

PROTECT & PRESERVE OUR LAND THROUGH CONSERVATION

Soil and Water Conservation Week September 18-24, 1988

Holst nurtures seedlings, plants valuable windbreak

By Ferd Kvidera
"Why are you planting those trees? You'll never get any good out of them!" These were the comments heard 20 years ago by Henry Holst, retired farmer who lives about four miles northwest of Clutier in Perry Township.

Since that time, Henry has not only had the pleasure of watching the trees grow, he has also reaped the benefits of a good windbreak for a number of years. Those trees planted 20 years ago are now over 20 feet tall, and give excellent protection from the wind for the Holst's ranch-type house, as well as trapping snow before it gets to the farmyard.

The first planting covered a distance of ten rods, and Henry didn't stop there. He continued adding to the windbreak by purchasing small eight to 12 inch trees in gallon pots and nurturing them in his garden until he felt they were large enough to transplant to the existing

windbreak planting. By raising them in the garden, Holst was able to cultivate between them to keep grass and weeds from competing for moisture and nutrients.

The original planting, which is west of the house, now is extended to the north an additional 15 rods, and wraps around the north side of the farmyard for another 10 rods. His final planting was three years ago, because, "I don't know where I'd plant them anymore." The last purchased trees are now squeezing out the garden space, so this is probably the last year for the garden.

The first trees were planted in accordance with ASCS guidelines at 16 feet apart for both the trees and rows. Henry has kept the grass mowed between them "You have to take care of it; can't grow grass and trees in the same place." But he is running out of maneuvering space, as the trees have grown to the size that there is no more room for the lawn mower

between them.

The later planted trees have been spaced 10 to 12 feet apart because Holst figures he will get the good out of them sooner. A row of honeysuckle is on the outside perimeter of all the evergreen trees. The later planted conifers are partially shaded by a row of deciduous trees, but they are gradually being taken down for firewood by friends of Henry.

The first planting consists of one row of Colorado blue spruce, two rows of Norway spruce and Black Hills spruce, and the row of honeysuckle. The later planted trees are all Colorado blue spruce. To add to the beauty of the farmstead, two magnificent concolor fir trees grace the front lawn.



Henry Holst of Clutier has created a solid windbreak on his property, by nurturing seedlings in his garden until they are big enough to transplant.



Soil Conservation Staff for Tama County includes (front, from left): Audrey Wheeler, Melody Bro and Dixie Caloud. Back, from left, are Brett Bro, Mark Kouba, Wayne Kos and Craig Stange. See page 13 for remaining staff photo.



Tips on Conservation cover crops

Cover planted on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) lands has some obvious benefits to summer nesting wildlife. Residual cover, or annual plant growth left unmowed, likewise provides valuable habitat through winter and early spring.

Residual vegetation can provide daytime loafing and feeding shelter for pheasants and other wildlife during mild to average Iowa winters. It also offers secure, early nesting cover the following spring, before new growth

offers safe nesting sites on cropland, haylands and many roadsides.

CRP lands not used for hay during declared emergencies can yield outstanding residual cover. Especially good is switchgrass, a native perennial grass now frequently planted for CRP cover.

Forage sorghum, sorghum-Sudangrass and similar long-season cover crops on annual set-aside (ACK) acres also offer excellent residual cover for wintering wildlife. Such cover crops, if left standing,

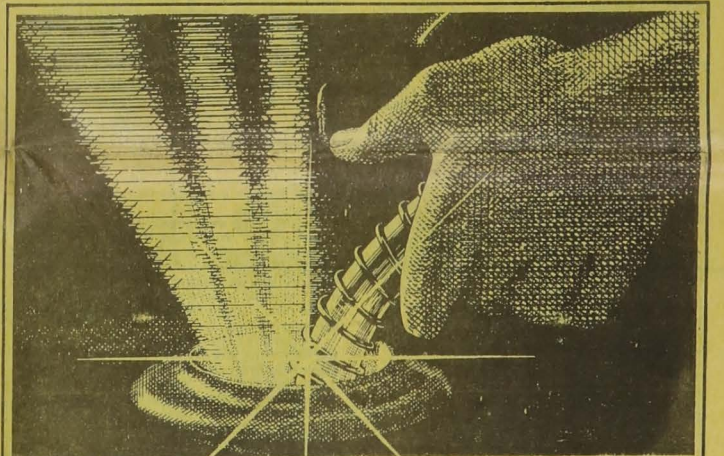
serve as wildlife food and provide very good storm shelter for Midwestern blizzards. Unless haying of such cover crops is absolutely required, farmers should be encouraged to leave these ACR lands uncultivated through winter and early spring.

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) receives many questions about fall planting of trees or grasses, both on CRP and other lands. Given the widespread drought experienced to date and the general

lack of adequate soil moisture so late in the season, fall plantings of trees and perennial grasses should probably be avoided this year. In isolated areas of adequate rainfall, fall plantings might still be a possibility.

Feel free to call me at (615) 484-3752 or visit with the Soil Conservation District office for more information on fall plantings, and for tips on managing your CRP or ACR residual cover.

By Bob Kurtz
DNR Wildlife Biologist



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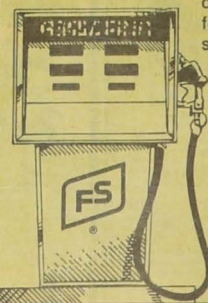
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Notes from the commissioners

Challenges

It seems like every year we have challenges to face. This year it was bugs and no rain.

One thing that shouldn't be as much of a challenge as you might think is your Conservation Plan for the 1985 Food Security Act. With the flexibility that is available, developing a workable plan is possible for everyone.

Most of us will have to make some changes in how we farm. None of these changes will be to something unknown, all will be workable. Some plans might take a little bit of effort though. The best thing is that every change will be saving more of our own precious soil.

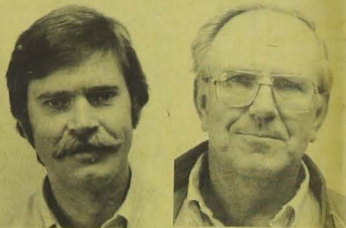
Saving soil, that's this challenge. Meeting this challenge will be a benefit to all involved.

Dan Bruene,
Chairman



Russell Lyon

Patricia Kadrmars



Dan Bruene

Frank Bro

The drought of 1988 has one redeeming feature - very little soil erosion! There wasn't enough rain to erode the soil even if the rows ran straight up the hill and the waterways were abused.

I do believe that conservation practices such as minimum tillage, contours, strips and terraces that hold the soil also conserve water, and crops planted on those areas had an additional advantage this year. The exception seems to be no-till into sod-and second-year corn.

My son Bob and I theorize that the problem with no-till was that the furrow behind the planter coulters didn't get closed around the seed as it does in a normal year! One fellow told me he moldboard plowed corn stalks and it really dried out. His second year corn is a disaster. Just an idea.

Some of my neighbors have expressed concern about the soil conservation requirements of the 1985 farm bill. They believe they will be required to build terraces on their HEL land, which is not the case. Requirements of the law are that a farm plan must be completed by 1990 and it must be implemented by 1995 in order to qualify for federal farm programs such as crop loans, ACP, wool subsidy, grain storage loans, FmHA loans, etc. The farm plan will designate practices necessary to control erosion at a very liberal level. These may be cultural practices or conservation practices which are selected by the farm owner and/or operator.

We all know that a steeper slope suffers from more erosion and consequently yields a smaller crop unless we are willing to use certain conservation measures. Producers who believe in using a plow may continue to do so if they are willing to use a rotation with lots of grass in it or establish conservation practices that help prevent erosion.

The point I wish to make is not to get all "bent out of shape" about the 1985 farm bill until you meet with SCS personnel and get the facts. The changes necessary to meet soil loss requirements are generally not expensive. Cultural practices that leave 40% or more of the crop residue off on the contour are very effective and inexpensive. Seeding turn rows, maintaining waterways, stripcropping, and longer rotations are also inexpensive. Remember, the producer can select which practices he wants to install on his farm.

Russell Lyon,
Commissioner

When speaking with the farmers about bringing their soil erosion down to five tons per acre, the big concern is, do I have to spend all that money for terraces in order to comply? We all know that there are going to have to be changes in our operation as we go along. However, there are many alternatives to terraces, which are all described in the packet you have, or will receive.

For many, no-till will solve your problems. For others rotations, stripcropping, or simply contouring and leaving residue on top.

These changes are perhaps hard for us to accept. If we can do it with a positive attitude and a feeling that we want to save our resources, it will be a lot easier for all of us. I know the future generation will benefit from it.

Franklin Bro,
Commissioner

we have.

And if you get done early because of a short crop, don't fall plow. Get your "farm plan" done and map out your weedy spots so you're ready next year.

Pat Kadrmars,
Commissioner

A concern of mine for many years has been the vegetative management of our roadsides in Tama County. Through the use of 2.4D following World War II, we "cleaned up" our road ditches through annual blanket spraying and transformed them from wildlife havens into an ecological desert of smooth bromegrass. However, the bromegrass is not sufficient to halt the continual invasion of weeds, so the spraying has continued for the last 40 years, with no apparent end in sight.

The entire state is on a "prairie grass kick" at the present time, and Tama County is as interested in it as anyone else. A sod created by a good stand of prairie grass will resist a weed invasion, thus cutting down or eliminating the need for roadside spraying, and an occurrence of native prairie flowers can add color and beauty to our countryside. The road ditch is about the only place in our totally cultivated landscape for a wildflower to survive.

However, establishment of a prairie sod roadside is difficult and expensive, and according to our present experience is feasible only where vegetation has been removed and bare soil exposed. New grading and ditch cleaning give this possibility, but presently there is no reason to put expensive seed into a cleaned out ditch until farming practices in the watershed control erosion and keep the ditch from silting in again. The main problem areas of weeds in the road ditches occur when heavy amounts of silt have washed in to bury the existing vegetation, and where the spray boom, loaded with grass killers, is swung out over the

Kvidera, see p. 11



Sept. 18-24, 1988



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Due to this week's special 7-page section on Soil and Water Conservation, Ferd Kvidera's "Corn Fodder" column will not be seen until next week's Tama News-Herald.



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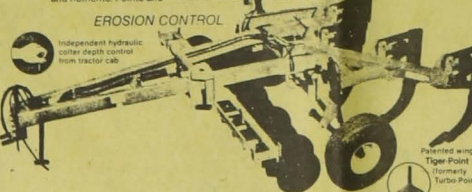
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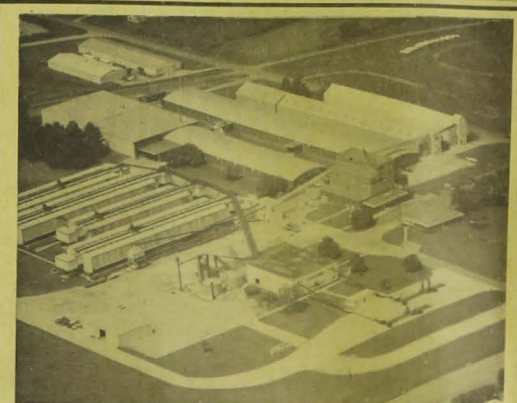
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Vavra Saw Mill enters third generation

By Ferd Kvidera
A family business which started 52 years ago is now in its third generation of operating owners. The Vavra Saw Mill, which is located south of Chelsea on V-18, just across the Iowa River, is now operated by Jerry and Virgil Vavra and their mother, Louise. The saw mill was originally started by their grandfather, with the assistance of the Vavra's father, who was about 20 years old when he started, and their uncle.

The operation, which relies on native timber within a 30 mile radius of Chelsea, produces between 400,000 and 500,000 board feet of lumber a year. The main species of trees used are soft maple, cottonwood, the oaks, and walnut, harvested on both the river bottom and the hills.

Elm trees are no longer a source of lumber due to the Dutch Elm Disease, and Virgil says that a person probably will not see a big elm any more, although there still are a few red elms around. After the trees died, the red elm could be used for lumber for a few years, but the white elm had to be sawn within a year to get marketable lumber.

Most of their production is used for furniture, mostly in Iowa and nearby states, depending on the weather elsewhere. They once sold a semi load to South Carolina when the weather conditions in that state made it impossible for a furniture maker to obtain local lumber.

Craftsmen and hobbyists purchase mostly walnut, one to three boards at a time, and the manufacturers purchase in multiples of 1,000 board feet. Maple, oak, and a walnut are used for external wood in furniture, with "some pretty poor stuff" used as farming in upholstered furniture where

the wood doesn't show. The other market for lesser quality lumber is in the manufacture of pallets.

Virgil and Jerry purchase the trees themselves and do their own logging. Tree cutting begins the last of August after the trees have stopped growing for the year and the new wood is hardening off. Cutting ends by the first of May, with the ideal time for cutting really being September to April.

The Vavras purchase the logs according to the number of board feet available in the saw logs after the tree is on the ground. They feel this is the fairest method for both the seller and buyer, as they don't have to bid a low price to allow for any hollow or decayed trees. Also, the seller will have cut those old, partially worthless trees, which are shading out new growth, and get paid for any salvagable lumber in them.

The saw mill will handle logs from six feet to 22 feet, but the seldom come up with a log longer than 16 feet. Most of the logs are 10 to 12 feet long.

When asked if there is any way to saw a log to keep the boards from warping, Jerry said, "If there is, we haven't found it." The sawn lumber requires a lot of hand labor after it comes from the saw. It is stacked with three-fourths inch strips between the boards to allow air to pass.

Depending on the weather, the boards may have to be restacked several times for proper air drying, and to keep the dividing strips from staining the light colored woods by being in one position for too long. By proper stacking and air drying, the lumber is kept from warping.

The lumber is air dried for a year, and the "top quality stuff" is kiln dried, a process

which takes from one to two weeks. About 20 percent of their good lumber is planed, mostly for home craftsmen. The large furniture manufacturers take their lumber without planing.

Some lumber is custom sawed for local farmers, who use it for fencing and livestock paneling. Oak is used in hog confinement buildings because it is hard, and the pigs have little success chewing their way through it. Some of the slab lumber is used to heat the kiln, and there was once a good demand by wood stove owners when other fuels were scarce. The demands for slabs has fallen off in the last several years.

The Vavras have a metal detector, which they use on logs obtained near farmsteads to try to find nails and wire which may have grown into the wood over the years. The foreign objects hardest to find are electric fence insulators, as the porcelain doesn't record on the metal detector and there is only a small nail head to give a reading.

Lately, a big problem has been spikes driven high in the trees by bowhunters who have nailed up a ladder or platform, and have not pulled out the spikes when they removed their stands. These spikes are not appreciated by any lumbermen, as they can ruin an expensive saw blade the same as a porcelain insulator.

When asked the future of a local saw mill using local saw logs, Virgil replied that they are now cutting trees which they passed up 10 years ago, and the timbered areas are decreasing every year. In too many timbers, after they have taken out the saw logs, the area is not left to reforest itself but rather is bulldozed out to be entered into the government farm program.



Jerry and Virgil Vavra and their mother, Louise, operate a sawmill near Chelsea which is entering its 52nd year of business.

Important meeting for owners of rolling land

"If you own or rent rolling farmland, the most important meeting you attend within the next year could be the meeting you have with your local soil conservationist."

That message is from Mike Nethery, state conservationist of the U. S. Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service.

Farmers with highly erodible cropland must have a conservation plan on that land by Dec. 31, 1989, if they want to continue to receive benefits from the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Nethery said. Benefits that could be lost include price and income

change. supports, crop insurance, loans, grain storage payments and other commodity-related payments.

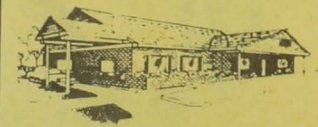
The conservation plan that's developed at the planning meeting must be carried out by Dec. 31, 1994.

"Many farmers have been surprised to find that there isn't as much conservation work needed as they thought. The planning meeting is a relief to them, to know exactly where they stand in the erosion control work needed on their farms," Nethery said.

Nethery cautioned farmers not to wait as he sees no indication the deadlines will

change.

In Iowa, some 12.5 million acres will need a conservation plan. That's nearly half the cropland in the state. As of June 1988, SCS had worked with Iowa farmers to develop conservation plans on about 4 million acres.



Best wishes
and . . .

Congratulations

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Farmers on their good
conservation practices.

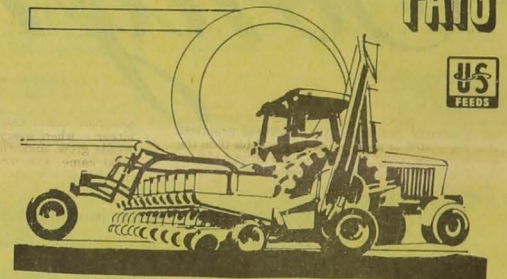
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CRP creates positive effects

As of this printing nearly 300 Tama Countians have entered into long term contracts with the government to protect nearly 21,000 acres of erodible ground. In return for seeding steep hillsides to grass, the federal government will pay farmers a yearly rent

check. CRP (Conservation Reserve Program) has some very positive and potentially lucrative aspects:

- 1) Steady income for 10 years.
- 2) Easy way to comply with erosion control requirements

of the Food Security Act.

- 3) In most cases the rent check is more than the income from producing crops on steep hills.
- 4) Improves the soil resource.
- 5) Helps clean up water, both surface and ground water supplies.
- 6) Excellent wildlife cover.
- 7) As witnessed this year, it can be a source of additional forage in years of crop stress.

If you are interested in CRP and curious to see if you might qualify, contact the SCS or ASCS office for more details.

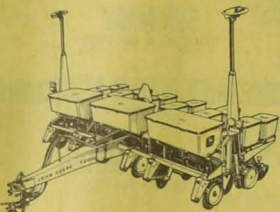
Kvidera, from p. 10

fenceline to destroy a semicircle of bromes sod.

Roadside vegetative management is not an exact science, so experimentation is going on all over the state, ranging from no County spraying at all, to blanket spraying. However the trend is towards establishing prairie cultures in the road ditches and elimination of expensive and potentially polluting sprays. Tama County is among the leaders in looking for better ways of handling the problem of weed control and the beautification of our "highways and byways."

Ferd Kvidera
Assistant Commissioner

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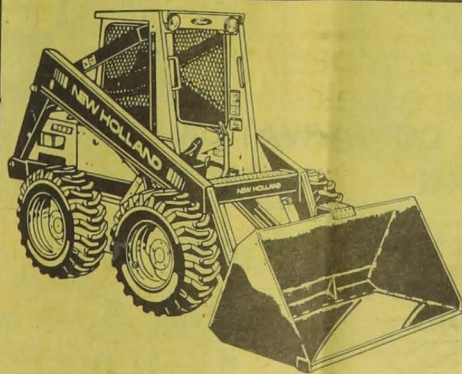
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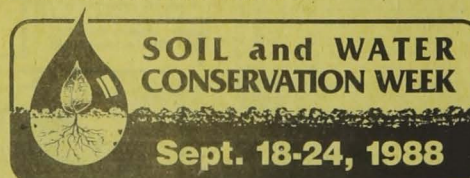
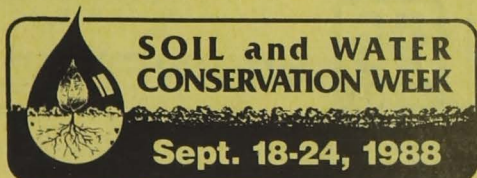
Congratulations

**To our Tama County farmers on
their conservation practices**

Iowa leads the nation in soil conservation — and Tama County ranks in the top ten counties in Iowa. Iowa was the first state to provide financial assistance for soil conservation and Tama County also provides funds. There are 1,400,000 lineal feet of terracing in the county,

6,000 acres of grass waterways and other soil conservation practices are rapidly being adopted. But we still have a long way to go. So we urge you, our farm friends, to keep up the good work.

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Cooper prairie grass plantings

Richard Cooper
By Ferd Kvidera

A trend is now popular to return some of Iowa's land to prairie grass, but a Tama County "pioneer" in prairie grass seeding is Richard Cooper. He has been practicing soil conservation on his rolling land for many years. Cooper, who is the postmaster in the city of Tama, has farmed in the hills just northwest of Toledo, and some of those slopes are very steep — "they drop off just like a barn roof," he says.

In 1972, Cooper attempted to convert two areas which were each about two acres in size, and so steep that he didn't want anyone to try to farm, into an area of trees. One tract was planted to red pine and the other to white spruce.

Both plantings grew and thrived the first year, and the red pine stand is a beautifully forested area today. The white spruce planting suffered a 100 percent casualty rate; all were dead the spring following planting. This tract was then seeded to brome and orchardgrass, and remained that way for the next three years.

One day, the Cooper family traveled to Ochevedan in northwest Iowa to a Hartford field day. Richard knew the Kalsow Prairie was nearby — a state-owned preserve of 160 acres of virgin prairie — so he set out to look for it.

The day was hot and his family quite unenthused about the adventure, and farmers in the area were unsure of just where the Prairie was located. After several stops at farmsteads, he finally talked with a farmer who said, "It's that big weed patch right across the road." The farmer then went on to tell why he thought

everything was wrong with it, but said that he couldn't figure out why there weren't any Canada thistles in there, because the farm which he had just purchased a few years before was "160 acres of Canada thistle!"

Richard thus was able to see the Kalsow Prairie and discover that the community of prairie grasses and forbs didn't allow the Canada thistle and other weeds to invade, and he decided to seed down a portion of his farm to form a prairie grass community.

In 1977, he purchased six kinds of seed: big bluestem, switchgrass, Indiangrass, little bluestem, side oats gramma, and crested wheat grass. The plot he chose was the two-acre tract which was a failure with the white spruce, now a solid stand of brome and orchardgrass. He had fears of the orchardgrass coming back and taking over the planting, so plowed it under, disced it, and harrowed it.

The attempt to apply the prairie grass seed with a farm seeder didn't work because of the fluffiness of some varieties of the grass seed, so the actual sowing was done by hand. He spent a whole day on those two acres and wondered if this was a silly thing to be doing.

Along about this time, Cooper's son was enrolled at Iowa State University studying veterinary medicine, and while in Ames one time, Richard saw that there was a Midwest Prairie Conference going on at the school, so he went over to see what was going on. He just got in on the last afternoon's session, but after seeing people there from states all over the Midwest, he thought that his planting, "wasn't such a silly idea after all."

The planting is now 11 years old, and well populated with prairie grass. An attempt to introduce forbs in the planting has so far produced only a few horseman plants, although quite a few goldenrod are present. As he picked up a handful of the heavy thatch from previous years' growth,

Cooper said, "Here is the key to our corn and beans — thousands of years of prairie grass building the soil."

He's concerned that if we lose that soil, we're not going to produce much grain, because "we don't do the producing, the soil does."

Native prairie grasses back

By Melody Bro

"What is native tallgrass prairie? If 85% of Iowa was once covered with it, where did it all go?" With increased awareness in soil and wildlife conservation programs, these questions have become quite common.

Before Iowa's European settlement, the state's plains and rolling hills were covered with a sea of grasses which were two to 12 feet high, and flowering plants with blooms of every color of the rainbow. Just a few burr oaks interrupted this living sea, and trees and shrubs grew along the watercourses.

Thousands of years of undisturbed evolution and development had created the Midwestern prairies and their rich soils. But settlers leveled the prairies to be infinite and too productive; within half a century, the grasslands were plowed under and cultivated.

Only 0.1% of Iowa's original prairie remains, tucked away in forgotten field corners, along railroad right-of-way, in pioneer cemeteries, and even in small patches along our country roads.

Many wise Iowans are re-establishing tracts of native grasses and forbs. Slowly, people are realizing the numerous uses for the native vegetation: erosion control, excellent pasture and hay which thrive during Iowa's warm summer months, wildlife habitat, low-maintenance roadside cover, and an interest in the state's natural heritage.

The old "farm fence-row to fence-row" philosophy is on its way out, and the countryside is becoming green again! If you would like more information on native grasses and their establishment, contact the Tama Soil Conservation District, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, or the Tama County Conservation Board.

(Melody Bro is a technician at the Toledo office of the Soil Conservation Service.)



Richard Cooper holds prairie grass residue in his field. "This is the key to our corn and beans — thousands of years of prairie grass building the soil," Cooper notes.

CO. FARK PRO



Dennis Gienger

Gienger working to protect Union Grove

By Ferd Kvidera

"What they're doing is great," says Dennis Gienger of Gladbrook. "Anyone who has grown up around here has used the lake, and it's nice to have a recreation facility so close to home."

Dennis, who lives just north of Gladbrook, owns land in the Union Grove Lake Watershed, and is working to protect those acres, and keep them from contributing to the degradation of the lake. He purchased this land in 1984, immediately started plans to terrace it, and put in his first structures that fall.

He has been putting some in each year, and "can't understand why everyone in the watershed isn't taking advantage of the 75 percent cost shares" when they can improve their land and at the same time save the lake.

Gienger has experienced a good working relationship with the Soil Conservation Service people, and has utilized their service to lay out contour lines as well as designing the terraces. These structures are the new stone base, or "push up" type, upon which machinery is not driven, and the intake pipe is tight against the terrace, so it

doesn't have to be dodged by machinery as do the intake pipes of grass back and broad base terraces.

Dennis is pleased with the accuracy of the terrace spacing, because it fits his six row, 30-inch planter so that he has no odd rows to plant between the terraces. Also helping with this accuracy has been the good work of building them by Gethmann Construction of Gladbrook.

Possibly the greatest problem with his new terraces this year has been the inability to get a seedling to catch because of the drought. Gienger is starting to work into a no-till system of planting. The proper coulters went on the planter last spring, and corn was planted into the stem stubble. He still discs his cornstalks in the spring, doing no fall tillage out on the Union Grove watershed land, but he has cattle to run the stalks, and doesn't have the time for fall tillage anyway. He feels that herbicide selection is the key issue to a cropping system.

Dennis and his wife, Doris, have two sons, Jason is five and has started school in Gladbrook. Jared is two years old.



Cheryl Pansegrau and Richard Campney round out the Soil Conservation Staff for Tama County.

Photos by Ferd Kvidera

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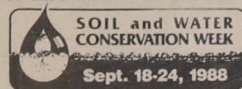
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The dredge operating on Union Grove Lake this summer has begun pumping out silt, after area farmers altered their land use practices to prevent further erosion.

Union Grove compliance near

By Ferd Kvidera
Geologically speaking, a lake is a very temporary part of the landscape because of its very nature. If it has no outlet, it becomes an evaporating pool whereby pure water leaves by way of the air, and any salts and minerals remain. Example: The Great Salt Lake of Utah.

However, most lakes have an outlet, but the upper reaches of the lake, where running water enters into it, becomes a settling basin to trap silt and debris carried in. Thus the nature of a lake is to be temporary, even though it may be centuries before the lake eventually fills in with either silt or salts.

Iowa's man-made lakes have been built by damming up streams, so each has running water feeding it. Therefore the life of an Iowa lake is totally dependent on the degree of erosion in its watershed, and Tama County has one of the highest soil erosion rates in the nation.

The progression of a lake which is subject to erosion is to eventually become a shallow water marsh, then a peat bog, and eventually dry land. The lake and marsh stages have recreational value, although different as a lake is for fishing and boating, and a marsh for hunting and trapping, but neither recreation nor farming are too good on a bog.

A number of years ago the Iowa Conservation Commission conducted a survey of Iowa's lakes, based on their use by the public, need of improvement, and cost effectiveness of renovation. Union Grove Lake in Tama County rose to the top of the list in that it has much use from the local area, is used extensively by people from Waterloo and Marshalltown, and can be restored to its original status as a lake for boating, fishing and swimming. Financial backing for lake improvement has

come from both the State of Iowa and the federal government, through the Environmental Protection Agency.

A feasibility study pointed out that the lake can be restored through dredging, but first the farming practices in the watershed must be changed so that erosion of the land is at a minimum, in order to keep the lake from silting in immediately. Several farmers installed terraces in the 1970s when the lake had been drained and they were shocked to see how much top soil was already in the lake. They realized that some of it had eroded from their farms.

After this last feasibility study, many more farmers in the watershed began erecting soil control structures and/or began cultural practices to keep their soil at home on the farm. Some still refused to cooperate, so the Iowa Conservation Commission (now Department of Natural Resources)

filed a soil loss complaint against the watershed to bring about compliance in soil erosion control by all farmers whose land drained into the lake.

Compliance is near to being completed, so a dredge has been moved into the lake this summer and is in the process of pumping out much of the silt, depositing it into two old limestone quarries to the north of the lake. A new siltation pond has been built at the southwest corner of the lake to stop any eroded soil from entering from that direction.

The original depth of the lake was 14 feet in its deepest part, which was near the dam. The intent is to restore it to the same depth which it had when first constructed in the 1930s by CCC crews. The capacity of the two rock quarries is 450,000 cubic yards, and they should have sufficient capacity to hold all of the dredged-out silt.

Pieper strip-cropping in Union Grove watershed

By Ferd Kvidera

"An advantage to strip cropping is that you can adjust the strips to fit your equipment," Larry Pieper, who farms three miles south of Gladbrook in Spring Creek Township, decided to try strip cropping his land in the Union Grove Lake watershed in 1982 by putting a couple of strips on his steeper ground. In the six years following he now has all of his Union Grove watershed land protected with strip cropping.

He started out with 90-foot strips, but changed planters and now needs strips in multiples of 25 feet, the width of his present planter. They have been laid out by the Soil Conservation Service technicians to 100 feet and 125 feet, depending on the slope.

Alternating strips are row crop and alfalfa, with a corn-soybean rotation on the land which happens to be in row crop. Every three or four years, depending on the longevity of the alfalfa stand, the strips are alternated. The alfalfa is turned under with a moldboard plow in the spring, and corn planted there, to utilize the nitrogen put in the soil by the legume crop.

Since his strip cropping holds soil losses to three tons per acre or less, spring plowing can be done on an occasional basis, and Pieper still remains within acceptable soil loss limits. He likes the idea of turning over the soil once in a while, because he feels that it does the ground good.

The last two years there haven't been any big rains to cause erosion, but there was rain the year he installed the first strips, and he couldn't notice any channels washed out when going across the field.

Larry has no cattle, so doesn't need the hay produced by the alfalfa strips, but has found that these, the grassed headlands, and the grassed waterways fit in well as setaside ground for compliance with the government farm program. Some of the land which he farms slopes off to a different watershed than the one feeding into the lake, and Pieper has that cropped on the contour and some in a strip crop system. He doesn't plan on all of it to be strip cropped, as he doesn't need that much ground for setaside, and doesn't need the hay.

He has been experimenting with no-till, has the proper coulters on his planter, and has some corn planted into bean stubble this year. Two years ago he had a somewhat rocky piece of ground which he farmed, and followed a route close to no-till. The field was in alfalfa, and was sprayed with liquid nitrogen and 2-4-D. The field was then lightly disced and planted, resulting in a successful crop. Although he is still experimenting, he is leaning towards no-till as a future cultural practice. Larry still isn't too sure about planting beans in corn stubble without using a chisel first.

He has looked at the other various ways of cultural

practices, and wonders how they will fit farming in the future. If many chemicals are needed to control weeds, how far can we go before polluting ground water as well as surface water? If the use of chemicals is limited, how many tillage and soil loosening practices will be allowed to still comply with the Food Security Act? Pieper wonders about how many changes will be made in the chemical vs. cultural systems before 1995.

Larry and his wife, Karen, have one daughter, Kristi, 11 years old and attends middle school in Gladbrook.



Larry Pieper

District accomplishments

Fiscal Year 1987

District Cooperators	3 No....500 Acres
Sediment and Water Control Basins	23 Acres
Terraces	42,080 Feet
Grassed Waterways	89 Acres
Contour Farming	2,051 Acres
Farmstead and Feedlot Windbreak	3 Acres
Soil Survey	79,540 Acres
Plans and Alternatives	49,201 Acres

Budgets

July 1, 1986 - June 30, 1987

1M	
Commissioners Mileage, Meals, Hotel	\$1,181.19
Office Supplies and Expenses	\$ 581.44
Printing	\$ 39.20
2M	
Clerk and Engineering Aide Salary	\$25,059.00
3M	
86-87 Allocation	\$64,617.00
28 Agreements Approved	
20 Agreements Completed	

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Both Lyon gets planning help from Heritage Foundation

By Perd Kvidera

Now in his second year of working with the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, Bob Lyon, who farms 10 miles north of Toledo on Highway #63 is taking a second look at his farming methods of tillage, fertilizer, and chemical use.

The purpose of the Heritage Foundation is to demonstrate conservation tillage and reduced fertilizer and chemical use, through the Resourceful Farming Demonstration Project. An attempt was made to choose a farmer from each county to participate in the program, and Lyon was chosen from Tama County.

Bob said that he read about it somewhere, so sent for an application which asked all kinds of questions about the farming operation and involvement in community activities. When chosen, the Crystal Township farmer received free consulting for crops on 100 acres, in exchange for following their guidelines on a demonstration plot of 20 acres.

The consulting service provided by Heritage turned out to be of more value this year than last because of the drought, spider mites, and grasshoppers. Lyon hired consulting service for the rest of his acres this year as he felt it was worth the money. Advice is given on how to match corn or soybean varieties to the soil types in each field, as well as fertilizer needs, and a match of chemicals to weed pressures. Integrated Pest Management is also provided, and Bob was the first in his neighborhood to be alerted to spider mites in his soybeans and was able to spray for them the last part of June when he could still get into the field with a sprayer.

He had been alerted to be ready to spray fence rows and strips around each field for grasshoppers, but the applica-

tion of pesticide for the spider mites also took care of the grasshoppers. A check of the fields three weeks later revealed some pockets of reinfestation by the mites, but it was not economical to go in again to treat them.

The 1987 demonstration field consisted of soybeans planted in corn ground, and the comparison was Dual alone, to be followed by a post-emergence treatment with Basagran. The field was all cultivated once, but Lyon got rained out during the second cultivation and never got back to finish the field. The result of the comparison was that the Sencor didn't hold the weeds last year.

The 1988 demonstration involved the same field with corn planted in the bean ground. It all received the same treatment of anhydrous ammonia and liquid hog manure, so that there would be only one variable. One half of the field was tilled with a field cultivator before planting, and the other half was planted no-till.

Lyon has used no-till in the past and has been satisfied with it, but the no-till turned out to be the loser this year. The corn all emerged and was there when rotary hoed, but at the time of shovel cultivation there were some gaps in the row of the no-till.

The only explanation they can think of is that perhaps the packing wheels of the planter didn't adequately close the slot, and this year's lack of rainfall allowed the seedlings to dry out and die.

In his experimenting with Heritage and on his own, Bob has discovered that his soil is getting compacted and needs deep tillage once in a while. He feels that no-till will work for maybe three years, but then a chisel plow should be

used to tear up any compaction pan which might be forming. He feels that no-till has helped his yields in past dry seasons because moisture is retained in the soil, and won't discontinue it because of the performance this year.

His conclusions from two years of working with the Heritage Foundation are threefold: (1) He feels that on the whole, farmers do more tillage than necessary. Today's planters will handle just about any amount of residue and uneven seed beds — the ground doesn't have to be like a garden. (2) We have probably overfertilized for years — the economic crunch of the 1980s has caused us to be more frugal in our expenditures for plant nutri-

ents, and to take a closer look at the fertility generated by legumes. (3) There are a lot of options which can be made to work in an economical fashion. Various tillage methods can be combined with the necessary chemicals. In our "cadillac" treatment of crops in years past, we have probably applied more chemicals than necessary because we didn't want the neighbors to see a weed in our fields.

Lyon figures that scouting services may be a good investment, because many farmers have neither the time nor the expertise to look for bugs — "how can I find a spider mite if I don't know what I'm looking for?" — nor does a farmer sit down and compare seed varieties to match his different soil types and fertilizer levels.



Bob Lyon

Conservation cover crops

By David Quinlan
Tama County Agriculturist

With the early harvest this year there has been quite a bit of interest in cover crops. Some type of crop to hold the soil in place during the fall and winter, and provide some forage next spring.

There are three types of small grains that can be grown that will over winter and provide forage next spring — rye grain, triticale, and hard red winter wheat. Remember that triticale is a cross between rye and wheat and rye grain is small grain much different than rye grass. If seeded by the end of September these all have an excellent chance of over wintering and producing some grain and forage next spring. Of the three choices hard red winter wheat will produce the most grain.

All three of these small grains need to be seeded into a shallowly prepared seed bed of 2-4 inches. The seeds should be planted at depths of 1-2 inches, preferably with a grain drill. Forage grasses may also be planted at the same time, but require a seeding depth of 1/4 to 1/2 inch. The grain drill is also the preferred implement for planting forages. Legumes can be seeded in this stand, but should not be until early spring on

frozen soil. The freezing and thawing of the surface soil will set the seeds. Generally the use of red clover will result in a better stand than the use of alfalfa.

If small grains follow corn and the corn stalks are heavy, it may be advisable to chop the stalks before tillage. Fertilizer should be applied before tillage. Nitrogen should be applied at the 40-60 lb. rate following corn, but is not needed following soybeans. P and K levels should receive maintenance applications in the low range.

Rye is generally grown in Iowa as a forage, and consequently, the winter type is most often planted. Under Iowa conditions, the grain yield is not very high and the grain is rather unpalatable to livestock. However, the bushel weight is the same as corn, and has about 85% the feed value of corn. Triticale would not seem to be a good choice as a small grain for production in Iowa because of low yields and unavailability of a market except as a feed grain. It works much better as a forage.

Wheat has 110% of the feed value of corn on a pound per pound basis. This works out to 110% the value of corn on a bushel basis because wheat weighs 60 lbs. versus 56 lbs. for corn. Wheat growth may be grazed in the fall as long as soil is firm so the plants are not pulled up by the grazing livestock. The spring growth can also be grazed when the soil is firm, but grazing must be closely monitored so the plants are not grazed too closely. Grazing must cease when the plants begin to joint. In general, the hard red winter wheats are more winter hardy than soft red winter wheats. Winter hardiness also varies within type, so consideration should be given varieties of winter wheat grown.

Overall, these cover crops provide an excellent tool for controlling erosion, and provide some very good spring forage.

40% of pines planted in '88 survived drought

Thirty-eight Tama County landowners planted 74,200 tree and shrub seedlings in 1988. With extreme drought conditions, it is safe to assume that most of these small trees have been lost.

Despite heavy losses, some plantings still have enough live trees to grow into a fully-stocked forest or wildlife area. A survey by the Iowa Christmas Tree Growers' Association indicates a current survival of 40% on 1988-planted pine seedlings. Plantings that were sprayed or tilled for weed and soil control are the only plantings still surviving. Sod, weeds, and drought have eliminated the rest.

State Nursery tree order forms will soon be available for 1989 plantings. Do not be discouraged by abnormal conditions this season. Forestry, just like farming, is a high-risk venture. Anyone who has planted trees for three consecutive years has had sufficient survival to achieve his goals. Tree



**SOIL and WATER
CONSERVATION WEEK**

Sept. 18-24, 1988

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Only **99¢**



Regular Roast Beef Sandwiches are only 99¢ at Hardee's. It's a hot, delicious way to top off a big weekend.

Fresh roast beef sliced thin and piled high on a sesame seed bun. And it's under a buck, but only on Sundays at participating Hardee's.

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AUCTION

- SEPT. 24 - Mr. & Mrs. Ray Hines Household Auction, Chelsea, Ed Johnston, Auct.
- SEPT. 24 - Bernie Venenga Estate, Conrad, J&K Auction Service, Paulsian & Sash, Aucts.
- SEPT. 24 - Abbie Karpisek Collectible & Household Auction, 609 Jefferson, Dysart, CASA Auction.
- SEPT. 25 - Carolyn Kvidera Household & Antique Auction, 806 Siegel, Tama, Dale Dudley, Auct.
- OCT. 1 - John Popelka Household Sale, 205 N. Wilson, Toledo, Wayne Gray, Auct.

OCT. 5 - Real Estate Auction, 4th Bldg., Gladbrook, Forrest Thomsen Conservators, J&K Auction Service, Aucts.

OCT. 15 - Florence Balish Estate Sale, Dysart, Holst & Nolan, Aucts.

OCT. 22 - Louis & Dorothy Wallace Farm Sale, SW of Van Horn, Holst & Nolan, Aucts.

OCT. 23 - Vernon Petermeier Estate, Real Estate, Household & Tools Sale, Selken & Vavroch, Aucts.

NOV. 12 - Tama-Benton Coop. Office Equipment and Surplus Inventory, Dysart, CASA Auction & Realty, Craig & Sharon Earley, Aucts.

NOV. 19 - Elmer & Peg Bradley Antiques & Collectibles, Traer Memorial Building, Traer, CASA Auction & Realty, Craig & Sharon Earley, Aucts.

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We at Thomas Company would like to thank everyone who attended our 38th anniversary celebration. It was a great success and a pleasure to visit with our friends and customers.

Larry & Debbie Thomas
Bob & Gerry Thomas

DOOR PRIZE WINNERS:

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Zenith TV | Gladys Urhammer |
| Peerless water filter | Mrs. Keith Wilkinson |
| Smoke detector | Wayne Porter |
| VCR tape | Irwin Dowd |
| VCR cover | Mary Douglas |
| Telephone | George Strachota |
| Shelf reacher | Lloyd Chyma Sr. |
| Extra Heat | Shirley Weidner |
| Magnavox radio | Jim Blocker |
| Water Saver | Elizabeth Brown |
| Utility fork | Rose Strachota |

tastee-freez

Hwy. 30, Toledo Phone 484-3635

Closing for the Season
Sunday, September 25th
Specials

- | | |
|-----------|-------------------------|
| Wed. 21 | Cones 25¢-40¢-55¢ |
| Thurs. 22 | Banana Splits 1.05 |
| Fri. 23 | Shakes 75¢-95¢-1.25 |
| Sat. 24 | Floats & Sodas 55¢-75¢ |
| Sun. 25 | Reg. Sundae 55¢-75¢-95¢ |

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STATE FINALS
RODEO**

SAT SEPT 24 1:30 PM & 7:30 PM
SUN SEPT 25 2 PM FINALS
CENTRAL IOWA FAIRGROUNDS
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