



Ida

soil & water conservation week

April 28 -
May 5

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Special
Edition of:

THE REMINDER

Ida Grove, IA

April 30,
2019

Ida Soil and Water **CONSERVATION**
Annual Report

Ida Soil and Water CONSERVATION Annual Report

January – December, '18
July 1, '17 – June 30, '18 FY

**Presented by the Ida Soil and Water
Conservation District Commissioners**

Roger Bumann, Chair

Kyle McBride, Vice Chair

Wally Johnson

Marty Boyle, Treasurer

Jolene Riessen

Assistants:

Joyce Johnson, Co-Treasurer

Jerry Jensen, Inspector

Ida Soil & Water Conservation District
Tel 712-364-2124 ext. 3 • 5973 State Hwy 175, Ida Grove, IA 51445
barbara.knudsen@ia.nacdn.net



Photo Submitted

Ida County Soil & Water Commissioners: Front row from left: Lorne Miller, Joyce Johnson, Wally Johnson and Roger Bumann. Back row: Kyle McBride, Jolene Riessen, Barb Knudsen and Jerry Jensen.

**Working hand in hand with
Ida County Soil & Water Conservation
to fund conservation projects.**

In 2018:

- 1,540 CRP acres native grass plantings and maintenance
- 117 acres of food plots
- 2,100 trees and shrubs planted

Thank you to our
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annual banquet.



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**Demo
Terraces
Waterways
Conservation Work**

2018 Senior Scholarship Spotlight



Katie Knudsen

Katie Knudsen is the daughter of Cordell and Barb Knudsen of Ida Grove. Katie will be continuing her on-line education with WITCC in Sioux City. Katie is working towards her accounting certificate. Her future plans are to farm and raise livestock.



Jordyn Fredericks

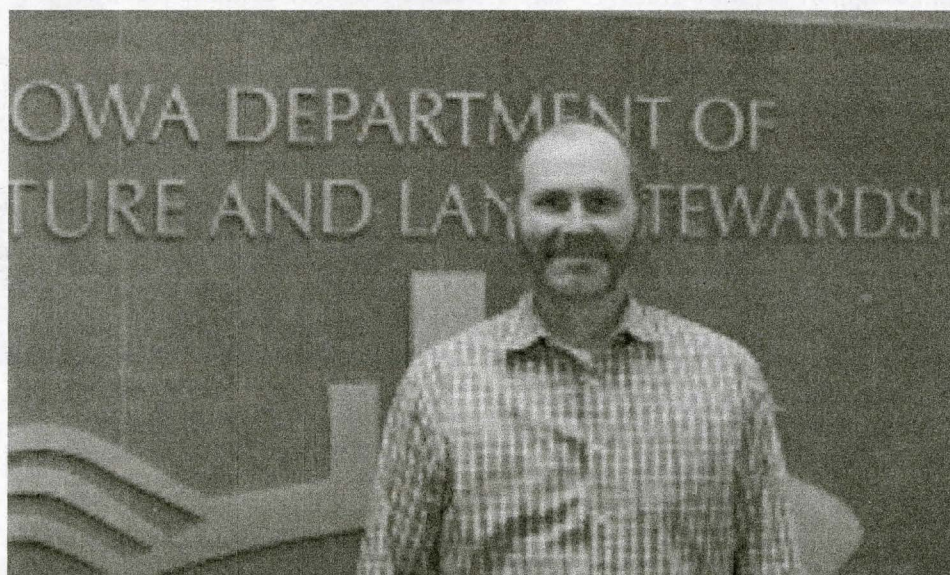
Jordyn Fredericks is the daughter of Mary Clough and Dennis Fredericks of Ida Grove. Jordyn will be attending DMACC in Ankeny and transferring to Iowa State University with a major in animal science. Her future plans are to work in an agricultural field.

Congratulations and Best of Luck to Katie and Jordyn. They are both recipients of \$1,000 scholarships and are graduates from OABCIG High School.

Conservation Thoughts

When I was a kid growing up on the farm, I remember Mom and Dad used to take us kids for an evening drive around the countryside. At the time, I never really understood the purpose, but I enjoyed them none the less. My dad was in his own little world, arm out the window, commenting once in a while how great Jim's beans looked or what a great stand of corn Roy had. Mom even seemed to get a little peace and quiet during these drives as my brothers and I were mesmerized by the cool breeze and the orange glow of the sunset in the horizon. On one of these excursions, I remember asking my dad what those grass lines in the field were. "Those are terraces," he replied without hesitation. At the time, his explanation of why they were out there didn't make much sense to a 10-year old, but he was my dad and he knew everything.

Now that I'm older and work in the conservation field, I've seen lots of new technologies that make farming and livestock production much more efficient and productive. Technology and research have led to the development of new practices, such as bioreactors, saturated buffers and nitrogen mitigating wetlands, but technology and research have also confirmed



Vince Sitzmann, Field Services Chief
IDALS-DSCWQ

that many of the practices that farmers and landowners were building back in the early forties are still effective today.

The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship has partnered with farmers and landowners for more than four decades to support the adoption of proven conservation practices. Recently, the Department partnered with Iowa State University, Iowa Department

of Natural Resources, Iowa Nutrient Research and Demonstration Council, Iowa Nutrient Research Center, and the National Laboratory for Agriculture and the Environment to complete a statewide effort to identify and map six types of common conservation practices. The study is the most comprehensive inventory of conservation practices in the nation. An analysis of the results shows the value of this pub-

lic and private investment in conservation would be 6.2 billion in today's dollars. Additional analysis work is underway to quantify the water quality impacts these practices are having in terms of reduced sediment and phosphorus loads to Iowa's lakes, rivers and streams.

The initial number of practices identified throughout the state by the mapping project include:

- 114,400 pond dams
- 327,900 acres of grassed waterways
- 506,100 terraces stretching 88,874 miles
- 246,100 water and sediment basins stretching 12,555 miles
- 557,700 acres of contour buffer strips
- 109,800 acres of strip cropping

These numbers reflect a tremendous amount of conservation work that has been completed on Iowa's productive farm ground. Today, as I'm driving down the highway with my kids, I'm always quick to point out the cover crops and conservation practices I see in the countryside, particularly the newly constructed ones. I'm not sure if I do it to educate my kids about agriculture and conservation or if it's more for my gratification knowing that conservation work is still being done. I suppose it's a little of both.

Another Record Year for Conservation

For the second consecutive year, Iowa farmers and landowners substantially stepped up their commitment to conservation through Farm Bill programs. In fiscal year 2018, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) obligated more than \$63 million to Iowa farmers and landowners, a 35 percent increase from FY 2017.

Last year, Iowa farmers received \$46.4 million in USDA assistance to implement conservation practices on their land through Farm Bill programs administered by NRCS. This was a 20 percent, or \$10 million, increase.

These financial investments help support ag community economies because more dollars are spent at local coops, paid to contractors and invested in fencing, trees and seed. But, more importantly, it also reflects the growing investment in private lands' conservation by Iowa's farmers and landowners.

More than 450,000 acres, an area the size of Webster County, will be treated by Iowa landowners and farmers through FY 2018 Farm Bill contracts. To put this in perspective, this area is equal to all the cropland acres in Connecticut, Massachusetts and New Hampshire combined.



**Kurt Simon, Iowa NRCS
State Conservationist**

Record-Setting Year for EQIP

Through EQIP, NRCS obligated a record \$30 million through 1,414 contracts. Nearly one-third of Iowa's EQIP funding went to grassland-based practices such as watering facilities, fence, and pipeline to support livestock grazing systems. In July, NRCS announced special EQIP funding to support livestock grazing systems

in drought-stricken areas of southeast Iowa. Through the special funding, livestock producers signed 362 EQIP contracts totaling more than \$3.6 million that will treat natural resource concerns on about 38,800 pasture acres.

This funding came at a crucial time for southern Iowa livestock producers. Ponds were drying up and grazing conditions were worsening after consecutive years of low rainfall in that part of the state. We felt if we could provide extra assistance for water well access and rotational grazing, it would help to improve forages and natural resource issues.

Expanding Conservation Assistance

According to the 2017 Ag Census, there are about 88,000 farmers in this state. That is about 300 farmers for each NRCS field office staff person. Even with 100 field offices across the state, and our team of dedicated conservation professionals, we know we can't fully support conservation efforts with NRCS staff alone. To help bridge this gap, Iowa NRCS annually invests in the Iowa Partners for Conservation (IPC) Awards to encourage collaboration in addressing some of Iowa's most pressing natural resource concerns. NRCS identifies potential proj-

ects for leveraging NRCS and partner resources to build conservation technical capacity to develop and implement effective project outcomes. This year, up to \$5 million will be awarded to conservation partners through IPC. Projects may be farm-based, multicounty, small watershed, or statewide in scope. Collaborative projects that provide on-the-ground support for Iowa NRCS Field Offices are highly encouraged.

A New Farm Bill

After many months of hard work, Congress passed a new Farm Bill which was signed by President Trump on December 20, 2018. According to USDA Secretary Sonny Purdue, this Farm Bill is "more evolutionary, rather than revolutionary." It bolsters farm safety net programs, protects federal crop insurance, and maintains strong rural development and research initiatives.

As with all new Farm Bills, there will be much more info in the weeks and months to come as rules are developed and programs are rolled out. We look forward to working together with Iowa farmers and conservation partners as we strive towards another record-breaking year in 2019.

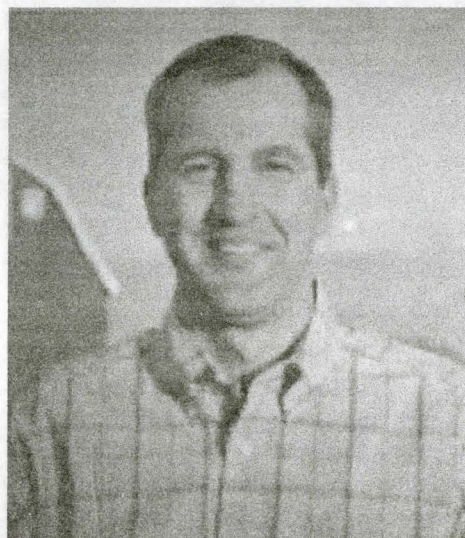
Notes from Mike Naig, Iowa Secretary of Agriculture

As I travel the state, I see Iowans both on the farm and in town who take being good stewards of the land very seriously. Iowans in communities across the state care deeply about protecting our state's natural resources. They want to leave the land better for their children and grandchildren.

I'm proud of the work of our team at the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship and the many partners across the state committed to soil conservation and improving water quality.

For example, just in the last year we saw:

- 2,800 farmers signed up to invest an estimated \$9 million in funding to match \$5 million in state cost share funds to adopt cover crops, no-till or strip till, or use a nitrification inhibitor when applying fall fertilizer



**Mike Naig,
Iowa Secretary of Agriculture**

- 760,000 acres of cover crops in Iowa in 2017, an increase of 22 percent from

the year before

- \$420 million in funding for programs with a water quality benefit, a \$32 million increase from the prior year

- 64 demonstration projects located across the state to help implement and demonstrate water quality practices

We are seeing improvements within the small watersheds that have been a focus of our efforts and now moving beyond demonstration projects to focus on implementation efforts within larger targeted watersheds.

We are also looking at new ways to expand adoption of proven practices such as cover crops. Last year, we began a three-year demonstration project that provides a crop insurance premium reduction for farmers who use cover crops. We are pleased by the initial response and are working toward continued expansion of cover crops across in

the state.

Thanks to the hard work of the Legislature and Governor Reynolds, we are fortunate to now have long-term water quality funding in place. The legislation that was passed and signed into law commits more than \$280 million to water quality efforts in Iowa over the next 12 years

The Department will receive \$2 million this year, \$4 million next year and then \$15 million annually through this legislation. We are targeting this new funding towards conservation infrastructure practices, such as wetlands, saturated buffers and bioreactors

We are on the right path but have more work to do. I look forward to continuing to work with our incredible farmers and hundreds of partners throughout Iowa to make even more significant water quality improvements in our state.



Photo Submitted

Pollinator plantings: This field is located on L67 about a mile south of Highway 20 in Ida County. Animal pollinators, like bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds just to name a few, are an integral part of our agricultural system. More than $\frac{1}{4}$ of the food and beverages that we consume are products of animal pollinators. Pollinator seed mixes are primarily forbs (wildflowers) and a small amount of native grass seed. Native plantings like this not only help the pollinators, but they also provide habitat for other wildlife, help in reducing soil erosion and are beautiful when in full bloom.

Conservation terms you should know

Field Borders: Field borders are a strip of grass around the perimeter of a field where end rows run up and down the hill...usually 5% grade and steeper. They are helpful in reducing sheet, rill and gully erosion and provide benefits to wildlife and extra forage for livestock.

Grassed Waterway: Waterways are areas of permanent grass where water concentrates and runs off the field. The grass slows down the run off and guides it safely from the field. Waterways should be placed where gully erosion is a problem.





Photos Submitted

Tour: Ida County Soil and Conservation commissioners toured the county and explored cover crops planted by local farmers. Commissioners that stopped at the Rick and Jerry McBride farm were Wally and Joyce Johnson and Marty Boyle, along with District Conservationist Lorne Miller. Pictured below is rye grass planted as a cover crop.

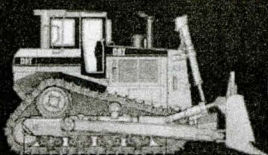


Photo Submitted

Residue and Tillage Management: Residue management in Ida County is managing the amount and distribution of the plant residue on the soil surface throughout the crop growing season. This practice should be used in all cropland fields to reduce soil and water erosion, maintain and increase organic matter, increase moisture availability to crops during the growing season and provide cost savings to the operation by reducing fuel consumption.

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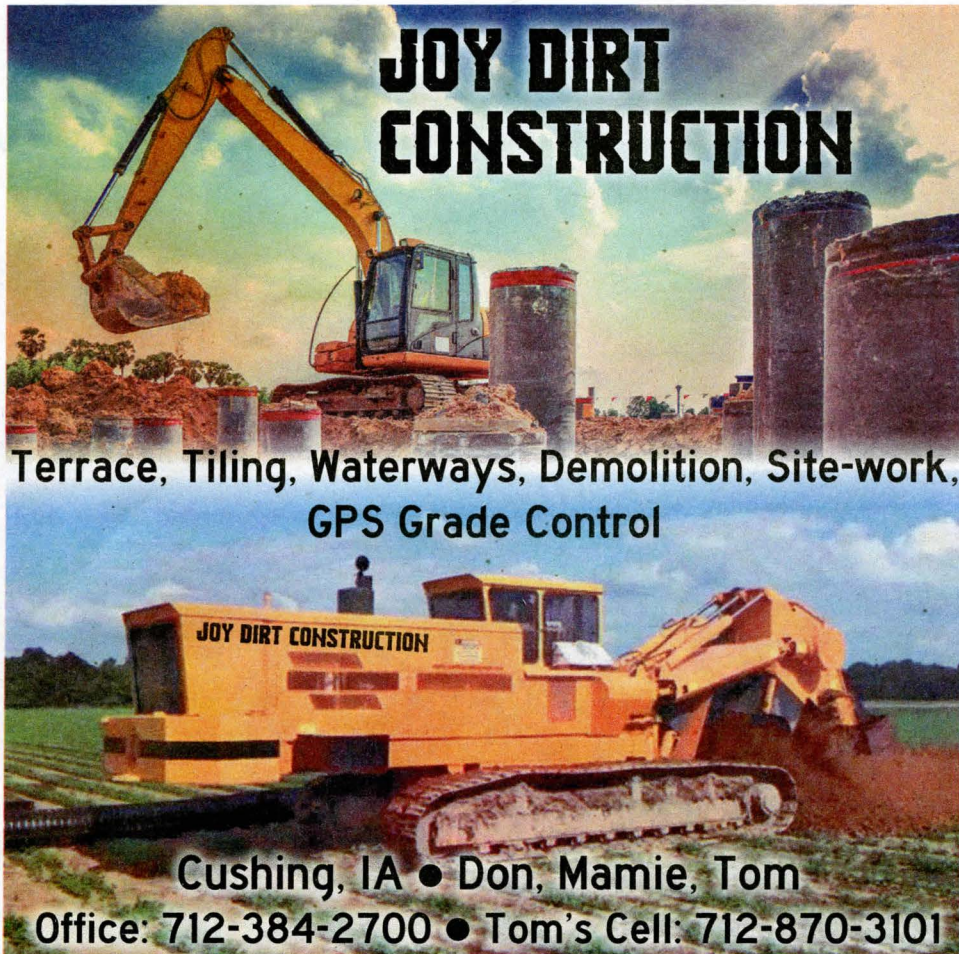
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Photo by: Mike Thornhill

Arbor Day: Lorne Miller of the Ida County Natural Resources Conservation Service talked to OABCIG students about the importance of trees on Arbor Day.



Photo by: Amy Forbes

Tree planting: The Ida County Conservation Board held a tree planting at Moorehead Park. Fifty Black Hills spruce trees donated by the Ida County Pheasants Forever with a grant from the Audubon Society were planted north of the playground area. The Ida Grove Cub Scouts and their families assisted with the planting. Here, Danielle Bennett, Ida County naturalist, shows how to loosen the roots on the tree.

Less of this.



More of this.



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Financial Summary July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2018

Commissioner Expense Fund (1M)

Income - \$2,350.00

Expenses - \$2,609.94

\$259.94 short fall is paid by revolving funds

Revolving Expense Fund

Balance forward - \$20,650.42

Income - \$15,262.25

Expenses - \$15,741.07

Outstanding checks - \$6,439.64

New Balance - \$26,611.24

Maintenance Fund

Balance Forward - \$5,294.57

Income - \$19.46

Expenses - \$2,607.91

New Balance - \$2,706.12

Maintenance Fund CD's - used only to repair 100% federally funded watershed structures

First State Bank \$26,381.89

United Bank of Iowa \$50,468.00

United Bank of Iowa \$26,649.44

General Fund CD's from tree sales and donations

First State Bank \$57,970.43

United Bank of Iowa \$63,418.74

United Bank of Iowa \$10,471.85

Cost Share Funds - The IFIP (Iowa Financial Incentive Program)

provides cost-share assistance to landowners for installing soil and water conservation practices

Allocation + Supplemental \$72,378.00

Previous years balance \$30,269.46

Cost share paid for completed projects - \$56,690.22

Obligated for projects not completed - \$45,066.71

Balance to be recalled \$890.53

REAP Practice is a conservation program funded by the state legislature for cost-share assistance in the protection of our environment.

Allocation - \$9,693.75

Previous years balance - \$2,016.00

Cost share paid for completed projects - \$6,936.25

Obligated for projects not completed - \$4,758.25

Balance to be recalled \$15.25

REAP Forestry and Native Grasses is a conservation program funded by the state legislature for cost-share assistance in the protection of our environment.

Allocation - \$2,424.87

Obligated for projects not completed - \$2,424.00

Cost share paid for completed projects - \$0.00

Balance to be recalled \$0.87

"A nation that destroys its soils destroys itself. Forests are the lungs of our land, purifying the air and giving fresh strength to our people." Quote from Franklin Roosevelt

Cost Share Assistance

The Ida SWCD and NRCS offer various cost share programs to help landowners and producers with resource concerns on their farms. If you are looking for assistance, please stop into the office and they can answer your questions and get you signed up for the right programs.

Programs offered include:

IFIP Cost Share Funds

- ✓ *Assistance up to 50% of the costs for installing conservation practices that meet NRCS standard and Specifications.
- ✓ *Terraces, rebuilding a terrace system over 20 years old, waterways, drain tile in conjunction with terraces or waterways, and water and sediment basins are just a few practices we will cost share on.
- ✓ *A one-time payment of \$25 per acres up to 160 acres for seeding a cover crop.
- ✓ *A one-time payment for seeding down pasture or hay land from crop ground.

REAP Practice Funds

- *These funds can only be used in the Soldier, Garfield, Crawford Creek and Pleasant Valley Watersheds for building terraces, waterways, water and sediment basins, and rebuilding terrace systems over 20 years old.
- *Assistance up to 50% of the costs for installing conservation practices that meet NRCS standards and specifications.
- *Cost share for seeding down pasture and hay land from crop ground.

REAP Forestry/Native Grasses

- ❖ *Assistance for planting windbreaks, tree plantings and grasses.
- ❖ *Assistance up to 75% or \$1500 for a three-row windbreak.

Water Quality Incentive Program

- \$25/acre up to 160 acres for first time seeding of cover crops
- \$10/acre up to 160 acres for first time no-till
- \$3/acre up to 160 acres for first time user of a fall applied nitrifica-

tion inhibitor with anhydrous - Nitrapyrin only

- \$15/acre up to 160 acres for previous users of seeding cover crops

EQIP

- ✓ Funding for practices on crop ground, pastures and for livestock producers
- ✓ Funding is contingent on a ranking score

CSP (Conservation Stewardship Program)

- ❖ Helps farmers maintain and improve existing conservation systems
 - ❖ Payments are earned based upon conservation performance
- Stop by or call to learn more about these programs or any other technical assistance or soil health questions you may have.

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Conservation Accomplishments 10/1/2017 to 9/30/2018

Terraces – 77,880 feet
 Cover Crops – 1,653 acres
 Grassed Waterways – 10 acres
 No-till/reduced till – 9,486 acres
 Conservation Cover – 628 acres
 Cropland acres with conservation applied to improve soil quality – 12,754 acres
 Cropland acres with conservation applied to improve water quality – 12,809 acres
 Cropland acres with conservation applied to improve soil health – 2,068 acres

District Activities (January-December 2018)

- Held 11 regular meetings and an organizational meeting
- Election of Officers, set district cost share rates, set district policy and reviewed financial policy
- Awarded two \$1,000 scholarships
- Completed watershed inspections and repairs
- Sold 2,100 trees and shrubs
- Donations made to the CDI scholarship fund and to the Cherokee SWCD for the Envirothon
- Donated \$195 in ethanol, pork and beef certificates to the Ida County Fair
- Paid CDI and NACD dues
- Completed the District Audit
- Hosted an EQIP Local Working Group Meeting
- Hosted a Producer Appreciation Day
- Had a liaison on the Source Water Protection Committee for Ida Grove and Holstein well head areas
- Attended the watershed meeting held in Correctionville



Photo Submitted

Ida County Windbreak: A windbreak consists of 3 or more rows of trees and shrubs strategically planted around building sites to manage snow drift, provide food and shelter for wildlife, protect farmsteads and livestock from extreme temperatures and wind and help manage odors from livestock facilities.

HELPING PEOPLE HELP THE LAND: EPHEMERAL GULLY EROSION SOLUTIONS...

by Jason Johnson,
 Public Affairs Specialist,
 USDA-Natural Resources
 Conservation Service,
 Des Moines, Iowa

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has a new planning resource for farmers who are having problems controlling ephemeral gully erosion on their cropland. "Conservation Choices: Controlling Ephemeral Gullies" is the latest in a series of planning guides developed to provide natural resource conservation solutions. The new guide is part of a NRCS campaign called "Fix It, Don't Disc It" that encourages Iowa farmers to stop ephemeral gully erosion with conservation systems.

Ephemeral gullies are the small ditches in fields that farmers smooth with a disc before planting crops. Ephemeral gullies are natural drainageways that form in the same location after additional runoff events. When farmers fill in gullies, they often use loose topsoil treated with fertilizer and herbicides. Erosion from ephemeral gullies can then contribute to excess phosphorus and nutrients in streams and rivers.

Best Practices—Iowa NRCS is promoting the following practices as the best ways to control ephemeral gully erosion: Grassed Waterways – Planting grass or

other perennial vegetation where water usually concentrates as it runs off a field.

Terraces – Earthen structures built across the drainageway, which segments the ephemeral area into short sections. Terraces effectively shorten slope length and reduce the drainage area.

Water and Sediment Control Basins – Similar to terraces but built to form a sediment trap and water detention basin with a stable outlet.

Critical Area Planting – Establishing permanent grass or other perennial vegetation in areas with high erosion rates. Typically used for smaller areas.

Other Practice to Help with Smaller Gullies (Seasonal Protection)

No-Till – Growing crops without disturbing (tilling) the soil from planting through harvest. No-till is most effective in reducing ephemeral gully erosion in small watersheds with relatively wide and flat drainageways.

Cover Crops – Crops, such as cereal rye, oats, and radishes, provide seasonal cover and other conservation benefits. For ephemeral gully erosion, cover crops provide annual or temporary protection and are most effective with a no-till system.

Practice Maintenance

Because of larger equipment, properly maintaining conservation practices can be challenging for farmers. The best prac-

tices for ephemeral gully erosion control often require perennial vegetation or proper spacing down the hillside. The width of newer spray booms, for example, makes it difficult to keep herbicides from drifting to terraces and grassed waterways. Terraces and water and sediment control basins also require shorter spacing from the top to the bottom of a hillside, which can make maneuvering spray equipment between terraces or basins difficult.

Here are a few maintenance tips for farmers and custom applicators:

•Turn off spray equipment when crossing grassed waterways.

•Do not plant crops along a grassed waterway. Instead, plant on the contour perpendicular to the waterway, making sure to lift the planter while crossing the waterway.

•Avoid driving through grassed waterways when it is wet or when water is flowing down the waterway.

•Don't spray chemicals on windy days and keep spray equipment far enough away from grass covered terraces to avoid killing perennial vegetation.

•In full-field cover crop systems, allow early season growth in areas susceptible to ephemeral gully erosion. Terminate those areas later with the second herbicide pass.

Compliance

Since the passage of the 1985 Farm Bill, farmers have been required to annually control sheet, rill and ephemeral erosion on fields that are classified as highly erodible. Each spring, NRCS conducts random compliance reviews on highly erodible fields to determine if erosion has been adequately controlled.

State Conservationist Kurt Simon says Iowa NRCS employees will work closely with farmers to help them meet erosion control requirements. "If erosion control issues are identified during general program assistance, producers may be given time to make adjustments and install needed conservation practices," he said. Simon says Iowa NRCS offers financial assistance to help farmers install or implement conservation practices. Landowners can sign up for voluntary Farm Bill conservation programs on a continual basis at their local NRCS office. "NRCS staff are available to help farmers identify ephemeral erosion in their fields or where it may occur, and then assist them with applying the conservation practices that best fit their farming operations," said Simon.

Meeting erosion control requirements may not only affect eligibility for Farm Bill program benefits, but also Federal crop insurance premium subsidies.

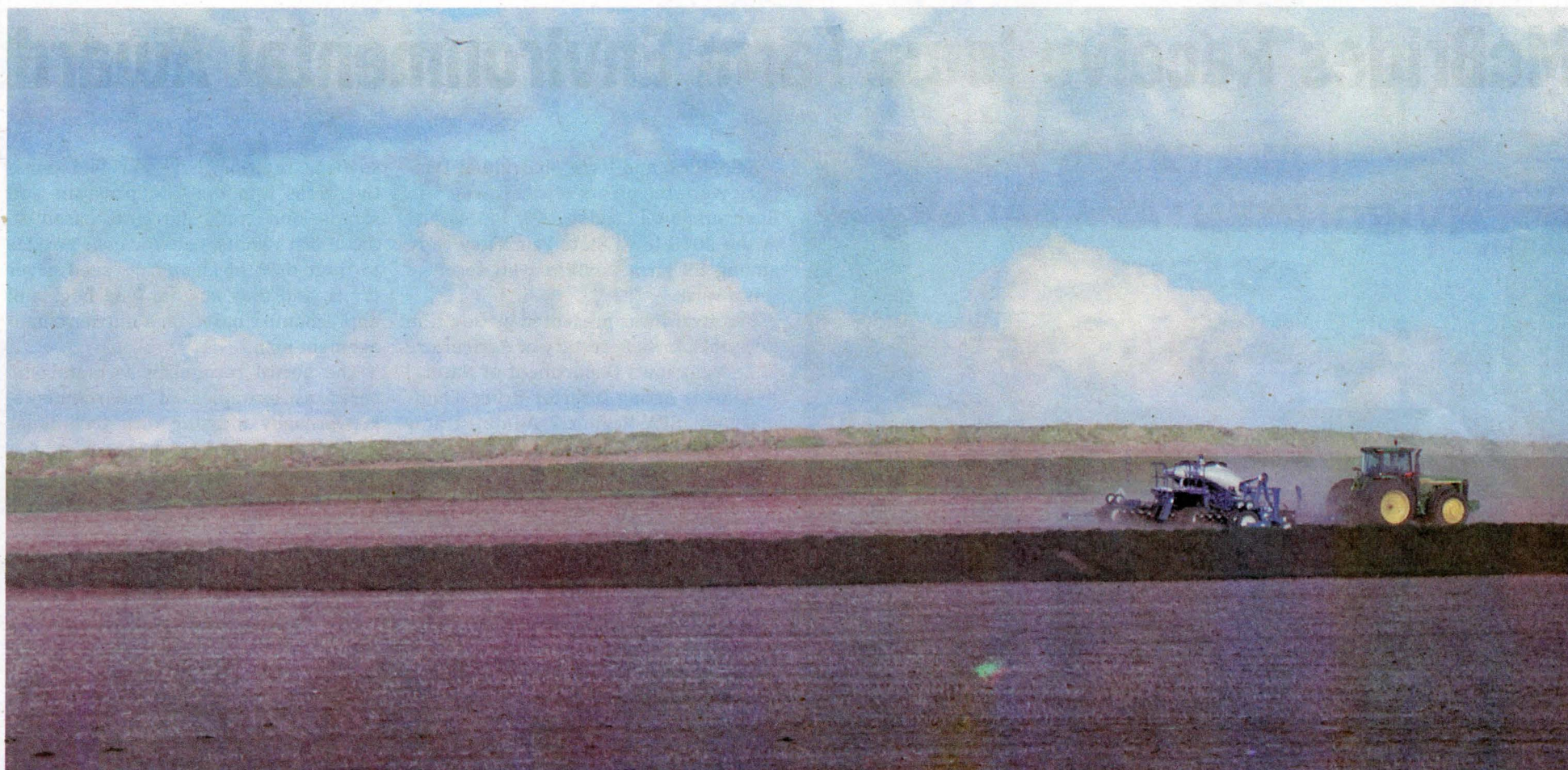
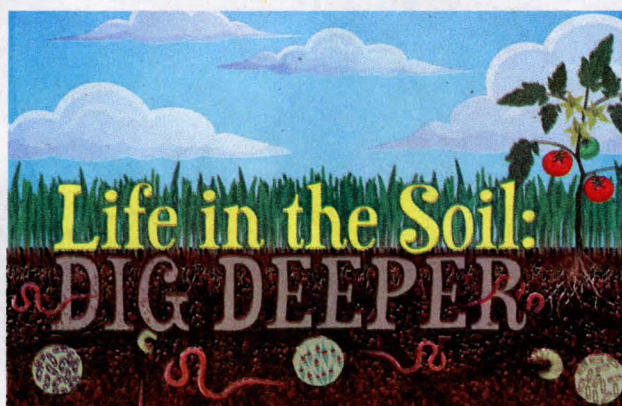


Photo by: Amy Forbes

Terrace System: Terraces in Ida County are earthen structures that transform long hillside slopes into a series of shorter slopes. They usually fit the contour of the land. Terraces reduce sheet and rill erosion, prevent gully development and reduce the rate of water run-off. The grassed back slope provides wildlife habitat.



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McBrides Receive Iowa Farm Environmental Award



Photo Submitted

Environmental award: McBride Farms (Jerry McBride, Rick McBride and Kyle McBride from Ida and Woodbury counties) were presented with the Iowa Farm Environmental Leader Award during a ceremony at the 2018 Iowa State Fair. Pictured above, at center: Kyle McBride with other state and regional officials.

Kyle, Rick, and Jerry McBride of Danbury were recipients of the Iowa Farm Environmental Leader Award in August at the 2018 Iowa State Fair. They were among 69 farm families who received this award.

The award was presented by Gov. Kim Reynolds, Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Mike Naig, Iowa Department of Natural Resources Acting Director Bruce Trautman and EPA Region 7 Administrator Jim Gulliford.

The McBrides use no-till in their corn

soybean rotation, have enrolled sensitive acres into the CRP program, soil sample and apply nutrients based on those test results, use low drift nozzles to limit drift of chemicals, seed cover crops, and they custom feed hogs and apply manure based on a nutrient management plan.

The award recognizes farmers who serve as examples of environmental stewards by utilizing new techniques and best management practices in their operations.

“After you eliminate all the economic, social, and political reasons for practicing soil conservation, you still have the most compelling one left; Stewardship-the obligation to care for the land properly.” *Anonymous*

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