

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

INFORMATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Name of paper *Bloomfield Democrat*
 Where published *Bloomfield, Ia.*
 Date of issue *7/26/73*
 Sent by *Christine Betts*
 S. C. D. *Davis SCD-45*
 Stationed at *Bloomfield, Ia.*

CLASSIFICATION:

Weekly column	☐
Story (SCS)	☐
(Other)	☒
Feature (SCS)	☐
(Other)	☐
Editorial	☒
Advertisement	☐
Cons. picture	☐

2 July 26, 1973, The Bloomfield Democrat, Bloomfield, Ia.

Land management benefits

(Editor's Note—The following is the speech given by Susan Wyatt in the Regional Soil Conservation Speech Contest. Miss Wyatt finished second in the regional contest)

+++

By Susan Wyatt

Following the landing of the Pilgrims and the establishment of the 13 colonies, the population of our country grew steadily forcing the continuing expansion westward across the continental United States. The early settlers cleared land using what trees they desired for their immediate needs, destroying the rest, to fit the land for crops. As the soil became depleted, they moved on westward to new land—repeating this wasteful process over and over. Finally there was no more free land, and as the last acres were homesteaded, the timber was depleted and the farmers had to use what land they possessed as best they could.

We, who live in Iowa, are most fortunate for in our great state there are 56,000 square miles of some of the most fertile agricultural land in the world. Prior to 1935 people became concerned with the depletion of this rich soil, by wind and water erosion. In 1935 the Soil Conservation Service was created by an act of Congress and Iowa passed a soil conservation district law in 1939, with the purpose of assisting farmers to control erosion. Iowa now has 100 soil conservation districts governed by elected commissioners with technical help provided by the United States Department of Agriculture. This has been of valuable help in preserving our fertile soil and aiding us to produce bounteous crops to feed the world.

Yet, ladies and gentlemen, even this is not enough! We need more long-range planning if we are to maintain and keep enough fertile acres to feed the growing population of the United States and the people of the world who need additional food. Why then is long-range planning necessary? Let me quote you some figures taken from a report by Dr. J. Fulton Lutz, soil scientist of North Carolina State University:

"There are 38 billion acres of land, or 12 acres per person in the world. In the United States there are 10 acres per person. Alaska has 1600 acres per person; Australia has 175 acres of land per person; the USSR and South America both have 25 acres of land per person; Canada has 125 acres per person; Japan has less than one acre per person; India less than two acres and France has less than three acres per person. However, when we speak of arable land—Peru, China, Japan and the United Kingdom have less than 1/2 acre of land and the United

States has only three acres."

During World War II there was a tremendous expansion of industry, such as ammunition plants, air fields and various other plants needed for the war effort. Little regard was paid to the type of land being used for this expansion. In most cases, prime agricultural land was used for this purpose. Following the close of World War II many of these airfields and ammunition plants and industrial sites were no longer needed. Some were returned to agricultural production, but many are still problem areas for the communities in which they are located. This and other types of continuing expansion has brought about much wasted land.

With the birth of the atomic age, new problems appeared on the horizon. The energy crisis has focused the attention of the nation for the need of atomic power for generation of electricity. The requirements of large amounts of water for the cooling of atomic reactors tends to locate these plants on some of our most arable river bottom lands. The need to expand our super-highways to relieve traffic congestion and the continuing expansion of industry and urban development has consumed many acres of our better farm land. In fact, Dr. Lutz tells us that 8000 acres of arable land per day is being diverted to non-agricultural uses. Think of it ladies and gentlemen—this is over 2 1/2 million acres per year of our tillable land being diverted to non-agricultural uses.

We hear and read of boycotts and consumer strikes because of high prices of food. There have been efforts in the United States Congress to roll back prices because of these protests. Yet—if we continue to destroy good productive land at the present rate—there will not be enough food and fibers at any price!

Quoting again from Dr. Lutz "It would only be possible to bring another 6 acres per person into use in the United States, if irrigation and suitable crops could be provided." This, ladies and gentlemen, is briefly our problem. If my generation and future generations are to prosper, proper land management is an immediate necessity. For over 25 years my community has had a Soil Conservation District, dedicated to conserving soil on our farm land. Yet, more is needed! All communities will

benefit when proper land management with long range consideration is given to the best use of each acre of our land.

Atomic plants and factories should be located on non-productive land, if at all possible. Highway engineers should give first consideration to locating highways where the least amount of tillable land is used, trying to avoid diagonal cuts across farms. Urban expansion should be planned with an eye to using non-productive land in every instance.

My community is primarily a livestock producing area. Proper land management is a must for us, because we need each acre of tillable land to produce feed for our livestock. We need new housing—true—new highways are to be built in the near future with some relocation necessary and here let me thank the highway engineers for they have planned this relocation well and are using very little additional tillable land. Remember the figures I quoted to you previously—8000 acres per day, 2 1/2 million acres per year of our arable land being consumed for non-agricultural purposes. Now is the time, ladies and gentlemen, not tomorrow, but now—for each of us to become personally concerned with proper land management. Our state has taken the lead by adopting a soil conservancy law. We have excellent technical help through our Soil Conservation Districts. If we all are personally concerned, our community of tomorrow will be modern and prosperous. Instead of the decaying slums in our cities and small towns (that have ceased to grow), we will have prosperous cities surrounded by land being used for the best possible purpose. We will have small towns that grow because they provide the services needed for their community. Thank you.

Strictly Fresh

Lady who wants to be anonymous says that you date yourself if you call a frying pan a "spider."

+++

Never put off till tomorrow that which the boss will ask you about today.

+++

The best nit-pickers are those who have the least to do.

VOICE OF
OPINION