

ANNUAL REPORT
IDA COUNTY, IOWA, SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT
1950

DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS

Ross E. Baumann, Chairman	Cash, Iowa
Henry Dall	Battle Creek, Iowa
H. L. Elk	Galva, Iowa

TREASURER

Ray D. Bresnahan	Ida Grove, Iowa
------------------	-----------------

SECRETARY

Paul Peterson, Extension Director	Ida County
-----------------------------------	------------

TECHNICIANS

Kenneth H. Burnett	Soil Conservationist
Joseph E. Clarey Jr.	Soil Conservationist
Albert M. Murphy Jr.	Conservation Aid

INTRODUCTION

I beg to submit the following report of the activities of the Ida County Soil Conservation District for the calendar year of 1950. Recognizing that interest among farmers in soil conservation is the first step to build up soil conservation practices in the district, several methods were used to develop this interest, which will be listed later.

A second step in the work of the Conservation Service was a definite plan for soil conservation which was adhered to closely throughout the year.

The accomplishments of the Soil Conservation Service in the District are enumerated in detail as to participants, acres under plans, acres contoured, terraces built, grassed waterways constructed, etc.

Also the problems of the Conservation Service are listed, for by recognizing our problems we may overcome them by a more efficient approach and careful planning.

Also credit is given cooperating and assisting agencies, firms and individuals who have contributed much to the work accomplished by the Conservation Service of the Ida County Soil Conservation District.

In 1950 the District was given the following direct assistance:

From the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service:

Soil Conservationist GS-7 - 12 months service
Soil Conservationist GS-5 - 12 months service
Conservation Aid GS-4 - 9 months service
Transportation, office space and supplies for the above.
(U. S. Post Office Department furnished office space.)

From the Ida County Farm Bureau, cooperating with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Extension Service and the Iowa State Extension Service:

Assistance of the County Extension Director in setting up and holding meetings, in laying contour guide lines on farms of prospective cooperators, and in acting as secretary for the District Commissioners.

From the Ida County Production and Marketing Administration:

Assistance in laying out contour guide lines.
Much favorable newspaper publicity.

From the State Soil Conservation Committee:

\$164.62 for miscellaneous expense.
\$1240.28 for equipment and clerical help.

DEVELOPING INTEREST IN SOIL CONSERVATION

During the past year a special effort has been made to connect soil conservation with all good farming practices. This has led to a wider acceptance of those things this District is fostering. The Ida County Extension Director has, where possible, conducted his demonstrations on farms that were practicing good soil conservation. Many people have gained their first knowledge of soil conservation in this manner.

In this last year the District has started to change from the individual approach to the group action approach. Such a change must, naturally be gradual. It is anticipated that the complete change-over will be accomplished by 1952. It is felt that the change will conserve District manpower and will result in better application of soil conservation practices.

Since the establishment of the District, in 1945, an annual birthday party has been held. More recently this has been expanded to include a one day soil conservation short course. In addition to education this meeting has been used also as a time for recognition of outstanding work by groups and individuals and for the election of District commissioners. Next year it is planned to hold a four-day soil conservation training school. The Birthday Party will be on the days of the school. The highlight of the 1950 Party was an illustrated talk by Mr. Jim Wallace, Manager, Iowa State College Foundation Farms. In the talk he described the effect of good land use, sound farm management, and soil conserving practices on crop yields, on livestock quality and on the people who lived on the farms. The District needs to have more of this sort of thing at future meetings.

During the past summer the District conducted two tours. One of these was over two watersheds where flood control structures had been installed. Good soil conservation practices were in use. The other was a trip to the Castana Experiment Station to observe results of soil conservation trials.

In September the District conducted its first field day on the Albert Bird farm. Method demonstrations were given in terrace construction, waterway sloping, contour plowing and strip cropping. By an appropriate contest it was also proved that the eye is not a satisfactory substitute for the hand level.

In addition to the activities of the Soil Conservation District that have been initiated and conducted by the District, advantage has been taken of various projects of other organizations to advance the cause of soil conservation.

First of these is the Veterans Training Program. The various instructors of these groups are all interested in soil conservation and have helped to create interest among this group of young farmers and have contributed much to the activities of and interest in soil conservation in the District.

Second is the Sioux City Program for Permanent Agriculture, sponsored by the Sioux City Chamber of Commerce and Sioux City Journal-Tribune Publishing Co., who make awards for various phases of a soil improvement program. Three farmers, David Brueck, Battle; Waldon Buchanan, Arthur; and Marvin Volkert, Washta, were given awards for the best soil conservation and soil use programs in operation in the District. Hugh and Pat McGuire of Holstein were given an award for the greatest improvement in soil conservation practices during 1950.

The District is represented on the Ida County Agricultural Improvement Council. This group has been of material assistance by including soil conservation and related good farm management in many of its monthly projects.

The Ida County PMA has been one of the principal assistants in the District program. Payments for conservation practices applied have greatly increased the rate of general acceptance of these practices. The local PMA Committee has laid out many contour lines. Cases of individual interest in the District program have been referred to the District.

Newspaper stories pertaining to soil conservation continue to be one of our best means of reaching the public. The Newspapers in the District have made a noteworthy contribution in this field.

The Little Sioux Flood Control activity in the District has made it possible for us to reach additional farmers. The gully problem is still first in many of their minds.

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The Ida County Farm Bureau and County Extension Service gave their fullest cooperation and participation in the county Agricultural Development Council Program which dealt with problems concerning soil conservation. They also gave their fullest cooperation to any program sponsored by the district. Soil Conservation as written in the educational program of work for the period of October 1, 1949 to September 30, 1950 received major emphasis among the problems facing rural people in the County extension Educational Program.

As secretary of the Ida County Soil District, the county extension director attended the regular monthly meetings of the soil district commissioners and assisted in carrying out the program as planned and assisted with events sponsored by the District.

Assistance was given to the soil district commissioners in planning for the Soil Conservation District Annual Short Course by being given the responsibility of publicizing the event in all the county papers, over the radio and in newspapers of the territory. In addition the county extension director served as master of ceremonies for the day's program. Two-hundred and twenty-five residents of the county attended the short course. Boys 4-H clubs in the county assisted the district by selling tickets for the noon luncheon held at the Ida Grove School.

The county extension director appeared before several groups during the year such as women's clubs and neighborhood clubs to present information and show films on soil conservation.

The special activity for the boys 4-H club program in Ida County for 1950 was crop production and soil conservation. Several films were shown and talks were given to the leaders and local members on crop production and soil conservation with 4-H members presenting talks and demonstrations themselves on soil conservation and crop production.

The number of soil samples tested for lime during 1950 were on the increase with 110 samples being tested in the county extension office, with 92 samples of soil being sent to the Iowa State College Soil Testing Laboratory. On March 29, twenty farmers attended the first soil testing interpretation clinic with Marvin Anderson, extension agronomist of Iowa State College conducting the meeting. Information was presented on limestone quality and purity, recommended method of taking soil samples, soil management, crop rotations, interpretation of soil testing results and fertilizer information concerning application, kinds and amounts of fertilizer to use.

A program receiving considerable attention and achieving outstanding results was the Ida County Agricultural Development Council, organized in Ida County for the first time in December of 1949. The purpose of organizing the council was to coordinate and facilitate county wide educational programs and to serve as a clearing agency to avoid conflicting dates on county wide events. Its purpose was also to work on problems of the people of the county and any individual, group or organization could call on the council for assistance.

Membership of the council is composed of farmers, businessmen, and representatives of agricultural agencies and other allied groups, and included vice-chairman, Marion Elson, Vocational agriculture Instructor; Secretary-treasurer, Kenneth Burnett, Soil Conservation Service; Fred Harder, County PMA Chairman; Dale Merrill, Bruce Bye and Louie Dorr, county newspaper editors; R. J. McNelly, county superintendent of schools; R. B. Freese, county board of supervisors chairman; E. G. Moorehead, county weed commissioner; Harold Elk, Soil District Commissioner; Marion Belson, Farm Bureau president; Fred Bischoff, PCA supervisor; Charles Pullen, REA manager; Albert Bird, Charles Bacon and Earl Traver, GI instructors; Bob Deason, Farm Bureau fieldman; George Lamp, District soil Conservationist and the following commercial club representatives: Galva, Crowley Spindler; Ida Grove, Byron Moeller; Battle Creek, Oliver Erickson; Arthur, Clarence Hemer; Holstein, Vess Moser.

Others who assisted the council throughout the year were Edwin Carlson and Ed Reimers, members of the county PMA Committee; Ross Baumann and Henry Dall, Soil District Commissioners; and Joe Clarey and Mitchell Murphy, soil conservation service.

Following was the years program for the council and the committees appointed:

- June - - - - Corn borer, training school and weed control demonstration.
Peterson - - Burnett, Moorehead, Bacon, Bird, Harder, Elson, Moser, Erickson
- July - - - - Soil Conservation Tour (Evening) Chicken Dinner, Night Ball Game, Farmers and Businessmen
Burnett - - Pullen, Moeller, Traver Bischoff, McNelly, Elk
- August - - - County 4-H Fair
Peterson - - Spindler, Hemer, Merrill, Belson, Deason, Freese
- September - Soil Conservation Field Day
Harder - - Elk, Moser, Erickson, Elson, Moeller, Lamp, Burnett, Peterson
- October - - Pasture Improvement Demonstration
Bird - - Bacon, Traver, Pullen, Bischoff, Freese, Dorr
- November - - Herd Improvement Tour
Elk - - Spindler, Hemer, Belson, Deason, Bye
- December - - Agricultural Banquets (Five of them on a community basis)
Galva - - Spindler, Elk, Belson, Freese, Peterson
Ida Grove - - Moeller, Merrill, Pullen, McNelly, Moorehead
Battle Creek - - Erickson, Dorr, Reimers, Bird, Deason
Arthur - - Hemer, Carlson, Burnett, Traver, Elson
Holstein - - Moser, Bye, Harder, Bacon, Bischoff

More than 100 people attended the first Annual Ida County Soil Conservation Field Day. The event took place on the Albert Bird farm located three miles northwest of Ida Grove. Most of the actual work was performed by Ray and Lloyd Braden, tenants on the farm.

Contour plowing, waterway shaping and terracing were demonstrated. A ditch was filled by a tractor and disk tiller without driving the tractor wheels over the ditch bank.

Leonard Bresnahan, Ida Grove, won a hand level, the special prize for staking the nearest level line without the aid of instruments.

On August 2, the soil conservation twilight tour and businessmen-farmer ball game sponsored by the Ida County Agricultural Development Council was held. Fifty rural and urban people made the tour of the Kirkholm and Perion watershed east of Ida Grove. Farms visited were Jens Kirkholm, Cyril Perion, Edward Perion, James Stephan and Floyd Lindberg. On these farms the following soil conservation practices were viewed: gully structures and gully control, effectiveness of good grassed waterways, contouring and terracing. That evening 400 attended the ball game between the farmers of Ida County and the businessmen of Ida Grove. The final score of the game was, farmers - 15, and businessmen - 8. The ball game was held to improve relationships between farmers and businessmen.

PLANNING FOR SOIL CONSERVATION

As of December 31, 1950, this District had 182 active farm conservation plans. This does not include plans cancelled because of change of ownership.

The content of a plan is as follows:

1. A farm soil inventory map (sometimes called soil conservation survey), showing extent and seriousness of erosion.
2. A land use map showing how the farm land will be used and the location of special soil saving practices.
3. A cropping plan showing how to plant the crops to change from square fields to contour fields.
4. A plan of conservation operations which includes detailed instructions for the application of practices agreed upon.
5. Recommendations of practices not agreed upon, but deemed desirable by the farm planner.

During the past year two subwatersheds in the Little Sioux Flood Control Project were completed. Preparations for another subwatershed have been completed and construction will start at a later date. The Little Sioux program includes the application of gully control and flood control structures in major watercourses after individual farmers have installed adequate soil conservation practices on the upland. Necessary cooperation with land owners and public bodies is sometimes difficult to arrange.

APPLYING SOIL CONSERVATION PRACTICES

In 1950 the District was instrumental in establishing major soil saving practices in the following amounts:

Contour Farming	8744 acres
Terracing	15 miles
Contour Field Boundaries	6067 rods
Adequate cropping systems planned	5752 acres

The Ida County PMA reports the following establishment of conservation practices in this District. This is based upon total practices reported and not just those upon which payments were made:

<u>PRACTICE</u>	<u>UNIT</u>	<u>1950</u>	<u>1949</u>
Standard terraces	Mile	10	6*
Contour plow and plant	Acre	8877	7 288
Contour plant only	Acre	8511	7 363
Contour plant row crop	Acre	17388	14 651
Seeding waterways	Sq. Yd.	919375	1 055422
Lime spread	Ton	3548	6 049
Fertilizer spread	Ton	995	838
Green Manure crops	Acre	33367	36 603
Grassed headlands established	Lin. Rod	24719	23 100
Above normal seeding	Acre	17077**	-----

* Practice first used in 1949

** Practice first used in 1950

In 1950 a terrace contractor started operation in the District. This has materially increased the amount of terraces installed.

PROBLEMS

1. The 1950 system of corn acreage allotments is based on past history, modified by judgment of local township PMA committeemen. The law does not provide for ample consideration for good land use. Old Soil Conservation District cooperators who in previous years have reduced corn acreage to comply with good soil conservation practices, now must reduce corn acreages again by the same percentage as non-cooperators who have had a high corn acreage. Better integration of these two programs is badly needed.

2. The shortage of manpower for educational purposes, and in September Mr. Murphy, one of the Service's technicians, left for the service.

3. The difficulty of maintaining long-time land use and soil conservation plans where there is a rapid turnover of owners and operators.

4. Many farmers overlook the need of a good rotation, the seeding of legumes, the replenishing of humus in the soil to assist contouring and terracing practices in following a good soil management program. However, this problem, while still evident is gradually becoming less of an obstacle in the establishing of a sound soil program on the cooperating farms of the District.

5. The lack of funds available in the Ida County Board of Supervisors for roads. This problem becomes critical where the Little Sioux Flood Control Program calls for a large number of structures on public roads.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Space will not permit the naming of all individuals and groups to which this District is indebted for assistance and cooperation. Many farm operators have carried on soil conservation practices without our knowledge. However, it is desirable to name the following organizations and persons, and to express appreciation for all assistance rendered.

Ida County Farm Bureau
United States Soil Conservation Service
Iowa State Soil Conservation Committee
Ida County Production and Marketing Administration
Iowa Agricultural Experiment Station
Ida County Superintendent of Schools
Iowa Agricultural Extension Service
Production and Marketing Administration
Sioux City Journal Tribune
Sioux City Chamber of Commerce

Battle Creek Times	Arthur Trust and Savings Bank
Galva Tribune	First Trust and Savings Bank (Galva)
Holstein Advance	Holstein State Bank
Pioneer-Record (Ida Grove)	Ida County State Bank (Ida Grove)
	First State Bank (Battle Creek)

PROGRESS SUMMARY
IDA COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT
ESTABLISHED - Feb. 19, 1945
WORK UNIT OFFICE OPENED - Mar. 13, 1946

	<u>In 1950</u>	<u>To Date</u>
Sub-Watershed Groups Organized	1	12
Soil Conservation Surveys (acres)	22,960	61,948
Farm Conservation Plans Completed (NO)	47	182
(Acres)	8040	31,849
Acres Contouring Laid Out	8744	
Miles Terraces Built	15	42
Acres Definite Crop Rotation Planned	5752	23266
Educational Meetings Held (NO)	27	92
(Attend)	1114	2733
News Articles	27	134
Demonstrations (NO)	1	32
(Attend)	110	288
Radio Talks	1	3
Birthday Party (NO)	1	5
(Attend)	225	1050

Ross Baumann

ROSS BAUMANN, Chairman
Ida County Soil Conservation District