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Special Progress Edition



Terrace building

More than 70,000 feet of terraces were built in Benton County in 1976, protecting about 300 acres. Cost of terrace construction (like these on the Jim Kullmer farm southwest of

Mt. Auburn) ranged from \$1-\$1.50 a foot. The Benton County Soil Conservation Service (with officers in Vinton) provides assistance with this and other types of soil conservation to area landowners.

Ups and downs for conservation



SCS staff

Staff members of the Benton County Soil Conservation Service are, from left, Connie Lange, district clerk; Robb Morrow, conservation technician; and Floyd Peters, district conservationist.

There were bright spots and some not-so-encouraging developments for soil conservation in Benton County in the last year.

Among the bright spots was having long-time conservationist Harry Horak named the farmer with the most outstanding soil conservation program in Iowa. Also, 70,000 feet of terraces were built in the county, protecting another 300 acres of land from erosion. (While terraces aren't the only means of controlling erosion, they are considered the most effective and permanent.)

On the other hand, pressures for production on the soil in the county increased last year, increasing the frequency and susceptibility to erosion. Benton County Soil Conservationist Floyd Peters gives the following assessment of conditions in the county:

"About 60,500 acres of Benton County's 362,000 acres of cropland—or 16 per cent—has been severely damaged by erosion since 1850 (the time of early settlements when the prairie was first broken). According to the Iowa-2 form, which was developed by Iowa agronomists, this means a reduction in yield of at least 10 bushels per acre per year.

"About 15,000 acres of Benton County's land slopes five per cent or more and is subject to severe sheet erosion. Forty per cent of our sloping land has already been severely damaged and another 90,000 acres is in danger of being damaged unless conservation practices are installed at a much more rapid rate than they have been in the past 20 years.



County commissioners

Elected commissioners directing activities in the Benton County Soil Conservation District are, from left, seated, Roman Gardner, Garrison, Henry Lyphout, Vinton, chairman John "Dick" Schild, Belle Plaine, and Don Weichman,

"About 70,000 feet of parallel, tile-intake terraces were built in Benton County in 1976 at a cost of \$1-\$1.50 per foot. Our conservation needs report shows we need erosion control practices on 220,000 acres, including 70,000 acres of sloping, class II land. Conservation practices are now adequate on only 127,000 acres.

"We could exist without oil, but we cannot exist without food. We are allowing our primary natural resource in Benton County—its soil—to erode into neighbor's fields and into lakes and streams.

"There seems to be a real reluctance to plant row crops in sweeping curves to conform to the topography. We can find no good reason for this reluctance. Contouring will help store extra water needed at some time during the growing season.

State award

Horak, an assistant soil conservation commissioner, was honored as the Benton County's, Region 7's (eastern Iowa) and state's outstanding farmer-soil conservationist in a presentation Dec. 1. Horak has practiced soil conservation since making his first plan in 1948 for the 260 acres he farms in Harrison Township. About 120 acres are terraced; 108 acres are contoured; waterways protect seven acres; trees have been planted on four acres; two wildlife areas are maintained; and 23 acres of woodland are held in timber reserve (no grazing); and conservation tillage is used on all cropland.

In the last year, the county district allocated the \$29,000 of its 1975-76 cost-sharing allocation, and \$15,703 of its \$44,000 1976-77 allocation.

Atkins. Assistant commissioners, standing, are Harry Horak, Lee Goodell, Vinton. Paul Anderson is also a district commissioner. Horak was named Iowa's outstanding soil conservation farmer in December by the Iowa Association of Soil Conservation District Commissioners.



Glenn Burrows of rural Brandon, was named the Outstanding Soil Conservation District Commissioner for region 4 at the annual District Commissioners Conference in Des Moines on Nov. 30. The Outstanding District Commissioners' contest is conducted annually by the Iowa Association of Soil Conservation District Commissioners and the Wallace Farmer. Glenn was selected for the conservation program he maintains on his farm, community activities, and service to the Buchanan County Soil Conservation District program, where he is a commissioner. He uses contouring, strip-cropping, grassed waterways, and wildlife plantings in a well balanced conservation program on his own farm.



County conservation award winners

Dick Schild, center, presents awards to the Benton County winners in the 1976 Iowa Conservation Awards Program. Winners are, from left, Allan Horak, Mr. and Mrs. Harry

Horak, winners in the owner-operator division; Noma Jebe of Ann Arbor, Mich.; and Mr. and Mrs. Willard Jesse of rural La Porte City, winners in the owner-tenant division.