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Conservation funds puzzle

State funds allocated to Davis County farmers for conservation practices through the Davis County Soil Conservation District are not in amounts that is making local officials exuberant.

Funds under the new program will give the Davis County Soil Conservation District \$10,000 for the cost-share program and the amount is puzzling local officials.

C. Iles Heady, chairman of the Davis County Soil Conservation District, pointed out this week that county's with the best land in the state received \$7,000. There were other counties that received as much as \$23,000.

It's hard for Heady and others to believe that Davis County is that close to having the best land in the state and that far from having the worst.

The allocation, according to Heady, was based on the amount of No. 2, No. 3 and No. 4 land in the county in 1967. He said there have been some tremendous changes in county's since then.

"It kind of looks like they are penalizing us for the conservation practices we have installed in the past," Heady said.

While Davis County is receiving \$10,000, Appanoose County will be getting \$14,800. Wapello County will receive \$9,000 while Van Buren County will get \$11,100. Monroe County will receive \$10,000.

Nevertheless, Davis County will have to make do with the \$10,000 for the cost-share program with farmers to install erosion and sediment control practices.

The funds allocated for use in the Davis County district will be administered by the local district commissioners. In addition to Heady, they are Sam Botts Jr., LaVern Weilbrenner, Lionel Herteen and Phillip Melvin.

A farmer may apply for and receive cost-share assistance provided he has or will enter into a conservation cooperative agreement with the soil district. This agreement will provide, among other requirements, that he has or intends to develop and follow a

conservation plan for his farm that is acceptable to the district and that he will properly maintain the practices for which cost-share assistance is requested.

At Tuesday night's commissioners meeting, Heady said the commissioners recognize that with only \$10,000 to be spent locally, certain priorities must be set.

The commissioners decided to give priority on cost-sharing this fiscal year to landowners and operators who have signed conservation cooperative agreements prior to July 31, 1973. New conservation cooperative agreements would be eligible the following year based on new conservation plans to be developed.

The commissioners will accept requests for cost-sharing assistance this fiscal year for three practices—terraces, grade stabilization structures and grass waterways. Grade stabilization structures and grass waterways will not be eligible for cost-sharing until at least 75 per cent of the needed land treatment above the practice has been completed.

Landowners and operators may apply for assistance at the Davis County Soil Conservation District office in Bloomfield. The commissioners suggest applications be made early so they can be given proper consideration before the funds are obligated.