant Commissioner:
Chris Behrens

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Natural Resources Conservation
Service and the State of Iowa
Department of Agriculture and Land
Stewardship. All programs and
services are offered on a non-discrimi-
natory basis without regard to race,
color, national origin, religion, sex,
age, marital status, or handicap.

New Staff Member

Hi, my name is Angi Walker. I'm the new secretary at the NRCS/SWCD office. I've been working for the State of Iowa for about two years now. Before coming to Tama County, I worked at the Law Enforcement Academy in Johnston, where I also worked as a secretary. I grew up in Ankeny, Iowa, then moved to Iowa City and received my bachelor's degree in English. I moved back to central Iowa for a few years after college, and now I have just moved to Marshalltown in August when I started in the office. So, I'm new to the area, as well as the field of agriculture. I've been learning a lot since I started, and I've met many new people as well. The staff has been very accommodating in assisting me to learn about the job, and all of the different practices that we assist with here at the NRCS and SWCD.

Thanks for
bearing
with me
while I
learn
about
what our
programs
here are
all about.

I enjoy
reading,
watching
movies,
skiing, and riding my bike. I volunteer some of my time at the Animal-Lifetime Animal Shelter in Des Moines. I have also recently become a homeowner, so I am anticipating lots of painting in my future, and hopefully I will get the chance to do some gardening and work on landscaping this spring.



Conservation

Webster's defines conservation as: "the controlled use and systematic protection of natural resources, as forests and waterways". This definition pretty much sums up our thoughts of conservation - the controlled use and systematic protection of natural resources.

I have heard several comments like "look at that erosion", "nobody is conserving the soil any more", or "my Dad did better than that". Agriculture has changed dramatically in the last 50, 30, even the last five years. In general, soil conservation has improved and the estimated annual rate of soil erosion on cropland has decreased. As a result of the overall improvement, it is easier to spot a "problem area".

A publication titled "Complete Conservation" from the Natural Resources Conservation Service shares the following information:

CONSERVATION MEASURES WORK BEST TOGETHER IN SYSTEMS

A single conservation practice may solve a problem, but conservation practices work best together - in a resource management system. The benefits of conservation practices are generally additive - for instance, small gullies can usually be stopped with

grassed waterways or small structures. But the chosen practice will last longer and be more effective if the drainage area above the gully is managed to absorb more rainfall and reduce runoff. Or, cropland protected by contouring is even better protected if crop residues, or mulches, are left on the soil surface or if row crops are rotated with small grain, grass or legumes. This kind of farming promotes better soil and water quality as well as wildlife habitat. The use of several practices to solve multiple problems is called the "systems approach" to conservation. Ask your local conservationist for help in designing a complete conservation system for your land.

To view this publication and others published by the NRCS, please stop by the Tama County Service Center, or you can view these publications online at: [http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/TheTamaCountySoilandWaterConservationDistrict\(SWCD\)andtheNaturalResourcesConservationService\(NRCS\)encourageproductstoconservetheSoilonthelandtheyoperate.Reviewyourcurrentconservationplanandcontactusifitneedsupdated,orifyouneedhelpestablishing anewplan.](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/TheTamaCountySoilandWaterConservationDistrict(SWCD)andtheNaturalResourcesConservationService(NRCS)encourageproductstoconservetheSoilonthelandtheyoperate.Reviewyourcurrentconservationplanandcontactusifitneedsupdated,orifyouneedhelpestablishing anewplan.)

Larry Jones
District Conservationist

We're Moving!

After nearly 44 years in our building at 203 West High Street, the Toledo USDA Service Center is in need of more space. Our new building is being built at 102 Highway 30 West, the former location of CT Farm & Country and Twin Town Liquor.

The existing structure will be torn down. The concrete slab will remain to be used as the employee parking lot. The anticipated move-in date is sometime near the first of March. Iowa State Extension will be moving with us. An open house is being planned for early spring.
See more below.

FSA - NRCS - Tama SWCD— All in one place

We thought it appropriate to review what each agency within the USDA does, and how they are related because the Tama County Service Center will be moving to a new location in early spring. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is the federal government's agriculture department. In Iowa there is a local office in each county. Over the years the U.S. Congress has developed many programs and regulations to deliver laws and regulations that Congress enacted. Some deal with foreign agriculture trade, and some deal with local farmers like the Food Security Act (Farm Bill). The Tama County USDA Service Center contains two federal agencies, one district agency, and one State of Iowa agency.

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) is one branch of the USDA. Some of its duties are to administer the Direct Counter-Cyclical

Program (Farm Program) set up by the Farm Bill. Its purpose is to make direct payments to farmers for crops and other commodities according to the rules set by Congress. It gives financial education and makes loans to qualified farmers for operating and ownership expenses. FSA administers and regulates the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and the Wetland and Highly Erodible Land provisions of the Farm Bill. Currently, FSA has seven employees in Tama County.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is the other federal agency located in each USDA Service Center. It has specific conservation duties and also has a nationwide cooperative agreement with FSA to do some of the more technical conservation duties tied to the Farm Bill. For example, it writes and regulates individualized "Farm Conservation Plans", so

a farmer knows what is necessary to properly follow soil and water conservation and wetland rules. Another technical duty that NRCS does for FSA is to help with some of the conservation and field aspects of CRP. NRCS does some of the field visits to see if the land qualifies for CRP, figures out what improvements need to be made, and supervises the construction of these improvements. NRCS also has several specific duties not related to FSA, such as EQIP and CSP. Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) gives incentive payments to farm owners and operators to make conservation and environmental improvements to their operations. NRCS also will administer the Conservation Security Program (CSP) when it is available in this area. It gives payments to farm operators that are currently doing an excellent job of protecting the environment. NRCS has four employees at this time in Tama County.

The Iowa soil conservation program was initiated in 1939 when the Iowa General

Assembly passed enabling legislation to allow soil conservation districts to organize and to provide for their administration. Iowa has 100 soil and water conservation districts. The Tama Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) has specific programs, such as youth scholarships, 5th grade Conservation Day, Outdoor Classroom, Women Land and Legacy, and native-grass drilling. At the present time there are two part time SWCD employees.

The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) is responsible for the administrative functions of the soil and water conservation laws of Iowa. Division staff advise and assist districts with local resource management programs, allocate state financial incentive program funds, and assign state secretarial positions to districts. They give state cost-share to farmers to improve groundwater quality and to reduce non-point source pollution. The state secretary also acts as an office manager for NRCS, and as the secretary and treasurer for the SWCD.

2007 CONSERVATION AWARD WINNERS

•Landlord-Tenant:
Harold Wright/John Kopriva

•Owner/operator
Craig Earley

•Windbreak:
Bill Heckt

•New windbreak:
Henry Horstmann

•Wildlife:
Whannel/Stone

•Buffer Initiative:
Brad Aldrich

•Backyard Conservation (Rural)
Bill Tessau

•Conservation Tillage:
Calvin Dostal

•Friend of Conservation:
Nancy Havran



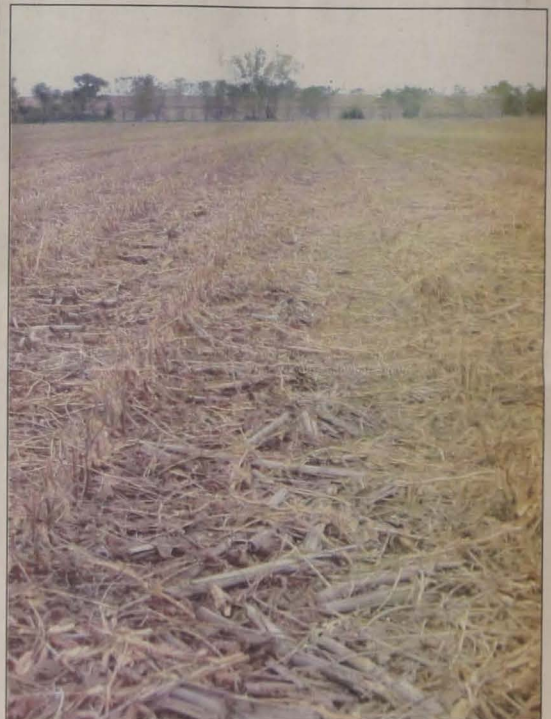
Buffer Initiative: Brad Aldrich



Conservation Tillage: Calvin Dostal



Waterway - above
and residue field (right) of
Owner/operator winner:
Craig Earley



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2007 Summary of Activities

January

- Commissioners Jeff Bruene and Jan Wobeter took the oath of office at the Tama County Board of Supervisors meeting.
- Election of Officers: Jody Kasal was elected as Chairman, Mike Snider was elected Vice Chairman, District Conservationist Larry Jones was appointed to serve as secretary until the vacancy is filled. Jody Kasal and Jeff Bruene were elected as co-treasurers, and it was voted on to require two signatures on checks over \$1000.
- The annual audit of the district funds was completed on December 29, 2006 and was reviewed.
- There is not currently a timeline for hiring a new secretary. The Secretary in Marshall County will fill in one day a week for the time being.
- Annual Contractor's Meeting scheduled.
- Annual report is being prepared.
- Appointment Assistant Commissioners: Chris Behrens appointed as assistant commissioner. - Commissioner Wobeter plans on attending "New Commissioner Orientation" session. - List of committees for 2007 updated and established.

February

- The amended contract for Hickory Hills Lake watershed project was reviewed.
- Discussion of awards for 4-H students who complete conservation projects.
- Suzanne Wanatee appointed as the official representative of the Tama SWCD on the Iowa Valley RC&D board.
- Estimated cost list for conservation projects updated and amended.
- Jan Wobeter appointed as assistant Treasurer. Those approved to sign checks on behalf of the district are Jan Wobeter, Jody Kasal, and the new secretary when hired.
- Annual review of Memorandums of Understanding, EEO and Civil Rights policies completed.
- Review of additional funds available from DSC for district staff.
- Update on Women, Land and Legacy.
- Approval for continuation of the district's annual grocery sack contest, purchase of pencils for Outdoor Classroom, and purchase of Arbor Day trees.
- Update on new building.
- DSC Field Representative gave an update on the hiring of a new secretary. He also spoke about the low interest loan program.
- The annual tree sale was discussed.

March

- The Regional Meeting is to be held in Johnson County near Iowa City, there was discussion as to whether any commissioners would be available to attend.
- It was approved to apply for additional DSC funds for a district employee to work on CRP applications.
- A motion was approved to supply watermelons for the Tama County Fair again this year. - The annual scholarship winners were selected.
- The topic of renting out the drill for public use was discussed.
- There was discussion of NACD dues.
- Official notification has been received that there will be no CSP program sign-up for this year. There will also be no modifications to old CSP contracts allowed.
- The EQIP application deadline is March 16.

April

- A decision was made by the DSC Field Representative to transfer the Black Hawk County Secretary to Tama County. Her starting date is Monday, April 16.
- A report was given from the Regional Meeting. Handouts were shared.
- There was an update on the tree sale.
- The Hickory Hills quarterly report was reviewed.
- The sign design for Hickory Hills was approved.
- An application was approved to be submitted for Union Grove Lake watershed project.
- The Women, Land and Legacy core committee will meet to discuss the upcoming June meeting.
- The grocery sack contest was judged.
- A decision was made to donate \$100 to the NACD renovation project.
- Approval was made to purchase a 19" flat panel monitor for the District Secretary.
- NRCS is currently operating under a continuing resolution, this restricts spending.
- All 15 EQIP applications should be fully funded.
- A motion was approved to purchase prizes for the upcoming Outdoor Classroom.

May

- DSC Field Representative informed the district that the secretary would be vacating her position effective immediately. The process to find a new secretary will begin again.
- A motion was approved to support up to five local girls (from Tama County) in registration for the "Outdoor Journey".
- The DSC Field Representative announced that the new computerized cost share accounting system will go live on July 1, 2007.
- It was noted that many districts have their own websites. There is currently a committee at the state level working on educating districts on the costs of this, as well as offering support for the initial setup.
- A bid was approved for the construction of the new building.

June

- Information about copying slides was shared. The secretary shared information on pricing for two different businesses to transfer the slides, either to copy them, or to transfer them to a disk.
- There was an update on the tree sale.
- The winner from the Tama County scholarship contest was not selected the state winner. The checks for the three winning applicants were mailed.
- The applicants for the secretary position are to be interviewed by the DSC Field Representative, the District Conservationist, and two commissioners.
- Received an update on the new online accounting system for state cost share.
- Motion approved to apply for funds for district employee working on CRP and EQIP.
- Plan of work for 2008 Hickory Hills project signed.
- Donation received from Thien Farm management for work on Salt Creek watershed.
- An issue came up with the new building, so the project has been awarded to another builder.
- A new CED was named for the FSA office.

July

- A candidate was selected for the secretary position, and accepted.
- More information was received about Outdoor Journey, two Tama County girls were sponsored for this event at Springbrook State Park.
- The cost of t-shirt for grocery sack winner was approved.
- A motion to pay the CDI dues was approved.
- The new building was put on hold.
- Status reviews were completed on 25 tracts.
- The District Conservationist reminded the commissioners of the need to find assistant commissioners.



Duck Box - Wildlife Award Winner: Whannel - Stone

August

- The new secretary will start this month.
- An update was given on copying slides. The district will not be asked to incur this expense. Clarification was given for the "start by" and "end by" dates for state cost share. A motion was passed to cancel all applications that do not meet these requirements.
- An update was given on CDI funding for district employees.
- A list was made of conservation award nominees for the annual awards banquet.
- The date was chosen for the annual awards banquet.
- An update was given on Women, Land and Legacy.
- A new program offered by DSC was reviewed.
- Budget concerns were reviewed.
- The State Conservation Committee has two new members.

September

- The winners were chosen for the annual conservation awards.
- A report was given on the regional meeting.
- A list was made of the people that should be invited to the awards banquet.
- Outdoor classroom has been scheduled for May 14, 2008.
- The new secretary was officially appointed secretary and treasurer for the district.
- The annual conference was discussed.
- An update was given on the new building.
- The Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations gave an update on the budget.
- The Regional Coordinator for Water Quality Projects gave an update on local projects.

October

- The program for the annual awards banquet was decided upon.
- The REAP assembly meeting will be in Marshalltown on October 23.
- More Farm Bill VI funds were made available for district employees.
- An update of Women, Land and Legacy was given.
- Voting for the CDI resolutions took place.
- There was discussion of the tree sale for 2008.
- An update was given on the Union Grove watershed project.
- There was an update on the new building.
- There was an update on Farm Bill VII.

November

- The district employee's holiday pay and salary was reviewed.
- An update was given on the Grazing on CRP program.
- A nursery was chosen for the annual tree sale.
- A memo from DSC was reviewed regarding Buffer/District Initiative funds.
- NACD membership was discussed.
- A census was received by the district, and will be completed by the secretary.
- An update was given on the REAP assembly in Marshalltown.
- The annual contractor's meeting was discussed.

December

- There was discussion of Tama County hosting an IOWATER Workshop.
- The official agreement was received for Union Grove.
- The policy and procedure manual was reviewed regarding the annual audit.
- Open meetings law was reviewed.
- The initial order has been placed for the tree sale.
- An update was given on the new building.
- There was discussion of staffing changes in the office.
- An update was given from the annual conference.

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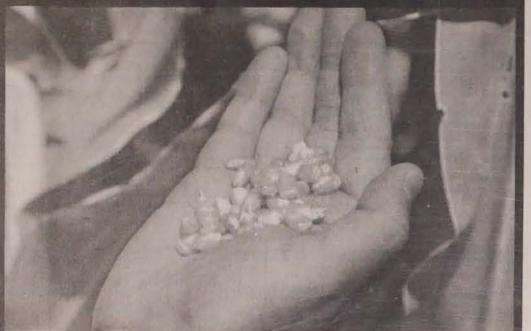
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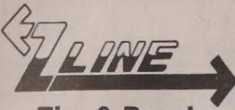
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Commitment to serve

By Al Ehley
Area Conservationist

The staff of USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is here to serve the farmers and landowners of Tama County. That commitment to serve is highlighted in the conservation work found throughout Iowa and specifically in Tama County. Terraces, grassed waterways and a host of other conservation practices are clear reminders of the public and private partnership that helps conserve our soil and natural resources.

Your Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners and District Conservationist Larry Jones, NRCS and State employees, district staff, and partners have worked hard on conservation projects this past fiscal year. This effort is illustrated in these accomplishments: conservation plans were written on 18,135 acres of county land; 11,606 acres had a new conservation practice applied that improves soil quality and 8,538 acres have a new conservation practice applied that improves water quality.

There is no doubt that helping to conserve resources on private lands serves the public good. Regardless of where they live, everyone across the country benefits from productive soils, clean and abundant water, healthy plant and animal communities, clean air, an adequate energy supply, and working farms and ranch lands. Therefore, every acre and every landowner counts in our effort to effect change on the land.

There are challenges ahead. There is a new Farm Bill. High prices are encouraging farmers to plant more corn. There is the ongoing debate that compares no-till with other tillage systems. Common questions being asked in the countryside include: Do I really need to till the ground? What is the savings in equipment and diesel costs with no-till? Which system will give me the best yield? Which system will give me the best return?

We can help you answer those questions. Our staff and partners can help you come to informed decisions that are the best for you, your land and the environment. We will use Web-based tools where appropriate, but we also offer the on-site, hands-on planning and technical assistance we are known for.

At NRCS, our goal is to help landowners make decisions. You will get that from Iowa NRCS and the Tama SWCD. We help people help the land.



Women, Land & Legacy
came to Tama County in 2007!

By Melody Bro
Resource Conservation Technician,
Tama Soil & Water Conservation District

In recent years, women's roles in Iowa agriculture have changed dramatically. It has become more and more evident there is a need to reach out to women at the local level and to help them make connections they may find helpful as landowners, farmers, and other important role-players in our state's largest industry.

In response to this increasing need, the USDA State Outreach Council has designed a program called Women, Land and Legacy: Building Your Farm's Future Today. Through small group dialogue and focused conversation, women listen to each other and bring ideas together to coordinate connections with each other, with information, with local and statewide resources, and with others in their communities. This grassroots program is currently active in numerous Iowa counties.

The initial meeting in Traer had wonderful attendance, despite the bitterly cold February weather. The goal of this event was to allow women to share their experiences in farming, their dreams for the land, and what is necessary to meet their needs as landowners and operators. The women attending were passionate about agriculture and hungry for knowledge. We began a list of topics which those attending wanted more information on. This list is grow-

Watch for information on 2008's Women, Land & Legacy meetings, and plan to join us for estate planning in late February!

ing continuously and is being used to develop our local Women, Land & Legacy program.

Farm leasing was a top priority for which more information was requested: because of this, farm leases were the subject of our June meeting held at the Tama County Nature Center. In this time of increasing commodity and land values, farm leases have seen numerous changes and have taken many forms. Valuable information was shared by our presenters, benefiting both land owners and land renters alike.

Farmhand 101 was another topic brought up at our initial meeting. Those attending were interested in learning more about basic skills needed in a farming operation. Our September meeting in Gladbrook found us investigating under the hood of a car, learning about household electricity, operating a fire extinguisher, and watching the sparks fly from an electric fence. Since Women, Land & Legacy began in Iowa in 2003, the concept of Farmhand 101 was never brought up until the innovative women of Tama County recognized the need for it. Due to this meeting's popularity and the apparent need for this type of program, your county's core committee is planning to make Farmhand 101 a regular part of Tama County Women, Land & Legacy.

Expiring
CRP

By Mark Pokorny

In the next several years there will be a lot of Conservation Reserve Program acres that will be expiring. In the past, it has always been an easy decision to re-enroll the acres back into CRP.

With all the excitement in the grain markets these days, the decision to re-enroll isn't as simple. Many factors must be weighed before deciding to re-enroll or to put your land back into crop production.

Is this land practical to farm? All expiring CRP land going back into crop production is required to have a new conservation plan in place.

Working with one of the planners at the NRCS office can assist you with updating a new plan and determining if a good working system can be implemented on your farm. Planning ahead and doing this well in advance should help in the decision process.

Will this land be economical to farm? Land rents have escalated in the last couple of years due to increased grain prices. CRP rental rates have also gone up since the last time you enrolled into CRP. Your rental rate will be higher than before if you choose to re-enroll. Check with the FSA office to see what your new rental rate would be.

What are other things to consider? The loss of wildlife habitat will be impacted. Additional drainage, driveways, tree removal, and other work may be needed.

Soil fertility will need to be addressed. Transitioning into row crop production will have some challenges. Will grain prices remain strong? Will input expenses continue to rise? Maybe pasture or forage production would be best suited on some or all of the acres?

You have several things to consider with your CRP acres in the near future. If you are considering putting land back into crop production, the first and most important step is to stop into your NRCS office early and see what tillage and cropping rotation will allow you to stay in compliance and still have a productive and profitable farm.

Tama Soil and Water
Conservation District's
2008 Grocery Sack Contest

The Tama Soil and Water Conservation District will again be hosting a grocery sack contest this year for students in grades 3 thru 5.

The contest is being co-sponsored by Grinnell Mutual Reinsurance Company and the Conservation Districts of Iowa (CDI). This year's theme is "Water Is Life".

The winner at each grade

level in each participating school will receive an award of \$5.

One overall winner in the county will receive a free airplane ride over Tama County in the summer of 2008, as well as recognition at the annual awards banquet in the fall.

Please contact your local school for further details.

Iowa Financial Incentives Program

Iowa Financial Incentives Programs
(Cost Share)

Income (allocations received)	
REAP practices	7,369.29
REAP forestry	2,456.43
Voluntary	38,808.00

Expenses (cost share payments and/or funds obligated)

REAP practices	3,657.00
REAP forestry	2,232.75
Voluntary	29,629.25

District Operations Fund
(Reimbursements from State for commissioner and office expenses)

Income:	
Allocations received	2,136.40

Expenses:	
Commissioner mileage	820.75
Postage	368.84
Office supplies	955.97

Printing and printed material 217.36

Meeting Expenses & dues 2,699.41

Total expenses 5,062.33

Excess spent from revolving fund (2,925.93)

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Cost-Share Conservation Programs

By Cliff Foster

The funding for conservation cost-share programs comes from two sources, state funding and federal funding.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Division of Soil Conservation (DSC), and the Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) staff located at the USDA Service Center in each county in Iowa can assist landowners with free technical advice. Conservation technical assistance is provided on a voluntary basis to protect the soil, water, wildlife, and other natural resources. Information included in this article was obtained from the Guide to Conservation Programs available on the NRCS website listed later in the article.

Federal assistance programs include the following: Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) which is used to reduce erosion, increase wildlife habitat, and improve water quality through the application of conservation plans.

The Conservation Security Program (CSP) is used to reward farmers and landowners for past conservation work and provide technical assistance to develop plans that address specific natural resource concerns.

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides technical and financial assistance to landowners to develop and implement plans that address specific natural resource concerns.

The Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) is used to develop and implement a grassland resource management plan to help private landowners and operators restore and protect grassland, including rangeland and pastureland.

The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) is used to develop and implement a restoration plan for wetlands that were previously altered for agricultural use.

The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) is used to develop and improve fish and wildlife habitat on privately owned land through the application of a conservation plan.

State assistance programs include the following: Tama County provides funding or incentives for permanent and management conservation practices to control erosion and reduce sediment.

The State Loan Program can provide no interest or low interest loans to eligible landowners for constructing permanent soil conservation practices under a conservation plan.

The Iowa Water Protection Fund (WSPF) provides funding for water quality improve-

Tama County Fair 4-H Conservation Awards

The following students created conservation-themed projects for the Tama County Fair. These students were honored at the Annual Awards Banquet on Nov. 13, 2007 and each received a \$50 Savings Bond.

David Bruene - Crop and Plant Science Categories; Cody

Fevold - Crop Category; Emma Knoop - General Agriculture Category; Tyler Martens - Fish and Wildlife Category; Levi Petersen - Plant Science Category; Angela Wraga - Fish and Wildlife and Forestry Categories; Tyler Wraga - Fish and Wildlife and Forestry Categories

MORE INFO:

The following is a list of conservation agencies and website links to contact staff at these offices or obtain additional information:

NRCS -
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
www.nrcs.usda.gov - 641-484-2702 (in Tama County)

SWCDs -
Soil and Water Conservation Districts (see DSC website) - 641-484-2702 (in Tama County)

DSC -
Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship Division of Soil Conservation
www.agriculture.state.iowa.us/soilconservation.html - 515-281-5321

FSA -
USDA Farm Service Agency
www.fsa.usda.gov/ia - 641-484-2701 (in Tama County)

NRCS -
Iowa Department of Natural Resources www.iowadnr.gov - 515-281-5918

USFS -
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service www.fws.gov - 800-344-9453

ment practices in watersheds above priority lakes and streams, and to protect groundwater.

The Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) funds provide cost-share or incentives to address local water quality protection needs.

Practices and rates available for each program vary, contacting local conservation offices can assist landowners in determining the best program to utilize.

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) also has Private Lands Biologists located throughout the state, that assist landowners to improve wildlife habitat. There are numerous other organizations and agencies that provide conservation assistance or programs including local Pheasants Forever Chapters, Ducks Unlimited, the Nature Conservancy, the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, Iowa State University Extension, and Resource Conservation and Development offices.

Needed: More WRP Applications

"Now is an excellent time to apply for the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)," says Mike Webster, NRCS Wetland Specialist in West Union. "In years past, we had a tremendous backlog of funding and a long waiting list."

Now we've funded most of the applications on the waiting list and are in need of more to take full advantage of Iowa's WRP allocation."

The Wetlands Reserve Program is a voluntary program that offers landowners the means and the opportunity to protect, restore, and enhance wetlands on their property. WRP is a nationwide voluntary program that offers payment, based on the agricultural value, for restored wetlands that have previously been drained and converted to agricultural uses. Not only does the program pay up to 100 percent reimbursement for restoration costs, it lets landowners retain control of access (no public access is required), maintain ownership

TO APPLY:

If you would like more information about how to apply for WRP, contact your local NRCS office - 641-484-2702. General information on WRP is available online at: www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/wrp

of land (they have the right to lease the land for undeveloped uses, including hunting and fishing), and allows for land to be sold, subject to the permanent easement.

WRP also provides additional benefits for the entire community - improved water quality, enhanced habitat for wildlife, reduced soil erosion, reduced flooding and improved water supply. Webster also notes "For land to be eligible, at least 50 percent of it must have a crop history."

USDA EDITORIAL

Tillage Not Necessary for Planting Corn-on-Corn

USDA's Prospective Planting report released in late March shows Iowa farmers intend to plant 1.3 million more acres of corn in 2008. By upping their corn acres, Iowa farmers hope to take advantage of corn prices, which have risen 50 percent in the past year. From a business standpoint, planting more corn acres makes sense for many producers. Farmers are simply trying to supply a product the market wants and needs. But from an environmental standpoint, the corn acres forecast is concerning to many members of the conservation partnership. The three of us represent Conservation Districts of Iowa, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Division of Soil Conservation and the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service. We want farmers to succeed. We also want producers to consider making planting decisions that will not lead to loss of farm program eligibility or to more soil erosion which pollutes our lakes, streams and rivers.

Research conducted by Iowa State and other universities shows that planting corn-on-corn does not, in most cases, require tilling the ground. Reduced tillage is a concern when comparing no-till to tilling corn-on-corn, but, when figuring inputs, no-till corn-on-corn usually makes the producer more money while reducing soil erosion.[1] And in some cases, producers experience increased yields in their operations when planting no-till corn-on-corn and reduced input costs.[2]

As a team, our local, state and federal specialists educate and help producers, landowners and organizations with technical assistance and programs that conserve soil, water, and other natural resources to benefit all Iowans. We can help producers consider planting and tillage options. Our technicians can advise producers how to keep in compliance with their conser-

Scholarship Awards

The Tama Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and the Conservation Districts of Iowa (CDI) are conducting a Scholarship Contest. The scholarships will be presented to Iowa high school seniors to be used for their first year of education at the college level while pursuing programs of study in any field of agriculture or natural resources.

The District will be awarding two scholarships for graduating seniors. The first place scholarship will be for \$300 and the second place scholarship award will be in the amount of \$200. The first place scholarship winner will then have their application forwarded on to CDI for state level consideration.

Three scholarships will be awarded at the state level in the amounts of \$1,800, \$1,200, and \$1,000. Regional winners from the other six regions who do not receive a state award will each receive \$300. The first, second and third place awards will be paid directly to the school of choice in two installments, beginning with the first term of attendance and at mid-term or semester. The \$300 awards will be paid directly to the students.

All applications must be typed or completed with a word processor. Applications are to be submitted to your local soil and water conservation district office in the county in which you live. The county district will select an application and forward it to the CDI Regional Director, who will in turn select an application and forward it to CDI, where a judging team will make the final selections.

The application is due to the

Tama SWCD by Feb. 29, 2008. The application is available online at: <http://www.cdiowa.org/awards.html>. If you have questions, or would like a paper copy of the application, please call or stop by the office at 203 W High Street in Toledo, 641-484-2702.

Scholarship Winners

Jesse Kladio, son of Tom and Carol Kladio of Traer, was selected as the first place winner for last year's scholarship award. Jesse is a graduate of North Tama County Community High School, and is currently attending Hawkeye Community College. He plans on transferring to Iowa State University, and his goal is to become a wildlife biologist. Jesse was the recipient of a \$300 scholarship from the District.

Joel Paustian, son of Don and Marlene Paustian of Toledo, was selected as a scholarship winner for last year's contest. Joel is a graduate of South Tama County High School, and is currently attending Kirkwood Community College. Joel hopes to become an Agricultural Technician. He was the recipient of a \$200 scholarship from the District.

Daniel Poduska, son of James and Rebecca Poduska of Chelsea, was also selected as a scholarship winner for last year's contest. Daniel is a graduate of South Tama County High School, and currently attends Hawkeye Community College. He hopes to one day enter the field of either agriculture management, or parks and natural resources. Daniel was the recipient of a \$200 scholarship from the District.

About

Conservation Districts of Iowa, CDI, is a nonprofit 501(c) 3 organization mainly of soil and water district commissioners devoted to providing educational programs on the conservation of soil, water, and other natural resources. Working with commissioners, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship-Division of Soil Conservation address local natural resource concerns.

vation plan. If there is a tillage or corn-on-corn question, producers should visit their local USDA Service Centers. The experts there are working to help farmers succeed while protecting our state's air and water quality and wildlife habitat.

[1] Source: Dr. Mahdi Al-Kaisi, Asst Professor, Dept of Agronomy, Iowa State University
[2] <http://ftp-ic.sc.egov.usda.gov/IA/news/NoTillCorn.pdf>

United States Department of Agriculture Editorial from Ken Tow, Director, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship - Soil Conservation Division (515-281-6153); Deb Ryan, Executive Director, Conservation Districts of Iowa (641-774-4461); and Rick Van Klaveren, State Conservationists, USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service (515-284-6655).

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Saluting the Tama County Soil and Water Conservation District

Toledo Chronicle
Tama News Herald
Traer Star-Clipper
Dysart Reporter
Gladbrook
Northern-Sun
Reinbeck Courier

We salute the Tama County Soil & Water Conservation District and the conservation efforts of the landowners in Tama County

Soil & Water Conservation: MAKE IT A HABIT

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