

Schedule Watershed Meetings

At Melrose, Bureau Hall And Hilton

Farmers of Cedar Creek Area Asked To Study Plan.

Farmers and other interested persons in the upper Cedar Creek watershed will be given an opportunity to form a Watershed Association, it has been announced by Monroe County Soil District commissioners.

A series of meetings for explanation of the Watershed Protection and Flood Control Act will be held this month.

Here's the schedule:

March 18—Farm Bureau Hall, Albia, 8 p.m.

March 19—Melrose Community Hall, 8 p.m.

March 21—Hilton Church, 8 p.m.

The upper Cedar watershed is bounded roughly by highway 60 from the south county line north to the Tony Amoss farm, then west to the Matt Chelar farm. From there it runs south and a little west to highway 34 at John J Crall's, then west into Lucas county. It does not include southern Jackson township, which is in another watershed.

Personnel from the Soil Conservation Service, Soil District, Extension Service, Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation office, Iowa Soil Conservation committee and Agricultural Bureau of the Albia Chamber of Commerce will take part in the March 18, 19 and 21 meetings.

The watershed area to be discussed contains 72,558 acres, of which more than half are in pasture and woodland. There are over 2,000 acres of bottomland to be protected from flood, and about 10 miles of road that can be flooded.

Conservation practices already on the land in this area include 213 farm ponds, six drop-inlet diversion structures, 31 miles of terraces, 20 miles of diversion terraces and 96 acres of strip cropping.

Regardless of the action finally taken, the information available at the meetings will be of value to all farmers and landowners in this area, it was said.

EDITORIALS

former years were nothing but mud flats after torrential rains. But this year some of those fields have been protected by waterways, by terraces and diversion ditches and the crops in those fields this year have a chance, despite the rainfall.

We have seen weed-infested pastures which in years gone by have thrived on heavy rainfalls as the weeds grew to new heights. But the pasture improvement programs, the new seedlings, the proper grazing methods have made these same fields lush and verdant pastures.

All of us, too, have known years when water brought by the torrential rains simply disappeared down the creeks and into the rivers and there was none caught and stored on the land. But the proper protective cover and the good planning of farm ponds have this year captured much of this water and impounded it for use throughout the summer and fall.

Through the years as we have watched farmers in this section of Iowa improve their land, improve their conservation practices, we and they have thought about the cost. Conservation is a costly affair. It takes machinery and heavy equipment. It takes good seed. It takes good planning. It costs money to clear brush. It costs money to cut dead trees.

But those farmers who have practiced good soil and water conservation over a period of years know that money expended on these sound practices is returned to them many times over.

Look at the average value of farm land in this area and you get some idea of the pay-off.

Look at the increase in the farm income and the worth of farm products and you get another indication.

Compare the number of acres it takes for a cow and a calf today with that required even five years ago and you know what soil and water conservation and good pasture practices can mean.

We're sold on conservation, on building for the future.

We're happy for the enthusiastic support of conservation in this county.

We're proud of the cooperators, those farm owners and those farm operators for whom conservation is a way of life.

We salute those who each year make this annual soil and water conservation week observance more meaningful than ever.

Soil, Water Conservation Pays Off in This County

This is Soil and Water Conservation Week.

And perhaps it's a bit incongruous that we set aside a week in the midst of ton after ton of rainfall and in the midst of gulley after gulley in our fields to observe a week dedicated to the conservation of soil and water.

Yet, perhaps as no other single thing could have done, the rains of this month have demonstrated the real work of a good program of soil and water conservation.

For we have seen fields where gulleys had developed, gulleys big enough to hide a discarded car, carefully bladed over and seeded down and carrying the torrential rains down the grassed waterways.

We have seen, too, fields which in

Good luck at State Soil Judging

Eric, Travis, Jason and Matt



Four Albia Community High School FFA members have qualified to compete in the state FFA soil judging contest this weekend on a farm near Ames. The four will climb into a pit and judge various soil conditions including surface features, soil features — profile, land capability and productivity potential, evaluation of

management practices and the suitability of soils for non-agricultural uses. Members of the team competing at state include from left, Eric Biederman, Travis Zaputil, Jason Ammons and Matt Stocker. Richard Tharp was also a member of the four-member district championship team, but placed fifth in the regional competition.

Grandpa and Grandma Cabell

Soil Conservation
District Commissioners

Jim and Connie Keller
Bridgette, Jim and Brenna

Plackett's Super Valu

Mike, Ann and Alex Stocker
Coltrain Implement

Halley's Mobile Home
Park & Sales

Peoples State Bank

Henderson Implement Co.

Hardees

First Iowa State Bank

Dandee Grocery

Johnson Insurance Services

Gerald L. Haas Jr., D.O.

Pamida

A.Y.M., Inc.

Judge Chiropractic Center

Hawkeye Lumber Co.

Hy-Vee

Lindberg Shelter Insurance

Morehead Auction Service

G.B. Equipment Co.

Pizza Hut

Albia Motor Co., Inc.

Mick Furniture & Appliance

Hawkeye Farm Management
& Real Estate

Herb and Lucille Bettis

James J. Bates, D.D.S.

Kraber Electric

Folkerts Amoco

Smitty's Sandwich Shop

Chiropractic Health Center

Bettis Oil Co./Amoco Oil Jobber

Kness Mfg. Co., Inc.

Hawkeye Molding Engineers, Inc.

Zip Print & Advertising

The Hair Gallery

The Owl Tap

Geyer-Nordstrom Funeral Chapel

Falvey Lumber Co.

Albia Area Chamber of Commerce

Video & Office Supply Shop

Flower Depot

Denis Della Vedova, Inc.

Mom & Me

Albia Realty Co.

Duea Motor Co.

Hess Drug

Barbary Coast Opera House

Medicap Pharmacy

John J. Scieszinski, D.D.S.

Castings Hardware Hank

Chariton Valley Electric
Cooperative, Inc.

The Hair Port

L & C Photo's

Bredeaux Pisa

Albia Booster Club

Albia True Value

Adams Auto Body

*
* **Good Luck, Matt** *
* Love Dad, Mom and Alex *
*

50th anniversary banquet is Nov. 28

Nov. 17, 1994

Tickets for the Monroe County Soil Conservation Districts 50th Anniversary Banquet are available at the district office in Albia or from commissioners.

The banquet starts at 6 p.m. at the First Christian Church. David Dukes, a Bedford farmer, will be the guest speaker and will discuss no-till practices.

The cost of the banquet is \$5.

Commissioners include Mervin McDanel, Moravia, John Lawless, Melrose, Bob Henderson, Albia, Albert Tangie, Albia and Sue Ammons, Albia. Assistant commissioners include Marvin Wirtjes, Blakesburg, Pat Findlay, Lovilia, Mildred Gladfedler, Moravia, Bob McGinnis, Albia and Helen Sinclair, Melrose.



50 years of conservation

When this photo was taken almost 50 years ago, the men seated around the table probably didn't have a sense of the history that they would help create. These are members of the Monroe County Soil Conservation staff and commissioners taken around 1945, a year into the establishment of the U.S. Soil and Water Conservation Service in the county. From left, Harold M. Anderson, district commissioner, John A. Botts, soil conservation technician, Alton Wilcox, commissioner, James Foster, Commissioner, Sylvian Runkel, area conservationist, Lloyd Reed, extension director and Sterling Martin, commissioner. The Soil and Water Conservation Service is celebrating its 50th anniversary with a banquet Monday, Nov. 28, 6 p.m. at the First Christian Church. Tickets are \$5 and are available at the district office in Albia or from any current district commissioner. A feature story on the work of the SCS in Monroe County, including an interview with John Botts, who was with the SCS from its inception until his retirement, will appear in Thursday's Union-Republican.

November 15, 1994

Thursday, June 27, 1996

Soil conservation commissioner terms up for re-election

The terms of two Monroe County Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners, Mervin McDanel of Moravia Urbana Township and John Lawless of Melrose, Jackson Township will expire at noon on Jan. 2, 1997. Successors will be elected at the general election Nov. 5, 1996.

Any qualified elector residing in the soil and water conservation district, which is all of Monroe County including cities and towns, is eligible for the office of commissioner, except that no more than one commissioner may be a resident of any one township. Incumbent commissioners are Susan Ammons of Albia, Monroe Township, Albert Tangie of Albia, Troy Township and Robert Henderson of Albia, Mantua Township; therefore, residents of these township would not be eligible for office at this time.

Prospective candidates seeking the office of soil and water conservation district commissioner must

file nomination petitions in the same manner as for other elective positions at the general election, except that no political party is designated. Nomination petitions can be obtained from the County Auditor.

These petitions, signed by 25 eligible electors, must be filed with the County Auditor at the Monroe County Courthouse no later than 5 p.m. on Aug. 28, 1996.

Individuals elected in November 1996 will serve a term of four years commencing Jan. 2, 1997. Soil and water conservation district commissioners serve without salary and guide the overall soil and water conservation program in the county. For further information pertaining to the responsibilities of a commissioner, contact Monroe County Soil and Water Conservation District office, 14B 2nd Ave West, Albia, Iowa or call 515-932-5144.

JOHN FRIEDEN from the Agricultural Department of Soil Conservation Service met with the students from Grant Elementary's first grade class that is taught by Colleen Putnam. The students were taught how a pond was made, how the pond fills up with water and the uses for ponds. One popular use was for fishing (shown above). The pond that the class belonged to Bill Huber (right) who is showing the students a bull frog that he caught by the pond. Behind Huber is Kathy Bahl who is a soil conservation technician.



Albia Union-Republican Thursday, May 23, 1996

AGRICULTURE



ALBIA UNION-REPUBLICAN

Monroe County farmers eye weather, calendar nervously as rain continues

If a Monroe County farmer doesn't have his corn in the ground already, he can expect to lose up to 10 percent of his potential yield. By June 1, if that corn isn't planted, up to 19 percent of yield potential will be gone.

Those figures are daunting to farmers, few of whom have dipped their planters into the ground this spring.

Some corn has been planted in the northern part of the county, but heavy rains early and a pattern of rain about every other day has kept most farmers out of the field. Practically every aspect of the spring planting season is far behind schedule.

Tillage, application of fertilizers and planting are all languishing as El Nino weather patterns dominate the southern half of the state. South of Monroe County the news is even worse. Wayne, Appanoose and Davis Counties have all experienced

the same number of rains, but with great amounts.

According to the Monroe County Extension Service, farmers are closely watching the calendar as they prepare to rapidly plant their corn crop once (and if) the weather dries up.

Long term studies indicate that optimum corn yields result from plantings made during April 20-May 5. That window of opportunity is gone, although veteran farmers will tell you that southern Iowa has a two-week longer growing season most years which is a huge benefit during late planting years.

The goal for farmers is to establish a uniform stand of 26,000-30,000 plants per acre, regardless of the planting date. The extension service suggests that if planting is delayed past May 25, hybrids earlier than the "adapted full season" maturity

Delaney receives master's degree from Iowa State

Sue Delaney was awarded a Master of Science Degree in Agriculture from Iowa State University in Ames on Friday, May 8. Delaney is a 1975 graduate of Mayo High School in Rochester, Minn. and a 1979 Animal Science graduate of Iowa State.

She has been Iowa State University Extension Director in Monroe County since November, 1992.

for the area may be a better choice.

Farmers can still expect up to 67 percent of their corn yield if corn goes in the ground by June 10, still a month away.

Soybean planting is not as critical, according to the extension research. In fact, if soybeans are planted prior to April 28, yields can be docked 2-5 percent. A mid-May planting will achieve maximum yields for soybeans, but full season varieties can be planted until June 20 with 90 percent yields. Soybeans have been planted up until the first of July and with timely rains have come through with good yields in the fall.

A unique problem to southern Iowa farmers in a late planting year is that the critically important alfalfa crop may be ready for its first harvest at the same time corn and soybeans have to go into the ground.

Farm Bureau assists beef producers

A program dedicated to helping beef producers in southern Iowa receive a greater return on their investment received support this week from the Iowa Farm Bureau.

The Iowa Farm Bureau will provide \$22,000 to the Chariton Valley Beef Initiative, matching \$11,000 contributed by 11 county Farm Bureaus, including Appanoose, Clarke, Davis, Decatur, Lucas, Madison, Mahaska, Monroe, Wapello, Wayne and Warren County.

Chariton Valley Beef is designed to assist producers in making the transition to attain true value for their calves by securing information regarding feeding and processing performance. The initiative will provide producers entering value-based marketing arrangements with information that's essential for capturing premiums for quality beef.

Funds provided by the IFBF will be used to purchase appropriate computer software to evaluate beef herds and carcass data for producers.

Chariton Valley Beef will also inform and educate producers in the 11-county area via meetings, the Internet and ICN telecasts and hire 4-H and FFA youths with an interest in computers to assist the corporation with data entry.

In addition, Chariton Valley Beef has approval to purchase secondary alliance with Precision Beef of Lewis. In return, Precision Beef Alliance will offer producers access to its services, quality carcass data collection and meat merchandising.

AGRICULTURE



ALBIA UNION-REPUBLICAN

Heat wave plus rain helps corn, soybean crops play catch-up

Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Dale M. Cochran said today that the warmer than normal temperatures along with ample moisture last week provided ideal growing conditions for corn and soybeans.

"Spotty thunderstorms accompanied by high winds hit parts of the state, causing additional green snap to occur, and farmers in the northern one-third of the state are saying they could use a good shower to help out during pollination," said the Secretary.

Monroe Countians, like other Iowans, suffered under 90-100 degree heat for almost a week but timely rains provided relief to crops, particularly corn in the tassle stage. Monroe County missed a two and a half inch rain storm that tracked north and hit Oskaloosa on Tuesday night, instead receiving a gentle quarter-inch of moisture.

"As of Sunday, 76 percent of the state's corn acreage had tasseled, which is about one week ahead of the 1997 pace and 12 days ahead of the five-year average. Corn has silked on 49 percent of the crop, which is also six days ahead of last year, and nine days ahead of the five-year average," said Cochran. "As of Friday, the corn crop was rated 4 percent very poor, 7 percent

poor, 23 percent fair, 45 percent good, and 21 percent excellent."

"Soybeans are also progressing, with 77 percent of the acreage in bloom as of Sunday," said Secretary Cochran. "That is six days ahead of 1997 when 56 percent had bloomed, and 12 days ahead of the five-year average. Soybean acreage setting pods is at 22 percent, one week ahead of last year and the five-year average. As of Friday, the soybean crop condition was rated 3 percent very poor, 7 percent poor, 23 percent fair, 46 percent good and 21 percent excellent."

In its weekly Crop and Weather Report, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship's (IDALS) Statistics Bureau said as of Friday, July 17, the state's topsoil moisture was rated 2 percent short, 14 percent short, 74 percent adequate and 10 percent surplus. Subsoil moisture was 1 percent short, 9 percent short, 76 percent adequate and 14 percent surplus.

"The hot, humid weather has stressed Iowa's livestock," said Cochran. Flies and mosquitos are also starting to bother the cattle. Pasture conditions as of Friday were rated 1 percent poor, 25 percent fair, 51 percent good and 18 percent excellent.

DNR suggests filling tanks now

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) recommends that Iowans who use propane fill their tanks in late summer months. According to the DNR's July survey, Iowans paid an average of \$.56 for a gallon of propane, five cents less than last month. A year ago, the average price was \$.65 per gallon.

Ward Lenz, energy data analyst for the DNR, said the least expensive time to purchase propane is during the months of July and August, based on historical data. "By filling tanks during this period, consumers will save money and help ease the heavy propane demand that occurs during the fall harvest," he said.

Traditionally propane prices begin their seasonal price climb in September, and prices continue to increase through the heating season.

Iowa consumers can help themselves save money and avoid price spikes by participating in a propane summer fill effort. Propane consumers should check with their local suppliers to arrange for a fill of their propane tanks during the next month. Additionally, consumers should ask their suppliers about the option of locking prices for the winter months.

Several weather forecasting organizations are predicting a colder winter than normal this year. This would follow the trend set during years after an El Nino experience. A colder winter than normal will likely increase propane prices, with the potential for significant price spikes if demand outstrips the ability to deliver the fuel. Locking in maximum prices will allow consumers to avoid many of these price spikes.

Farm truck Labor Day tour

They hauled the eggs, they hauled the hay and then they hauled everyone to town. Farm trucks have been delivering the bacon for nearly a century. Now a Labor Day weekend tour of northeast Iowa will celebrate the significance of the Farm Truck to our states' heritage.

The Ridge Roads Truck Classic is open to all sizes and types of farm trucks. Everything from pickups to stake trucks to tank trucks to grain haulers are eligible - provided they are at least 25 years old, in sound mechanical condition and look good. The event is sponsored by the Country Heritage Tourism Region of Allamakee, Clayton, Fayette and Winneshiek counties and MotorMemories, Inc., organizers of the annual Motorloway tour.

"Our purpose is to showcase the natural beauty of the area and to tell the tale of agriculture in Iowa," says tour organizer Gerry Schnepf. "We're encouraging participants to bring their children and grandchildren along."

The itinerary includes 2= days of unique farm settings, festivals and stops at agribusiness sites. Actual travel will be less than 100 miles per day. "We will do 'run-outs' each day from Decorah," says co-organizer John Swanson. "The first stop will be fish farming on the Mississippi at Lansing. Then it's on to visit Iowa's first farmers at Effigy Mounds. Later we'll view the Lumberjack Parade in MacGregor. After visiting a grain terminal we will return to Decorah and the Red Barn Music Fest."

"The second day will expand on the first," added the events third co-organizer Claude Jones, "We will visit a barn in Elgin, the Motor Mill in Elkader and the Lock and Dam in Guttenberg; all while traveling through some of Iowa's most scenic hills, bluffs and Ridge Roads. In addition to celebrating farm trucks and our agricultural heritage, we also want this to be a travel showcase for our state," says Jones. "We want young people to appreciate all our state has to offer."

Participation in The Ridge Roads Truck Classic is limited to 75 vehicles and will be by invitation only. Those interested in participating must submit an application form accompanied by a \$25 non-refundable fee. The applications are reviewed and the final list of participants is by invitation only. The additional cost at the time of invitation is \$100 for a total fee of \$125 if selected to participate. Lodging at reduced rates and including Continental Breakfast have been reserved in Decorah. Additional passengers beyond the two covered in the fee are welcome at an added \$25.00 per person.

The Application fee covers two people and includes commemorative license plate, credentials, door decals, tour log book and other souvenirs, opening harvest dinner, plus emergency road assistance and closing Ice Cream Social on Monday afternoon. Application forms can be obtained from MotorMemories, Inc. c/o PO Box 13408, Des Moines, IA, 50310-0408. Telephone (515)270-2128, or e-mail CHANGE@DIR@aol.com.

Albia Union-Republican Thursday,

July weather not helping crops catch up to normal

Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Dale M. Cochran said today that strong storms further damaged crops in many parts of Iowa last week, but caused even more damage to farm buildings and trees.

"We had our fourth consecutive week of above average precipitation last week," Cochran said. "Precipitation statewide averaged 1.47 inches compared to a normal of .99 inches for this time of year. While most of the state did show good crop progress, significant damage to crops, buildings and trees occurred in several areas. Most of the crop damage was limited to corn which blew down in some areas, along with numerous reports of green snap."

"As of Sunday, 69 percent of the corn had been cultivated for the first time. This is nine days behind last year at this time when 87 percent of the corn had been cultivated," the Secretary said. "The tallest corn, without extending the leaf, was measured at 64 inches. The average for the state, without extending the leaf, was 49 inches."

"The corn crop statewide was rated two percent very poor, eight percent poor, 22 percent fair, 50 percent good and 18 percent excellent," Cochran said.

"Soybeans were blooming on 25 percent of the acres," Cochran said. "This compares with last year at this time when 11 percent of the acres were blooming. The soybean crop statewide was rated three percent very poor, eight percent poor, 26 percent fair, 48 percent good and 15 percent excellent."

In its weekly Crop and Weather Report, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship's (IDALS) Statistics Bureau said topsoil moisture statewide was rated three percent very short or short, 62 percent adequate and 39 percent surplus. Subsoil moisture was rated one percent short, 60 percent adequate and 39 percent surplus.

"Continued high humidity and storms have caused stress to livestock," the Secretary added. "Some calves in Southeast Iowa are suffering from pinkeye. Pasture conditions statewide are generally good, with 86 percent of the pastures rated either good or excellent."

"The first harvest of the alfalfa hay crop was 89 percent complete as of Sunday," Cochran said. "This compares with last year at this time when 99 percent of the first harvest was complete and the five year average of 91 percent. The hay crop is rated seven percent very poor or poor, 22 percent fair, 52 percent good and 19 percent excellent."

Farmers make incredible progress in three dry days

Black cutworms now pose serious threat

When Iowa State Extension Crop Specialist Mark Carlton got to work on Monday morning he thought Monroe County farmers probably had 25 percent of their corn crop planted -- a dismal figure for May 18.

When rain chased farmers out of the fields on Wednesday, however, Carlton had another figure which caused him to think his Monday estimate was wrong or else Monroe County farmers have the ability to plant really fast.

Carlton's estimate of corn planting Wednesday was closer to 90-95 percent complete. "I missed it Monday," said Carlton. "The guys here made rapid progress over the weekend and had two great days Monday and Tuesday."

Carlton estimated soybean planting was still behind schedule but was close to 25-30 percent complete. Soybeans are not nearly as critical as corn at this point in the planting year.

Planting had gone so well, according to Carlton, that Wednesday wind, hail and rain was almost a welcome relief to many farmers. But Carlton would like them to slow down just a bit more and take a look at a potentially disastrous problem looming in fields throughout the county.

"I've had black cutworm traps out since April," said Carlton. "They're here and if they aren't sprayed, farmers could face replanting entire fields of corn, even though the first plantings of corn are barely up."

Carlton said the black cutworms have moved from the south on the

wings of late winter and early spring storms. "There were several significant flights during late April and early May," he said. "The eggs laid by those moths have hatched and we're observing black cutworm feeding in several corn fields around the county."

Carlton said the cutworms vary in length from less than a half inch to over an inch but the majority are less than a half inch at this point.

Cutworms less than a half inch long have at least two weeks remaining to feed and can cause considerable damage. The best time to scout fields is after mid morning when freshly cut plants are beginning to wilt. "Farmers need to carefully dig in the top half to inch of topsoil around the base of the corn seedling for the cutworm," he said. "They need to dig in several locations to determine the cutworm size, then count the number of plants cut or wilted per 100 plants."

Rescue applications of insecticides should be made when two to three percent of the corn plants are cut or wilted. For black cutworms longer than an inch, treatments should be made when five percent of the plants are cut.

"These thresholds need to be reduced in fields with low plant populations (less than 20,000 per acre)," Carlton recommended. "Farmers need to be scouting all areas of fields because there may be areas that do not need to be treated."

What Carlton fears most is that time-pressed farmers, hoping to finish their corn and soybean planting

and needing to put up their first cutting of hay, will not take the time to scout for the black cutworm. "The potential for severe damage here in southern Iowa is high," he warned.

Alfalfa problems

That's not all farmers around here need to keep an eye on when it comes to crop loss, according to Carlton. Warm spring temperatures and lots of rain have promoted rapid growth of alfalfa, creating the ideal environment for alfalfa disease development.

Carlton said spring black stem, leptosphaerulina leaf spot and common leaf spot are all a potential hay crop hazard.

"All three diseases begin on lower leaves and progress upward," said Carlton, "causing leaves to turn yellow and drop reducing both the forage quality and the yield. Unfortunately, no effective fungicides are available to prevent or reduce disease development."

Dry weather and sunshine are the best remedy and Carlton said farmers need to be scouting alfalfa fields and consider cutting severely alfalfa fields early to reduce leaf loss.

The alfalfa weevil populations appear to be far below economic thresholds this spring, he said, sharing some good news. In surveying fields within the past week, weevil populations are well below the average calling for chemical control measures. "If I were a farmer, I'd still be checking," he added.

CRP demo held Wed.

A CRP Enhancement Demonstration will be held Wednesday, Aug. 19, 4 p.m. on the land adjacent to the Albia Hy-Vee across from G.B. Equipment on Highway 34 west in Albia.

The Monroe County Soil and Water Conservation District is sponsoring the event that also includes a dinner following the demonstration. Anyone interested in learning about CRP seeding enhancement is invited. Call 932-5144 for more information.

Rainfall still running far ahead of normal as Iowa farmers struggle with weather

Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Dale M. Cochran said today that the statewide average rainfall for last week was 1.45 inches, well over the weekly normal of 1.03 inches.

The preliminary statewide average rainfall for the month of June stands at 7.46 inches, said Cochran. That is the eighth greatest June total among 126 years of records.

As of Sunday, June 28, 57 percent of Iowa's corn crop had been cultivated for the first time, which is six days behind the 73 percent

that had been cultivated at this time last year, said the secretary. The tallest corn was 44 inches and the average height of corn was 31 inches. As of Friday, June 26, the corn crop condition was rated 3 percent very poor, 8 percent poor, 21 percent fair, 47 percent good, and 21 percent excellent.

As of Friday, the soybean crop condition was rated 4 percent very poor, 8 percent poor, 26 percent fair, 46 percent good, and 16 per-

cent excellent, said Secretary Cochran.

The wet conditions from previous weeks are still causing stress to the crops, but the warm weather is helping. Much of the state is still reporting yellowing of corn and soybeans from the excessive moisture. There is some concern that much of the first cutting of hay is going to be a complete loss, said the Secretary.

In its weekly Crop and Weather Report, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) Statistics Bureau said as of Friday, June 26, the states topsoil moisture was rated 2 percent short, 51 percent adequate and 47 percent surplus. Subsoil moisture was 1 percent short, 50 percent adequate and 49 percent surplus.

The high humidity, hot weather and muddy feedlots have caused stress in Iowa's livestock, said Cochran. Pasture conditions as of Friday were rated 4 percent poor, 20 percent fair, 49 percent good and 27 percent excellent.

Sign-up for family farm tax credit begins

The Monroe County Assessor's Office announces that eligible owners of agricultural land in Monroe County may apply for Family Farm Tax Credit. The dates for sign-up are July 1 - Oct. 15.

Only tracts of land that are classified as agricultural real estate qualify for the credit. The tract of land must be 10 acres or more or contiguous to a horticultural purposes.

More than half of the acres in the tract must be devoted to the production of crops or livestock by a designated person. Contiguous tracts under the same legal ownership and located within the same county are considered one tract.

A designated person must be "actively engaged in farming" the tract during the fiscal year prior to the fiscal year in which the application for credit is filed. If the tract is owned by an individual or related persons, the designated person who is actively engaged in farming must be an owner of the tract, the owner's spouse or the owner's parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, nieces or nephews. No cousins.

BUSINESS



ALBIA UNION-REPUBLICAN

Farm profit margins at 10-year low level

Successful Farming magazine's Index, an annual analysis of farm income, show farm profits fell 47.5 percent in 1997, resulting in the lowest gross profit margin for farmers in more than a decade.

Based on a study of actual farm records of 1,865 farms in 11 states - Georgia, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Carolina and Wisconsin - the Index, published in the August issue of *Successful Farming*, shows an average gross profit margin on cash revenue of 4.5 percent in 1997, down from 9.5 percent in 1996 and 20.5 percent in 1989.

Perhaps the study's most significant finding was that farmers' expenses last year grew 40 percent faster than sales, a figure that Roy Ferguson of Ferguson Group, Ltd. (who analyzed the data for *Successful Farming*) calls "extremely destructive."

"I don't think I would say we're looking at the '80s again," cautioned Gary Bredenstener of the University of Nebraska, "but we could get there in a year or two."

A big difference between the early '80s and now, however, is that [farmers'] net worth continues to grow. Even so, 20 percent of Nebraska Farm Business Association members last year reported negative income, according to Bredenstener.

And 50 percent said farm income alone wasn't sufficient to cover family living expenses and income taxes.

Ferguson called it "especially crucial" that sales growth outpace expense growth. Ferguson added if cash sales run 23 percent ahead of expenses for the next three to five

years, profits could again hit the 20 percent mark.

In the short term Ferguson said the combination of low income and increasing short-term debt in recent years will result in the restructuring of some agricultural loans. On a positive note, he added that liquidity remains a relatively strong 161 percent.

Founded in 1902, *Successful Farming* magazine was the first magazine published by the Meredith Corporation.

With a circulation of 475,000 and 1.3 million readers, *Successful Farming* is the largest paid circulation farm magazine in the United States as well as the largest advertising revenue farm publication.

Meredith Corporation, head quartered in Des Moines, is one of America's leading media and marketing companies. Meredith businesses center on magazine and book publishing and television broadcasting.

USFWS proposes temporary okay of tungsten shot

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has proposed temporary approval of tungsten-iron and tungsten-polymer shot for the 1998-99 waterfowl hunting season.

The proposal was based on preliminary tests that show tungsten shot types pose little threat to waterfowl that ingest it. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will accept comments on the proposal through Aug. 26. A decision on whether to accept the proposal won't be made until later this summer.

Rathbun Land & Water Alliance plans cooperative approach to protect lake

The Rathbun Land & Water Alliance (RLWA) is a group of individuals representing District Commissioners, Board of Supervisors, Farm Bureau Insurance, Chariton Valley Resource Conservation & Development, Army Corps of Engineers, Natural resources Conservation Service and the Rathbun Rural Water Association.

These organizations are committed to protecting our land and water resources by reducing the impacts of agricultural nonpoint and point sources of water quality impairment in Rathbun Lake. One of the requirements for Rathbun Land & Water Alliance to receive Federal grant money to help the local producers protect their land from soil erosion is to determine if there is a problem within the watershed.

In April 1997, a water quality monitoring plan was initiated for the Rathbun Lake Watershed. The plan consisted of water samples taken strategically around the watershed by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), and the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE).

In all, 30 different water quality

parameters were analyzed in an effort to identify specific pollutants entering Rathbun Lake. The ultimate goal of the water monitoring plan is to determine possible sources of water impairment and to implement a watershed management plan which will reduce point and nonpoint sources of pollution entering the lake.

Results from the first year of monitoring have been collected and analyzed by the Environmental Protection Agency. The major problems which need to be addressed are turbidity, significant suspended solids loading, and high nutrient and pesticide loading.

The detrimental effects Rathbun Lake is experiencing due to these problems will only increase with time unless preventative measures are taken. The ACOE estimates that Rathbun Lake is silting in approximately three times faster than initially anticipated.

As a result, Rathbun Rural Water Association (RRWA) has begun a \$7.25 million renovation and expansion program to improve its water treatment capabilities to meet

the governments stringent safe drinking water regulations. RRWA estimates that high levels of turbidity and farm chemicals in raw water increases water treatment costs by 10-20 percent. In addition to their expansion, the RRWA has been actively involved with the Rathbun Land & Water Alliance by providing lots of time and financial support toward the protection and enhancement of land and water resources in South Central Iowa.

In addition to survey of land owners and residents who use water supplied by RRWA and the water quality monitoring program, the Alliance and its partners have initiated several other water quality protection efforts.

These include a water quality and education program, The Chariton River Corridor Wetland and Riparian Habitat Restoration project, Chariton Valley Beef Industry Initiative, and the Chariton Valley Biomass Project. These projects and others are community oriented designed to help improve the local economy and protect our resources.

It's farm lease extension/termination time again

We are rapidly approaching the end of August and the annual notice deadline for renewing or ending farm leases. Iowa law sets out the specific steps landlords and tenants must follow in order to provide legal notice for termination of existing leases.

Termination notice needed by Sept. 1. Generally speaking, if farm tenants occupy and cultivate 40 acres or more, the lease tenancy continues beyond the agreed term for the following crop year on the same terms and conditions as the original lease unless written notice is served by the party seeking termination (landlord or tenant) upon the other party.

Methods of notice of termination. Notice of termination can be legally provided by using

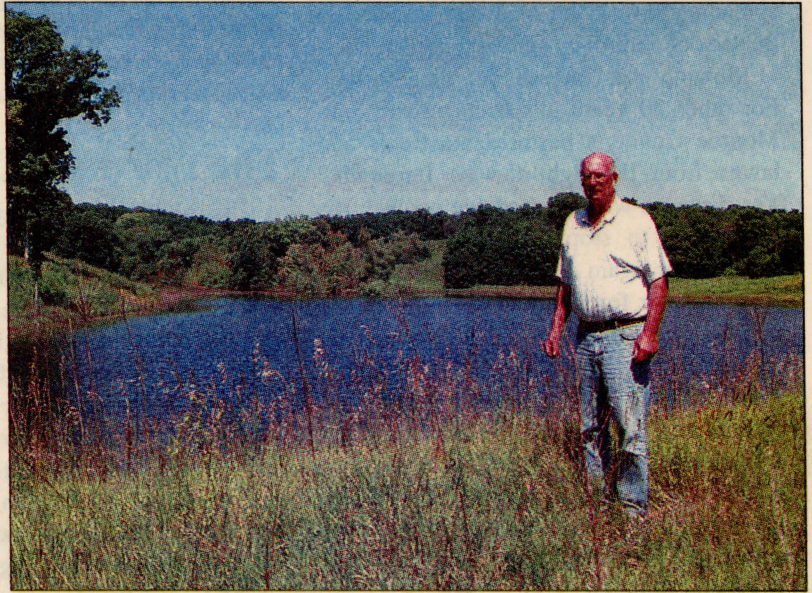
any of the following methods on or before Sept. 1, (1) by personally delivering to the other party to the lease a written notice with the other party receiving, accepting and signing that they received the notice; (2) by having the notice served by the county sheriff or other process server; (3) by publication; or (4) by mailing and completing the service of the notice by certified mail.

A private attorney should be consulted to ensure that the specific steps required under each method are strictly followed so proper service is accomplished.

CRP wetlands—an alternative to farming wet ground

The chirping of frogs and the buzzing of bees fills the air as Bob Pearson approaches the recently restored wetland sites on his property in Urbana Township. Bob farms nearly 1,000 acres in the southeastern part of Monroe County and is a firm believer in making his farm sustainable. It's hard to believe that just a year ago these crop fields were riddled with tractor tire ruts, some nearly two feet deep. "Even in the driest years it was nearly impossible to plant or harvest crops," states Bob, as he looks out across the 35 acres of wetlands. He points to a half dozen ducks paddling through the deepest part of the restored area.

"Bob Pearson is one of many farmers in Monroe County, who have signed up for the continuous CRP programs to restore wetland areas on farm ground that is usually too wet to farm", says Jo Runnells, Monroe County Soil and Water district technician. CP23 and CP9 are two such programs available through the Farm Service Agency that pays a percentage of construction, seeding and an annual rental



BOB PEARSON STANDS in front of his wetlands in Urbana Township. He is one of many Monroe County farmers that has taken part in a CRP program to restore wetland areas.

payment to help compensate for the loss of crop production. Coupled with the CP29 Buffer program, Bob has made great strides towards sustainability by making his farm into a place that not only provides excellent wildlife habitat, but is helping to provide safer drinking water for

generations to come. If you are interested in learning more about wetland conservation practices for your farm, please contact the Natural Resources Conservation Service at 641-932-5144 or stop by the office at 1701 South B in Albia.

Farm/Business

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Tuesday, September 15, 1998

Cattlemen win loan deficiency payment for silage

Leaders at the Iowa Cattlemen's Association have learned that Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman has announced new protocols which make silage and field ground ear corn eligible for the Loan Deficiency Payment.

"After three intense weeks of work and coalition building with other farm organizations and state cattle organizations, we got our message across that providing Loan Deficiency Payments on silage was vital to our industry," explained Glenn Rowe, ICA President.

"This issue surfaced within our grassroots membership as an unforeseen problem in the 1996 Farm Bill, and cattle producers across the Midwest put their best effort into getting it changed. It's a great example of how strong we can be when we pull together."

The new rules make all acres harvested for silage in 1998 eligible for the LDP payments, including acres already harvested.

According to the state FSA office, yields for silage will be determined by the yield of whole kernel corn harvested on the same farm.

In the event that a producer harvested all his corn in the non-whole kernel state, yield would be determined by averaging yields on

three neighboring farms. FSA office stated that no check strips will be necessary to determine yield for corn harvested in a feed state.

The ICA Board of Directors made this their highest priority issue at their Sept. 2 board meeting, encouraging all producers to communicate with Washington and with their local FSA offices.

The Board also enlisted the support of the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation, Iowa Corn Growers, Iowa Soybean Association, Iowa Pork Producers, Iowa Institute of Coops and the Iowa Bankers Association to convey the urgency of the situation to USDA.

Through the efforts of NCBA staff in Washington and a coalition of corn and cattle producing states, including Nebraska, Kansas, South Dakota, Illinois, Minnesota and Colorado, the issue was moved to the Secretary's desk.

"This is a great win for all cattle producers," added Rowe. "NCBA did a terrific job in Washington carrying the views of Midwestern states to the decision makers. It's something that will put money in producers' pockets—which is especially needed right now."

ISU to sponsor Soybean Field Day Sept. 17

Iowa State University Extension Service will sponsor a Soybean Cyst Nematode Field Day on Thursday, Sept. 17 from 4 to 6 p.m. at the Rusty Plate Farm located southeast of Oskaloosa. Both resistant and susceptible soybean varieties from Asgrow, Crows,

Dekalb, Hisoy, Pioneer and Stine are planted side-by-side in the trial.

Dr. Greg Tylka, Iowa State University Nematologist, will be present to discuss the effects of Soybean Cyst Nematode (SCN) on soybean yield, methods for detecting SCN and strategies to control

SCN.

From Oskaloosa, go east on Hwy. 92 to the Lake Keomah corner, turn south to 265th St. and then east 1/2 mile. From Hwy. 23 (formerly Hwy. 63) go north on Quail Ave. to 265th St. and then

one and one half miles east. Look for the signs.

For more information call the Monroe County Extension office at 515-932-5612 or the Mahaska County Extension office at 515-673-9474.

Drop in use of soil-saving tillage is of mounting concern

DES MOINES -- Conservation and farm group leaders are concerned about an apparent drop in the use of soil-saving reduced tillage methods in Iowa. Preliminary results from the 1998 conservation tillage survey show a 25 percent drop in no-till methods and a 12 percent decline in total conservation tillage from 1997.

"It appears this decline in crop residue management was across the state. Our concern is that we let farmers know this has happened, and that we do all we can to urge them to leave crop residues on the soil surface this fall after harvest," says Leroy Brown, State Conservationist for the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Conservation tillage is the practice of leaving the stalks and other residues from the current year's crop after harvest on the surface of the soil, to protect the soil from falling raindrops until the next year's crop can protect it.

Conservation and farm groups have also noticed fewer crop residues this year. "The Corn Growers Association is convinced that conservation tillage has worked and saved millions of tons of topsoil in the past. So we're concerned when we hear reports and see extra tillage going on," says Larry Kay, a Pottawattamie County farmer and representative of the Iowa Corn Growers. "We need to be as concerned as ever about soil erosion. We know conservation tillage methods work and would like to see them used as much as possible," Kay says.

The decline in conservation tillage is being attributed to a long, dry fall last year which provided the time and opportunity to till farm fields after harvest. Other reasons given for more tillage include a cool, wet spring, compaction problems, and less attention to conservation compliance. Conservationists feel they have valid answers to each of the reasons for more tillage.

"Conservation compliance is still an issue for farmers," Brown says. "The NRCS made 3415 reviews in 1997 and found two percent of the farms were not actively following their conservation compliance plans, with eight percent being granted variances. In 1998, we made 1138 reviews and found three percent not actively following their plans, with nine percent receiving variances."

"Most farmers support the conservation compliance concept, and are following their conservation plans. But we do need to make it clear that farmers may still lose USDA program benefits if they don't follow their plans," Brown says. "And, of course, nearly all those plans included conservation tillage."

Conservationists and some long-term no-till farmers also took issue with the idea of needing to till because of extra time in the fall or cold, wet springs.

"You take away your options for next spring if you till after harvest this fall," says Jim Gulliford, Director of the Division of Soil Conservation for the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship. "Five years of on-farm analy-

sis, looking at economic records from 1623 corn fields and 1189 soybean fields, shows that corn-bean rotations in Iowa using mulch till, ridge-till and no-till systems have more profit than systems with little or no crop residues," Gulliford says. Gulliford's figures come from the MAX-Farming for Maximum Efficiency reports.

Farm and conservation groups both cite soil saving as a strong reason to farm with residues. They point to the severe erosion on farm fields this summer after heavy rains. "We saw some erosion on fields with heavy residues, but nothing like that on fields with very little protective residue," Brown says.

The conservation tillage survey is conducted annually by the NRCS and the Conservation Technology Information Center in West Lafayette, Indiana. Other preliminary information from the survey:

- * 25 percent reduction from 1997 in no-till corn and soybeans, from 4.8 million acres in 1997 to 3.6 million acres in 1998. No-till was used on 16 percent of corn and soybeans in 1998.

- * Two counties are 50% or more no-till, 31 counties are 25 percent or more no-till, and 28 counties are less than 10 percent no-till.

- * Counties with the highest no-till percentage are in southern Iowa. All but two (Harrison and Shelby) of the counties with 25 percent or more no-till are south of or include I-80.

- * No-till had grown in Iowa in all but six years since 1980, but has remained fairly level since 1994. The largest increases came in the early 1990's as farmers implemented conservation plans required in the conservation provisions of the 1985 and 1990 farm bills.

- * The drop in no-till was statewide - 77 counties had a drop, with 44 counties showing 25 percent drop or more. However, 22 counties had an increase in no-till.

- * No-till decline was in both corn and soybeans. Corn acreage fell from 2.08 million acres in 1997 to 1.4 million acres this year. Beans fell from 2.74 million acres in 1997 to 2.19 million acres in 1998.

- * Mulch till bean acres increased slightly in 1998; corn acres fell about half a million acres.

- * 12 percent reduction in total conservation tillage (1.56 million acres), from 12,810,671 acres in

1997 to 11,242,119 acres in 1998.

- * 51 percent of the corn and soybeans produced in 1998 were in conservation tillage systems, (at least 30 percent of the soil covered with residues after planting.)

- * While acres of no-till and conservation tillage decreased, acreage with 0% residue to 15 percent cover increased by 695,728 acres, from 3,541,426 acres in 1997 to 4,237,154 acres in 1998. Nearly all this increase, 669,768 acres, was in corn fields.

Iowa factory exports show continued strength in '98

Iowa manufactured and processed exports grew 5.1 percent during the first half of 1998. During the six-month period, Iowa firms exported \$2.7 billion in goods, according to officials at the Iowa Department of Economic Development (IDED). Nationally, U.S. exports grew by 1.6 percent during a similar time-frame.

"Iowa companies continue to produce high-quality products which are sought out by other countries," said David Lyons, Director of the Iowa Department of Economic Development. "At a time when we expect commodity exports to be disappointing, it's encouraging to see the concerted efforts by our processing community to develop new products and markets for our value-added agricultural output. As

we continue to diversify our markets, we believe our export figures will remain strong."

In 1995, Iowa's manufacturing exports broke the \$4 billion mark. At the end of the first half of 1997, Iowa's exported goods were \$2.3 billion and finished at \$5.2 billion

by the end of the year. During the first six months of 1998, Iowa's factory exports have totaled \$2.7 billion.

Industrial machinery remained the biggest export category at \$493 million; the second largest was processed food products at \$226 million.

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Tuesday, September 29, 1998

The harvest is on!

Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Dale M. Cochran said today that unseasonably warm, dry weather has caused Iowa crops to mature ahead of schedule as the 1998 harvest is well underway.

"Temperatures for last week averaged 6.6 degrees above normal in Cedar Rapids to 11.3 degrees above normal in Burlington," Cochran said. "Rainfall statewide averaged 66 hundredths-of-an-inch, or about three-fourths of normal for this time of year. Many farmers are concerned about crops drying down too fast. Corn is currently being harvested with moisture contents of 15 to 25 percent."

"Corn had matured on 88 percent of the acres as of Sunday," the Secretary said. "Normally, at this of time year, 51 percent of the corn has matured. Six percent of the harvest was complete on Sunday. This is twelve days ahead of normal. The corn crop statewide is rated nine percent very poor to poor, 20 percent fair, 48 percent good and 23 percent excellent."

"Leaves were dropping on 71

percent of the soybean acres as of Sunday. This compares with last year at this time when leaves were dropping on 49 percent of the acres and the five year average of 42 percent," Cochran said. "Five percent of the soybeans have been harvested. Normally at this time three percent of the soybeans had been harvested. The soybean crop statewide was rated seven percent very poor to poor, 17 percent fair, 50 percent good and 26 percent excellent."

In its weekly Crop and Weather Report, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship's (IDALS) Statistics Bureau said the state's topsoil moisture was rated 42 percent very short to short, 53 percent adequate and five percent surplus. Subsoil moisture was rated 33 percent very short to short, 62 percent adequate and five percent surplus.

"There are reports of a second generation of corn borers in the southwestern district," Cochran said.

18th general sign-up for CRP set

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) 18th general sign-up will be during a seven-week period from Oct. 26-Dec. 11. The CPR offers landowners annual rental payments for establishing grasses, forbs, trees, or other resource-conserving covers on environmentally sensitive croplands from a 10-15 year period.

"For landowners with CRP contracts expiring in September of 1999, and for those whose CRP bids were not accepted during the last general sign-up, and also for those landowners considering entering land in CRP for the first time, this is another excellent opportunity to offer to enroll your most environmentally sensitive land into this cost effective, voluntary program," said Tom Grau, State Executive Director of the Farm Service

Agency (FSA).

Land bid into the CRP which offers the highest protection to natural resources for the lowest cost to the taxpayer is generally the land USDA will accept. The Environmental Benefits Index (EBI) scoring system, used to rank CRP offers, allows points to be given for positive environmental effects on our soils, wildlife, water, air, and pristine lands. The EBI system is used to determine the most desirable land for the purposes of the CRP. The USDA will continue to evaluate and rank eligible offers throughout the sign-up period, however the EBI cutoff will be decided after sign-up 18 ends. The EBI cutoff will be decided after reviewing and analyzing EBI numbers from all offers.

CRP contracts accepted under

this 18th sign-up period will become effective on October 1, 1999. The USDA is authorized to maintain enrollment of up to 36.4 million acres of land in the CRP. In Iowa, this program has helped protect over 1.4 million acres of environmentally sensitive land on an annual basis.

Iowa producers and landowners should carefully review all the facts and alternatives before making any

final decision. Producers and landowners are highly encouraged to visit with USDA representatives at the Service Center Offices to find out ways to maximize their EBI points and increase the chances that their land will be accepted.

For more detailed information about the CRP's 18th general sign-up, or sign-up or the continuous CRP sign-up, contact your local USDA Service Center.

Farm/Business

Tuesda

Deadline for CRP sign-up is Dec. 11

The 18th sign-up period for landowners to bid highly erodible and other environmentally sensitive land into the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) ends Dec. 11.

As the sign-up nears its end, USDA officials in Iowa are urging more farmers to visit with their local conservation offices to consider the program. This general CRP sign-up offers landowners annual rental payments for establishing grasses, forbs or trees on environmentally sensitive lands for 10-5 years. Offers accepted for this sign-up will go under contract Oct. 1, 1999.

Leroy Brown, State Conservationist for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service, says the CRP continues to be one of the best programs USDA offers to help rural landowners save soil, improve water quality, and provide more wildlife habitat.

At the same time, entering land into the CRP may be an excellent economic decision, according to Tom Grau, State Executive Director of USDA's Farm Service Agency. He urges landowners to look at lower producing land for possible entry into the program. Land bid into the CRP which offers the highest protection to natural resources for the lowest cost to the taxpayer is generally the land USDA accepts, Grau said. An environmental benefits index (EBI) scoring system is used by USDA to assign points for positive environmental effects on soils, wildlife, water, air and pristine lands.

This general sign-up is again a competitive process where landowners are given a rental rate cap based on productivity of their land and average county rental rates. The landowner then makes an offer that cannot exceed the rental cap, but can be less. A lower rental rate offer increases the score, making the offer more competitive. The

FSA released new rental rates in September of 1998.

Brown and Grau also urged landowners to consider the option of entering land into the continuous sign-up of the CRP. "Land that meets the eligibility requirements for riparian forest buffers, grass filter strips, waterways, field windbreaks and shelterbelts, living snow fences, contour buffer strips and shallow water areas will be automatically accepted into the continuous sign-up," Brown said. He said that in some cases, the annual rental rate for land in these practices is higher than for the general CRP sign-up, because the practices protect the most sensitive land.

"Whether it's the 18th general sign-up or the continuous sign-up for buffer practices, we're urging farmers to take a look at their situation, and visit with our local NRCS and FSA offices about the procedures and benefits of the program," Brown says.

"Representatives of the FSA and NRCS are ready to work with each producer and walk them through the decision-making process," Grau says, "but the final choices are up to each producer."

Home Tips

PRESERVING PEPPERS —

There is a simple way of freezing peppers.

Cut the peppers in the desired sizes. Wash out the seeds and place the peppers on paper towels to dry. Put these peppers in a freezer bag. Use another freezer bag to prevent freezer burn.

There is an advantage of having these peppers on hand for long periods of time. It also prevents having to buy peppers during the off-season when they're so expensive. Alvin R., St. Clair Shores, Mich.



SCOTT AND JULIE ETCHER of Lovilia (center) were named district winners in the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation's (IFBF) 1998 young farmer achievement award contest. The announcement was made at a banquet during the IFBF annual meeting in Des Moines on Dec. 1. The Etchers were presented with their

award by IFBF President Ed Wiederstein (left) and John Croft (right), a representative of GROWMARK, Inc. As district winners, the Etchers received a \$50 gift certificate towards the purchase of FS products from GROWMARK, Inc.



JOHN DEHAMER of Eddyville (right) received the Monroe County Farm Bureau recognition award at the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation IFBF annual meeting in Des Moines on Dec. 2. Craig Lang (left), IFBF vice president, made the presentation to DeHamer, who is the county Farm Bureau president.

Center for Rural Affairs releases updated CRP "Bid to Win" Pamphlet

The USDA recently announced plans for a Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) general sign-up from Oct. 26 -Dec. 11. The Center for Rural Affairs will publish an updated pamphlet entitled "Bid to Win: Maximizing Your CRP Bid," based on the new bidding criteria. This tool is for farmers who want to understand the CRP scoring process, and maximize their chance of a successful CRP bid. The report is available for free.

For the general sign-up, farmers will again bid against each other on the basis of environmental points and the price of the bid. The USDA will score the bids this winter, and contracts for winning bids will be effective in October 1999.

Environmental points will again be based on soil erosion, water quality, and wildlife benefits. Multi-species plantings of native grasses, along with trees and shrubs where appropriate, will provide the most points for farmers. The scoring will be similar to 1997, but minor changes in state priority areas, rules on upgrading existing single-species stands, and endangered species points can substantially change the points available for a particular landowner.

Farmers interested in submitting a CRP bid should make an appointment early with their county USDA office to discuss their options. The USDA is also extending its CRP Continuous Sign-up,

which allows farmers to automatically enroll partial-field practices like buffer strips, contour grass strips, field borders and wet areas for wildlife in the CRP.

To obtain a free copy, call the Center for Rural Affairs' Conservation Hotline at 402-994-2021.

Harvest far from complete in southern Iowa

Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Dale M. Cochran said today that the 1998 harvest is nearing completion despite wet conditions in parts and reported rail car shortages in parts of the state.

Unfortunately most of the remaining corn and soybeans left in the fields is in southern Iowa. While the state is estimating the soybean harvest is 99 percent complete, a substantial number of acres of soybeans are still in soggy Monroe County fields.

And the Monroe County corn harvest is just getting underway. According to area farmers, the best thing that could happen would be a hard freeze and an extended November cold snap to firm up the ground.

A wet, sloppy snow of 4-6 inches over the weekend and heavy rains in parts of Monroe County on Monday night complicated the har-

HARVEST

-Cont. on P. 7

HARVEST

-Cont. from P. 6

vest problems being faced by area farmers.

"The harvest is virtually complete in the northern and central parts of Iowa," Cochran said. "Other areas of the state are reporting unharvested corn and some southern districts still have soybeans in the field. There are reports of corn being piled on the ground in certain areas."

"The soybean harvest statewide was 99 percent complete as of Sunday," the Secretary said. "That is the same as last year at this time and the five-year average."

"The corn harvest is about 92 percent complete," Cochran said. "Last year at this time 90 percent of the corn had been harvested and normally 85 percent of the corn is harvested by this time. The moisture content of corn left in the field is averaging 18 percent statewide while harvested corn is averaging 17 percent moisture."

In its weekly Crop and Weather Report, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship's (IDALS) Statistics Bureau said fall tillage for the 1999 row crop acreage was 38 percent complete, which is ahead of normal for this time of year. Fertilizer has been applied to 31 percent of the 1999 acres which is ahead of the 27 percent average for this time of year.

"On-farm grain storage availability estimates were almost the same as a week ago," the Secretary said.

Farm/Business

Monroe County farmers battle wind, mud

Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Dale M. Cochran said today that the corn and soybean harvest neared completion last week even though severe weather damaged some of the corn not yet harvested.

However, that is not the case in Monroe County where farmers were battling extremely muddy conditions to finish the soybean harvest and get a good start on the corn harvest. Monroe County farmers were in the same boat as other farmers across the state whose corn fields were subject to hurricane force winds that flattened many fields.

"Wind gusts reached 70 miles an hour at Oelwein on Tuesday while the rest of the state experienced gusts of over 50 miles per hour," Cochran said. "The wind caused significant damage to some fields where corn was still standing and heavy precipitation in Southeast Iowa added to harvest delays."

"The corn harvest was 95 percent complete as of Sunday," the secretary added. "This is equal to last year at this time and is slightly ahead of the five-year average for this date. Seventy-three percent of

the corn remaining in the fields showed some ear droppage last week, mostly caused by windstorms."

"The soybean harvest is 99 percent complete which is normal for this time of year," Cochran said. "There are soybeans still standing in southern Iowa where wet fields have slowed the harvest."

In its weekly Crop and Weather Report, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship's (IDALS) Statistics Bureau said fall tillage for the 1999 row crop acreage was 44 percent complete as of Sunday, which is behind last year at this time when 47 percent was complete, but ahead of the five-year average of 39 percent complete. Fertilizer has been applied to 38 percent of the 1999 acres which is ahead of the 34 percent average for this time of year.

"On-farm storage was rated 35 percent short, 62 percent adequate, and three percent surplus, the same as a week ago," the Secretary said. "Off-farm storage availability improved last week to 37 percent short, 61 percent adequate and two percent surplus."

Farm land drops across Iowa

AMES -- The average value of an acre of farmland in Iowa dropped to \$1,801 in 1998, the first decline in value since 1986, according to an annual survey conducted at Iowa State University. The decrease averaged \$39 an acre, or 1.9 percent statewide, said Michael Duffy, ISU Extension economist who directed the survey.

Monroe County farmland, according to the survey, fell \$6 per acre, a decrease of .6%.

Duffy said land values in Iowa continued their 11-year upward trend during the early months of 1998, but started to decline late in the year, reflecting lower prices that farmers are receiving for all major commodities. The ISU survey is conducted on Nov. 1 each year and is the only survey that reports land values in all 99 Iowa counties.

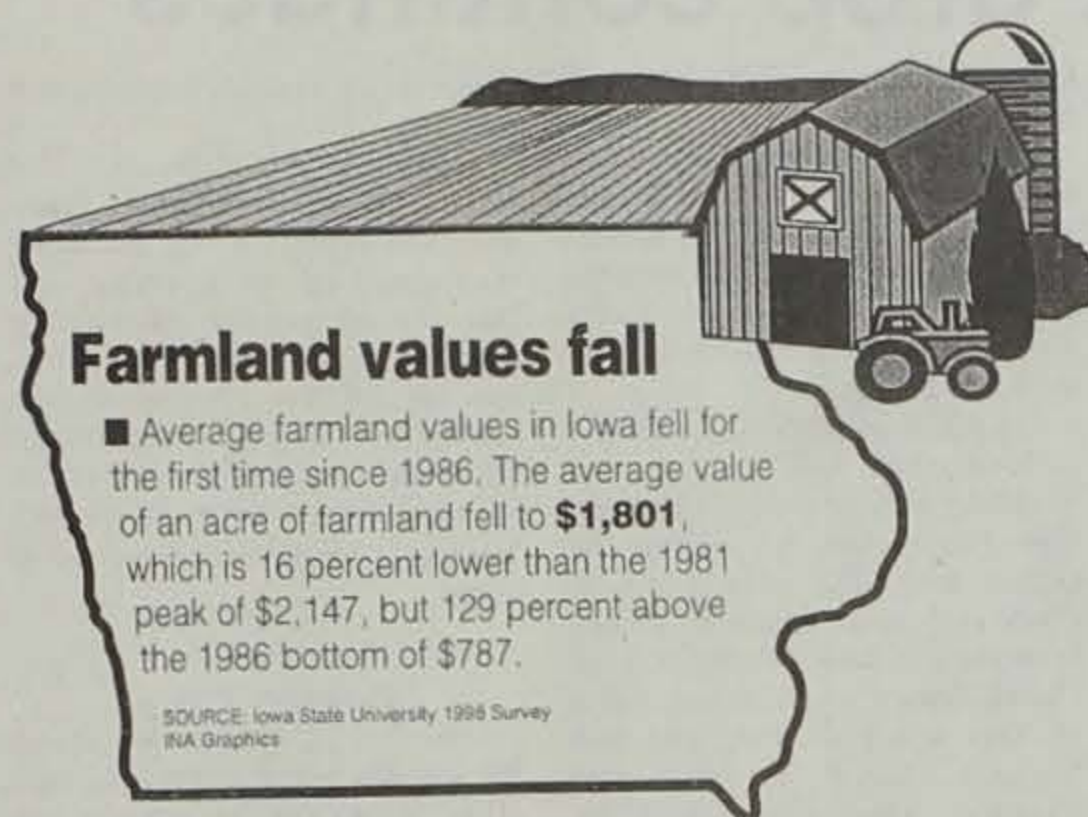
While the statewide average value declined, 30 counties actually showed increases in 1998, and one county, Decatur in south central Iowa, was unchanged from 1997. In the 68 counties where values declined, the largest percentage drop was in Boone County in central Iowa where the decline was 4.7 percent. Farmland in 21 counties lost more than 4 percent of its value, mostly in the northwest quadrant of the state where some of the most valuable land is located.

The counties where values increased were located in the northeast corner of the state where dairy farmers have been harmed less by low commodity prices than other farmers, and in the southeast corner of the state. The greatest increases were in Allamakee and Clayton Counties, in the extreme northeast corner, where values rose 2.3 percent. Declines of less than 2 percent were reported in east central Iowa and in southwest Iowa counties.

Duffy said three factors were mentioned by more than 10 percent of the respondents as having positive impacts on land values this year. They were lower interest rates, mentioned by 49 percent, crop yields (18 percent), and the supply of land available (14 percent). Four factors, all related to low commodities prices, were mentioned as negative influences. They were low grain prices, mentioned by 49 percent, low livestock prices (29 percent), low commodities prices (27 percent), and low hog prices (10 percent).

The statewide average in 1998 tied 1982 for fifth place in the ranking of average values. The statewide average in 1982 also was \$1,801, a drop of 16 percent from the all-time high average of \$2,147 in 1981. The only other years with averages higher than this year were 1979, 1980 and 1997.

Duffy said some concern has been expressed about whether the 1998 drop is the beginning of a collapse in the land market similar to the 1980s when values dropped more than 60 percent from the peak before beginning to climb again.



He noted that the 1998 average is 16 percent below the 1981 peak but 129 percent above the 1986 bottom.

The duration of the current decline in values likely depends on how long low prices for commodities last, Duffy said. "The expectations for returns will continue to be the major force in determining the direction of the land market," he added. Other factors include the impact of interest rates, and the influences of other economic indicators such as the stock market.

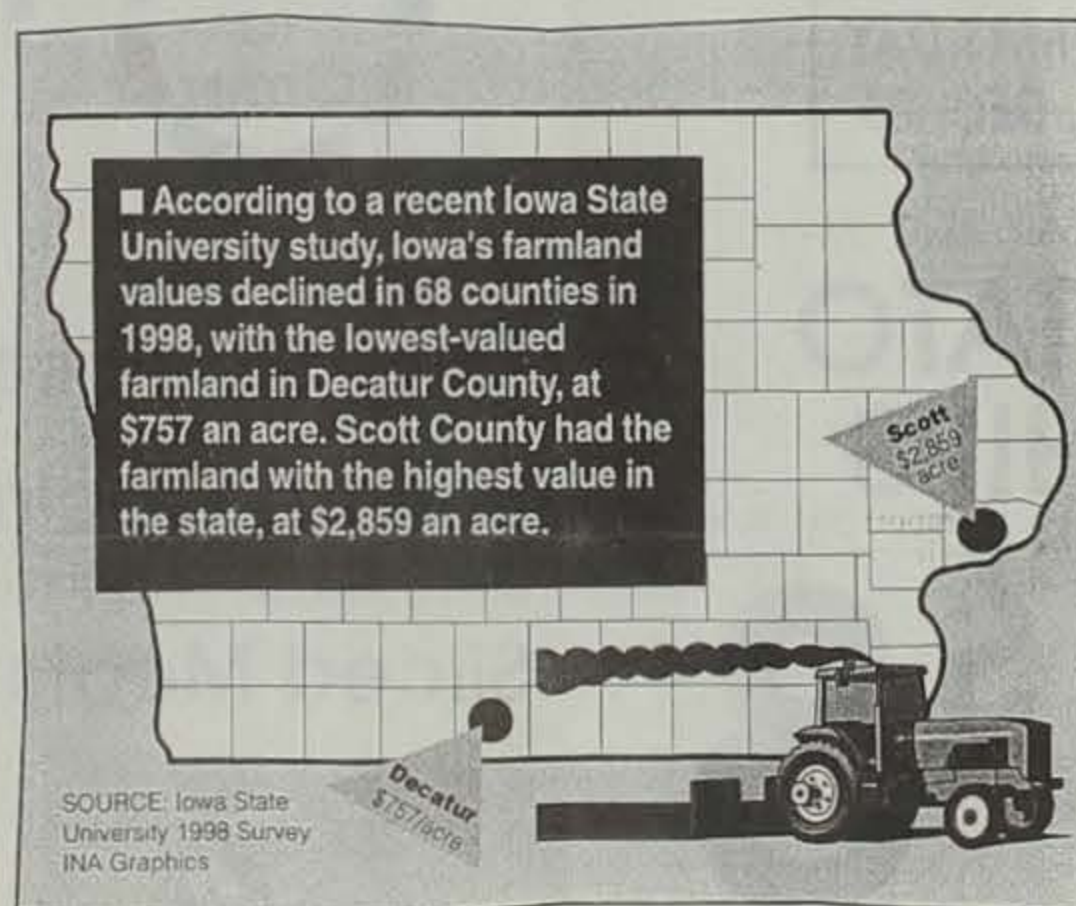
Most buyers of Iowa farmland continue to be existing farmers who are increasing their holdings, Duffy said, but investors made 30 percent of the purchases this year, up from 22 percent last year. Sales to investors were highest in southwest Iowa at 52 percent, while sales to existing farmers were highest in west central Iowa at 75 percent. Seventeen percent of the survey respondents said there were more sales this year, 50 percent said the number of sales was about the same as last year, and 33 percent said there were fewer sales.

The highest land values by crop reporting district were reported in central Iowa where the average was \$2,192 per acre. The lowest average value was \$948 per acre in south central Iowa. While the central Iowa district had the highest average value, it also had the largest percentage of decrease at 4.5 percent. The greatest percentage of increase was 2.1 percent in northeast Iowa. The highest estimated value was \$2,859 per acre in Scott County in east central Iowa, and the lowest

was \$757 per acre in Decatur County. Low grade land in the state averaged \$1,030 per acre and showed a decrease of 1.1 percent or \$12 per acre. Medium grade land averaged \$1,638 per acre and decreased \$30 or 1.8 percent. High grade land averaged \$2,248 per acre and decreased \$44 or 1.9 percent.

Iowa State University has conducted an annual survey of land values since 1941. More than 1,100 licensed real estate brokers and others knowledgeable about farmland are invited to participate, and this year's survey drew 589 usable responses from all 99 counties. Only the statewide data and the crop reporting district data is directly from the survey results. Data collected in the survey is combined with data from the U.S. Census of Agriculture to determine county figures. The survey is cosponsored by the Iowa Agriculture and Home Economics Experiment Station and Iowa State University Extension.

Crop District	1998	1997	\$Chg.	%Chg.
South Central	948	957	-9	-0.9%
Southeast	1,585	1,580	+4	0.3%
State Avg.	1,801	1,837	-36	-2.0%
County Name	\$/acre	\$/acre	\$Chg.	%Chg.
Appanoose	798	799	-1	-0.1%
Clarke	927	930	-3	-0.3%
Davis	1,006	1,001	5	0.5%
Lucas	854	855	-1	-0.1%
Mahaska	1,585	1,572	13	0.8%
Marion	1,491	1,485	6	0.4%
Monroe	1,010	1,004	6	0.6%
Wapello	1,175	1,165	10	0.9%
Wayne	839	840	-1	-0.1%



NO FALL TILLAGE campaign sponsors are pictured above. Susan Ammons (left), Monroe County Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioner with Kevin Halbmaier (right), Albia Hy-Vee store manager.

No-till campaign a success

An effort between Monroe County Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners and Albia Hy-Vee to encourage farmers not to till their farm land this fall was a success. Several area farmers pledged over 5,000 acres of no fall tillage, leaving the protective cover of crop residue on the field surface for erosion control purposes this winter and next spring.

The grand prize winner of \$100

cash was Judy Noe. Other winners received \$25 gift certificates. Winners include the following area farmers: Donna Kromray, Shawn Murphy, Bob Scott, Robert Hefron, Donald McLeod, Nellie Slagter, Edward Lahart, Jane Rothaar, Curt Peterson, Linda Mahon, Maurice Scieszinski, William VanPolen Jr., Kathryn Ballalatak, JoAnn Ahn, Dean Bettis and Michelle Ratliff.



IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY crop specialist Mike White explains how a conventional corn/soybean planter can be converted to interseed small-seeded forages into sod as a way to convert CRP ground back to crop, hay and pasture land. White's discussion was part of an afternoon demonstration put on by the Monroe County Soil and Water Conservation District and Monroe County Extension to help farmers learn the best ways to pull their land out of the CRP

program with the least amount of damage to fragile soils. A demonstration plot has been established on land just west of the Albia Hy-Vee which shows land conversion techniques using Round-up herbicide to renovate pasture; clipping CRP ground and planting no-till; using light disking and doing nothing with the land. The 10-year program is ending for many farmers and thousands of acres of protected CRP land will be converted back into crop, pasture and hay.

Native prairie survives

By WENDY CHAPMAN
Staff Writer

The Iowa Prairie Network (IPN), Region 6 has adopted a piece of land on Iowa Highway 5 north of Albia. On Saturday, Aug. 24, the IPN hopes to remove litter and study the fragments of Iowa's original native prairie. Overall, IPN hopes to restore the native prairie to better condition.

The two mile stretch of native prairie located north of Albia just past the Hiteman turn off can be identified by the Adopt-a-Highway sign at the beginning of the two mile stretch.

Currently the land has Prairie Blazing Star and Rattlesnake master in bloom. The Greek name for Prairie Blazing Star is *Liatris Pycnostachya*. *Liatris* meaning unknown origin and *Pycnostachya* means dense or thick. It is found often in thick stands on damp prairies and open bottom lands. Flowering begins in July and may continue until frost. This plant's stem grows erect and unbranched to a height of five feet. The top two-thirds of the blazing star is a spike of rose-purple, thistle-like flowers that have a fuzzy appearance.

The Greek name for Rattlesnake master is *Eryngium Yuccifolium*. *Eryngium* means 'prickly plant' for the shape of the leaves, although the plant is not sharp. *Yuccifolium* is Greek for 'yucca leaves,' referring to the yucca like appearance. It



MARTHA STILLMAN, member of Iowa Prairie Network, kneels next to Prairie Blazing Star and Rattlesnake master on Iowa Highway 5. (Wendy Chapman photo)

is usually found on wet or dry prairies and prairie relicts throughout the Upper Midwest. It blooms between June and September. This perennial grows two to six feet high and its leaves are up to three feet long and up to one and a half inches wide.

On Saturday, Aug. 24, the IPN and all interested parties will meet at 9 a.m. at Albia's livestock sale

barn for a Work Day. The group will collect litter and then study the prairie flowers and grasses that have managed to survive over the years. You don't have to be a member to join the group on the 24th, or any other group outing.

NATIVE PRAIRIE

Cont. to P. 5

NATIVE PRAIRIE

Cont. from P. 1

The IPN is a non-profit, volunteer organization of prairie enthusiasts that was initiated by Iowans at the 12th North American Prairie Conference in 1990. The purpose of the IPN is to learn about, teach about, enjoy, and protect Iowa's prairie heritage.

Before European settlement, tall grass prairie covered 85 percent of Iowa, interwoven with woodlands, savannas, wetlands, and other native ecosystems. Iowa's tall grass prairie was a complex and beautiful landscape with thousands of plant and animal species uniquely adapted to Iowa prairie conditions.

Today, less than three-hundredths of one percent of Iowa's tall grass prairie remains. Our small, fragmented prairie remnants are threatened by a variety of problems that range from urban sprawl to the invasion of trees and shrubs. Without human help, Iowa's prairie heritage won't survive.

For more information on Work Day or general questions about prairie, call Martha Skillman at (515) 472-1459 or Pam White at (515) 673-3508.

Rathbun Lake legislation hauled out of gridlock

The Southern Iowa Development Authority, an organization that would help protect the Rathbun Lake watershed, was pulled out of political purgatory when the Senate voted 47-0 to create the 10-county authority.

The Southern Iowa Development Authority will target erosion and other threats to Rathbun watershed which serves as the source of drinking water for about 50,000 residents in Iowa and Missouri and provides recreational opportunities for millions of visitors yearly.

The bill had been held up since a dispute between House and Senate Republicans erupted over an

unrelated natural resources issue.

The two houses resolved their problems, the bill sailed through the Senate and Gov. Tom Vilsack is expected to sign it.

The new authority would include Monroe County along with Lucas, Wayne, Clarke, Decatur, Appanoose, Davis, Wapello, Jefferson and Van Buren counties. Rep. Richard Arnold (R-Russell) sponsored the bill.

Once established, the authority would carry out conservation and preservation plans and administer a development and conservation fund to control problems with erosion and livestock waste.

Rathbun Land and Water Alliance get \$57,775 water quality grant

A \$57,775 grant from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources' Lake Rehabilitation Grant Program has been awarded to the Rathbun Land and Water Alliance to support the organization's efforts to improve and protect Rathbun Lake's water quality.

Each month for the past five years the RLWA has monitored 19 sites within and around Rathbun Lake to measure sediment and pesticide flow into Rathbun Lake, which is the water supply for the Rathbun Regional Water Association (RRWA). RRWA provides drinking water to 18 counties and more than

40 communities in southern Iowa and northern Missouri.

Marty Braster, environmental management specialist with RRWA says soil loss from land in the watershed and shoreline are the primary water quality concerns in Rathbun Lake.

"The lake is filling with sediment faster than originally anticipated," he says. "The US Army Corps of Engineers, which manages the 11,000-acre lake, have indicated Rathbun Lake could potentially reach a point where it is no longer able to absorb the sediment and chemicals unless measures are taken

to reduce these pollutants in runoff," says Braster.

Water quality monitoring data collected since 1997 are being used to develop a watershed management plan to reduce sediment and chemicals that enter the lake in runoff.

As part of the plan, "best management practices" will be implemented on land within the lake's 354,000-acre watershed. The DNR grant supports the water quality monitoring activities through 2006. RRWA and the US Army Corps of Engineers committed the funds and personnel that were required as match to secure the DNR grant.

BUSINESS



ALBIA UNION-REPUBLICAN

Yield effect of late planting

Wet conditions this spring has delayed corn and soybean planting or has created a replant situation for some growers. Long term studies indicate that optimum corn yields result from plantings made during April 20-May 5 in Iowa. The goal should be to establish and even stand of 26,000 to 30,000 plants per acre, regardless of the planting date. If planting is delayed past May 20, hybrids five days earlier than the "adapted full season" maturity for the area may be a better choice.

ISU research results from five locations in Iowa that soybeans should be planted by mid-May to

achieve optimum yields. This same research indicates that a harvest population between 125,000 to 150,000 plants per acre is usually sufficient. Full season varieties are recommended for soybeans planted until the last week of June. If soybean planting is delayed into June, increasing the seeding rate and converting to narrow rows will help reduce the negative yield affect of delayed planting.

Further information on delayed corn and soybean planting can be obtained at your Monroe County ISU extension office.

Corn Yield at Various Planting Dates and Reasonably Uniform Stand Levels

Established Stand/Ac.	Planting Date vs. % Yield			
	4/20 to 5/5	5/20	6/1	6/10
26 - 30,000	100	90	81	67
22,000	96	86	78	64
18,000	91	82	74	61
14,000	80	72	65	54
10,000	65	59	53	44

Crop disaster sign-up extended

Farm Service Agency Administrator Keith Kelly today announced that sign-up for assistance under the new Crop Loss Disaster Assistance Program will continue for one additional week through April 16.

"Adding one final week to the sign-up will not affect the timing of payments under the program," said Kelly. "We're doing this because we had such a high volume of applications and because we made some changes recently broadening eligibility for the multi-year loss assistance portion of the program."

More than \$2 billion was authorized by Congress to reimburse farmers hit by natural disasters who suffered losses in 1998 or in at least three years from 1994-1998.

Interested producers are encouraged to contact the Monroe County Farm Service Agency, 932-7134.

Zapitul appointed to conservation board

The Monroe County Board of Supervisors met Tuesday, March 23 where they accepted with regret the resignation of John Hastings' as a member of the Monroe County Conservation Board effective immediately. Steve Zapitul was appointed to the conservation board effective April 14.

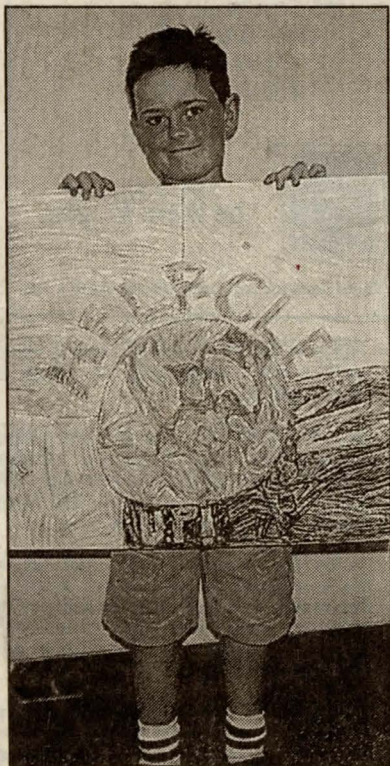
The treasurer's monthly investment report shows balance on hand as of Feb. 28, 1999, is \$1,845,478.30.

The board met with Susan Howard of Manpower Services to discuss working with the corporation. Manpower provides temporary employees. Manpower will pay the employee while they worked for the county and takes care of the taxes, unemployment and workers compensation.

Howard will bring a proposal with cost amounts for the board to review on April 5.

Tuesday, June 15, 1999

1999 soil conservation poster winners named

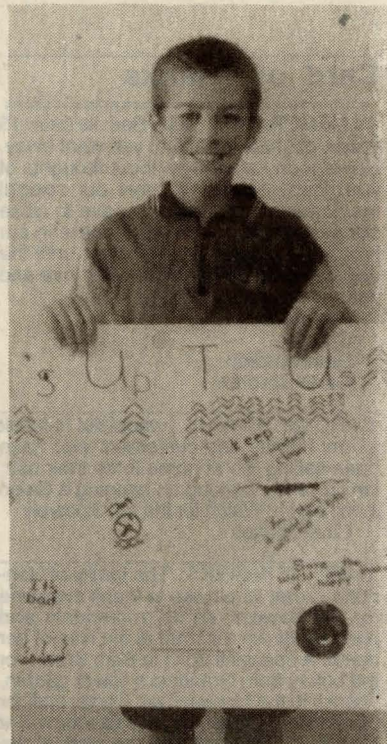


Patrick Motard

Every year the conservation districts of Iowa and the soil and water conservation districts sponsor a post contest. This year's theme was "In the Children's Hands," with the idea that today's children have the responsibility to take care of our natural resources.

This year Monroe County had seven classes participate in three divisions. First second and third places were given in each division with the first place poster going to the regional contest and the top regional winning going to a national contest.

Winners included: Division I, Kassi Ward, first, Heidi Brown, second, Chelsey VandenBerg, third; Division II, Patrick Motard, first, Jesse Simmons, second, Kylee Coughlin, third; Division III, Drew Yarkosky, first, Michael Wilson, second, Dana Peterson, third.



Drew Yarkosky



PAUL SILVERIO gets the award for the biggest yam of the season. This monster spud weighed in at 14 pounds and was 25 inches around.

Conservation district office moving Sept. 29

The Monroe County Soil and Water Conservation District office will be moving to its new location at 1701 South B St., Suite 100 on Wednesday, Sept. 29.

The new building is located just west of the AYM Mfg. plant at the corner of 17th Ave. and B St. The telephone number will remain the same, 932-5144. An open house is planned for October.

FB request

The Iowa Farm Bureau Federation has asked the U.S. Department of Agriculture to take immediate action to provide flexibility on grain storage rules this fall.

Farm Bureau asked Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman to relax Farm Service Agency (FSA) rules to allow farmers to retain beneficial

interest in grain, but store it on the ground. FSA rules require elevators to take control of grain before storing it on the ground.

District FB women's meeting Sept. 30

Monroe County Farm Bureau will host a district women's meeting at Trinity United Methodist Church in Albia on Sept. 30. Registration begins at 9 a.m. and programs run from 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m.

Guest speakers will be June Judge of Iowa City, representing the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill; Craig Hill, District 8 Director; Rick McLain, Region 14 manager; Bill Belden, Region 17 manager; and John DeHamer, president of the Monroe County Farm Bureau.

All counties present will have a part on the program in conducting workshops and other various activities throughout the day. Door prizes

will be given.

We invite men, women and couples to attend this educational and fun day. Call your County Farm

Bureau office for more details, 932-7873.

Registration fee and cost of lunch is \$6.

Local FSA offices move to new site

9/23/99

The Monroe County Farm Service Agency and Natural Resources Conservation Service will be moving to a new location at the end of September. They will begin transferring equipment and records on Sept. 29 and anticipate completing the move on Sept. 30.

They will maintain staff at both sites during the move for the public's convenience; however, area farmers and businesses should try

to schedule office visits before or after the move, if possible. While FSA does not anticipate any major problems associated with the move, they will be temporarily without computer and telephone service.

The new office building is located south on Highway 5 and one block west of A.Y.M. on 17th Avenue. An open house is planned for late October.

Tuesday, December 28, 1999

Amazing tree facts

As we approach the true beginning of winter, let's discover some interesting facts and history about the unique and wonderful tree resources we have in Iowa.

From 1859 to 1889, Iowa was one of the nation's leading lumbering states. The combination of westward settlement, the availability of lumber logs in Wisconsin and the river transport system provided the necessary environment for the lumber industry to flourish. Millions of logs were floated down the Mississippi River to riverside towns, where they were processed into lumber and final products. At the peak, more than 7000 people were employed and the forest products industry accounted for more than one-tenth of the state's total industrial output. When the vast forests of white pine started to shrink, the demise of the Iowa lumber industry was swift and final.

The most important use of Iowa's native woodlands in the late 1800s was for transportation. Initially, the main use of wood was for building and/or fueling wagons, bridges and steamboats up the major rivers. When the railroads began their major expansion throughout the state, the demand for wood for railroad ties consumed a significant portion of the state's forest resource. During this period, a white oak tie would last only 7 years, and each mile of rail would require 6 acres of woodland for the timbers and ties.

We value trees for many reasons, including their beauty during the seasons, their influences on our environment and the many species of birds and animals they shelter and

feed. Trees have an effect on our air quality. For every pound of wood produced by a tree, it also provides a pound of oxygen and uses almost 1.5 pounds of carbon dioxide. Or an acre of trees uses 5880 pounds of carbon dioxide and gives us 4280 pounds of oxygen each year.

Trees are nature's air conditioners. A single tree can transpire 100 gallons of water from its leaves in a single day. The cooling provided by this single tree is equivalent to five average room air conditioners running 20 hours per day. An acre of urban forest or park will transpire more than 1600 gallons of water per day.

A large tree may have 200,000 to 400,000 leaves, which act like a continuous air filter. An acre of trees may remove as much as 13 tons of dust each year. Streets with trees have 3000 particles per liter of air, compared with 10,000 to 12,000 in streets without trees. Trees also remove heavy metals. One study in Connecticut estimated that a single sugar maple tree, foot in diameter, removes in one growing season 60 mg of cadmium, 140 mg of chromium, 820 mg of nickel and 5200 mg of lead. Trees serve as moderate filters of some gaseous pollutants such as sulfur dioxide and carbon monoxide.

Each Iowa citizen uses the equivalent of a 100-foot tree each year. We use 600 pounds of paper each year for all uses. From 1900-1988, Americans grew and used the equivalent of 13 billion 100-foot trees. An acre of Iowa woodland grows 1/2 to 1 cord of wood each year. From a cord of wood the following products can be produced:

7,500,000 toothpicks
1000-2000 lbs of paper
(depending on the process)
942 one-lb books
61,370 #10 envelopes
4,384,000 commemorative size
postage stamps
460,000 personal checks
89,870 sheets of letterhead bond
paper
1200 copies of National Geographic
2700 copies of the average daily
paper
250 copies of the Sunday New
York Times
30 Boston Rockers
12 dining room tables

Building an average 1800 square foot home uses 10,000 board feet of lumber, equivalent to 20 cords.

Iowa trees have had some historical significance. The original Delicious apple tree grew up as a sprout in a orchard near Peru. Since this discovery, millions of Delicious apples have their roots from this Iowa tree.

Iowa is not known for its maple syrup operations but one of the oldest continuous businesses in Iowa is The Green Sugarbush. This sugar bush near Decorah has been tapped by five generations of Greens for more than 150 years producing this sweet product from the forest.

The "plow in the oak tree" near Exira illustrates how a single event can be carried through the years. The story is that an Iowa farmer was called to do battle in the Civil War during the early 1860s. He leaned his plow against a small bur

oak near his field and joined the Union forces, never to return. In the almost 140 years since, the tree has almost completely grown over the plow. Today, part of the handles and part of the blade are all that are visible.

Cost/share sign-up underway

Sign up for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) began Jan. 18 and will end March 3.

Applications are being taken at the Monroe County USDA Service Center in Albia. Applications will be ranked and selected for funding based on how well planned conservation work will address statewide resources concerns at the most reasonable cost to USDA.

Statewide concerns include soil erosion, water quality, manure management and grasslands.

Under EQIP, USDA provides

technical assistance, up to 75 percent cost-share on certain structural practices and incentive payments to producers who enter 5-10 year contracts based on conservation plans.

EQIP practices included but are not limited to: terracing, grassed waterways, ponds, manure, pasture and wildlife management, tree planting, windbreaks, strip cropping, conservation tillage, wildlife habitat management and wetland restoration, enhancement or creation.

Call 932-5144 or 932-7134.

AGRICULTURE



ALBIA UNION-REPUBLICAN

Switchgrass harvest sets stage for co-fire test

As combines and tractors brought in a fall harvest of corn and soybeans, mowers and balers brought in bale upon bale of a potential energy crop. Three thousand tons of switchgrass were harvested from 1,300 acres, setting the stage for a co-fire test to be held at Alliant Energy's Ottumwa Generating Station (OGS) in the year 2000.

The bales will be burned with coal at OGS as part of the Chariton Valley Biomass Project. Switchgrass grows well on marginal land and possesses excellent burn qualities. Alliant's participation in the project allows switchgrass to be tested for the possibility of using the warm season grass as a renewable fuel. The goal is to use switchgrass as a fuel to replace a portion of the coal burned at OGS.

Chariton Valley Biomass Project Field Specialist, John Sellers, says 4,000 tons are necessary to complete the test burn at OGS. "The remaining 1,000 ton will be harvested between January and April," he says. He added that the weather was perfect for the harvest. "It allowed us to complete the early portion of our harvest in what I would consider record time and in near perfect conditions."

Marty Braster, project coordinator, says the switchgrass yields taken during this harvest were very acceptable. "In some of the older stands, which have been producing switchgrass for two years or more, the yields were four tons per acre," he says.

More than 24 public and private organizations and agencies participate in the project, two of which played an intricate role in the switchgrass harvest, John Deere Ottumwa Works, and Prairie lands Bio-Products, Inc.

John Deere Ottumwa Works assisted in the switchgrass harvest by donating the use of harvesting equipment and the assistance of an equipment test technician. Prairie Lands board member Doug Goben, says the help of John Deere was crucial to the success of the harvest. "The harvest just wouldn't have been as successful without the assistance of John Deere," he says.

John Deere Ottumwa Works Senior Fielding-testing Engineer, Jack Guiter, says, "Providing assistance during the fall harvest gives us the opportunity to conduct product evaluations while participating in the testing of a new energy source."

He added, "It also gives us the opportunity to test the equipment in different crop conditions."

The switchgrass was mowed with a John Deere 4990 self-propelled rotary windrower. The machine cuts and windrows the grass in one pass eliminating the time it would take to make the second pass. "The Model 4990 will be a new product for the John Deere Ottumwa factory in 2000," says Guiter. The baling was completed with an experimental John Deere square baler. As the bales left the field they made their way to temporary storage until they will be used at OGS. "The bales are temporarily stored all over the area in sheds, silo pits, and out in the field under tarps," says Sellers. Plans are underway to construct a storage facility at OGS, which will house 3,000 tons of switchgrass.

Braster states, "Once the storage facility is built, transportation has been contracted with a local company to transport the switchgrass bales from temporary storage to the plant."

"Most of the harvested fields are enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) so the farmers aren't actually paid anything for their switchgrass. Where switchgrass was harvested on a few non-CRP fields, we paid the owner depending on quality and moisture standards," says Sellers.

Also assisting in the harvest was Prairie Lands Bio-Products, Inc., a group of switchgrass producers who formed through the project. Their participation in the harvest included transporting the bales to their temporary storage location. In addition to the harvest, they are leading efforts to develop products and markets derived from the plant, such as paper, fiberboard, mulch and logs. Prairie Lands members meet on a monthly basis to discuss harvest handling, transportation and the latest in product development.

The Chariton Valley RC&D, in Centerville, Iowa, coordinates the Chariton Valley Biomass Project. The project area includes the counties of Appanoose, Lucas, Monroe and Wayne. For more information about the project, contact Marty Braster, 515-437-4376.

Tuesday, December 14, 1999

DNR program will target assistance to farmers

DES MOINES - The DNR is stepping up efforts to work with private landowners to improve water quality and wildlife habitat.

Two wildlife biologists are being added, one in north central Iowa and the other in the southwestern part of the state. The biologists will work jointly with local Natural Resource and Conservation Service offices as well as local chapters of conservation organizations such as Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited and Trees Forever in helping farmers develop conservation areas on their land, particularly conservation buffer strips.

Farmers can receive yearly rental payments from the federal government to idle land along waterways through the continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)..

"Buffer strips have proven ability to improve water quality and

provide wildlife habitat. Often times, the rental payments for enrolling in the program can be more financially beneficial to the landowner than raising crops," said DNR Director Paul Johnson.

But for all the benefits offered by the buffer strip program, Johnson said it often still take a "personal touch" to sell landowners on the program.

"We've seen proof that one-on-one contact with landowners can make a tremendous difference in getting landowners to participate," Johnson said.

Johnson points to Carroll County where the local Pheasants Forever chapter went door-to-door encouraging landowners to participate. The result of the effort has been 2,960 acres - more than 290 stream miles - being put in conservation buffer strips.

"We want to emulate that success story in other parts of the state," Johnson said.

Buffer strips are being recognized for significant water quality improvements and wildlife habitat additions.

"Buffer strips and shelter belts are the most important and positive improvements a landowner can do on a farm. Both buffer strips and shelter belts can provide winter food, cover and migration routes for wildlife. Adequate winter cover is a limiting factor for wildlife populations like pheasants, particularly in the northern parts of the state," said Ken Herring, wildlife management supervisor for the DNR.

Herring said buffer strips along streams are important habitat for pheasants and aquatic fur bearing species.

Ag Day celebrated March 19

New members named to Ag Hall of Fame

Monroe County Farm Bureau will celebrate Ag Day on Friday, March 19, with their Ag Hall of Fame/Retail Appreciation Day. It will be held at the First Christian Church in Albia.

Ag-related businesses and commodity groups will have displays in the morning with information and snacks from 9-11:30 a.m. A special invitation is given to all retail friends to come for coffee and snacks. Also, pre-school and grade school children are invited to attend. The Albia FFA Chapter will have a machinery and poster display for all to examine and enjoy.

The meat for a pot-luck luncheon is furnished by Monroe County Cattlemen and Women and Pork Producers. Gary Wergin, WHO radio announcer, farm report and information, will be the guest speaker.

The Ag Hall of Fame was established 16 years ago to honor men and women involved in farming and agri-business who have contributed to the community and agriculture. The public is welcome to attend.

The 1999 Ag Hall of Fame inductees are: Albert and Joyce Tangie and Everett and Ruth Ella Gardner, as the two farm couples. Howard Lindaman will be inducted as the Agribusinessman and Brian and Renae Hindman will be inducted as the Young Farm Couple.

Hendersons honored for conservation

Conservation farm families from 77 counties across Iowa will be honored at the 1999 Farm Progress Show near Amana Wednesday, Sept. 29.

Bob and Rick Henderson, who farm east of Albia, will be among those families honored at the Family Living Tent at 12:30 p.m.

The "Century Conservation Farmers" were nominated by Iowa's local Soil and Water Conservation Districts for their efforts to protect the water, air and land that will produce food into the next millennium.

Each farmer will receive a limited edition wildlife print by well known Iowa artist Larry Anderson and a jacket and certificate bearing the logo, "Conservationist for 2000 and Beyond."

Tree planting season arrives in Albia

Spring weather in Albia means now is the time to get started with Alliant Energy Branching Out tree planting projects.

Through the winter, a number of committed Albia volunteers have been working hard, dedicating many hours to choosing sites, selecting tree species, ordering trees, and enlisting volunteer and funding support for tree planting projects in the community.

Albia is one of 139 communities across Iowa participating in the Alliant Energy Branching Out tree planting partnership coordinated by Trees Forever and sponsored by Alliant Energy. Over \$286,500 has been contributed in 1999 by Alliant Energy, funding projects in 71 Iowa counties. Trees Forever provides on-site assistance to local communities and administers the program across the state.

Diane Ramsey, Managing Director, Corporate Communications and External Affairs for Alliant Energy,

says, "Investing in community tree planting projects is a priority for us. Planting trees helps reduce peak electric demand, enhances energy efficiency, and provides long-term environmental benefits."

Planting trees offers people other lasting benefits-the smell of spring buds, shade from the summer sun, and glorious bursts of color in the fall.

Bowling

Towerettes
As of March 25, 1999

	W	L
Linderg Shelter Ins.	79	37
Albia Motor	76 1/2	39 1/2
Hughes Auto	73 1/2	42 1/2
First Iowa State Bank	66	50
American Legion	50	66
Ragtime Industries	42	74
KLBA	41	75
Pine Lane Advertising	36	80

High individual game: Kay Miller, 215; Celeste Croskrey, 213; Dot Simondale, 205.

High individual series: Kay Miller, 534; Celeste Croskrey, 521; Linda Gutcher, Dot Simondale, 514.

High team game: KLBA, 972; Hughes Auto, 956; Ragtime Industries, 945

High team series: Hughes Auto, 2,728; Ragtime Industries, 2,721; KLBA, 2,682.

Thursday, April 29, 1999



THE MONROE COUNTY Soil and Water Conservation District has distributed trees to third graders in the Albia elementary schools since 1972. This spring the students learned about and planted Sugar Maples. Although the trees sometimes fall prey to unfortunate happenings on the way home from school,

Monroe County is still blessed with several hundred new plantings each year to beautify the landscape and provide food and shelter for wildlife. Pictured above are students from Mrs. Hollinrake's third grade class in Melrose.



THE MONROE COUNTY Soil and Water Conservation District has distributed trees to third graders in the Albia elementary schools since 1972. This spring the students learned about and planted Sugar Maples. Although the trees sometimes fall prey to unfortunate

happenings on the way home from school, Monroe County is still blessed with several hundred new plantings each year to beautify the landscape and provide food and shelter for wildlife. Pictured above are students from Mr. Preston's third grade class at Grant.

Deadline to obtain FSA loans or LDP's approaching

The window of opportunity for producers to obtain marketing assistance crop loans or loan deficiency payments on 1999 corn or soybeans will close Wednesday, May 31, according to Bob Soukup, State Executive Director of USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA).

"Producers may obtain a marketing assistance loan or receive a loan deficiency payment (LDP) on all or part of their eligible corn or soybean crops during the loan availability period which ends on May 31, 2000," Soukup said. "Producers with 1999 soybeans or corn in storage should consider taking out a nine-month marketing assistance loan or obtaining a loan deficiency payment (LDP) before the deadline

passes."

Marketing assistance loans provide eligible producers with low interest interim operating capital and allow the producer to hold the commodity for future sale, he explained. The loans have a nine-month term and variable interest rate which is currently 7.25 percent.

"Producers who obtain a marketing assistance loan on their 1999 corn or soybean crops can still take advantage of benefits available if prices fall," Soukup emphasized. "This can be done through the repayment options available to them before their loan matures."

The actual loan repayment rate would be the lesser of the county loan rate plus accrued interest, or

the posted county price (PCP) for the day the repayment is made. The difference between these two options is the market gain that producers earn when repaying their loan.

"The market gain they earn with a PCP repayment option is similar to the benefits earned from LDP's," Soukup said. "It is important to note these options are only available to producers that have not already received LDP benefits or have not repaid a loan at a discount previously on the same bushels."

More information on FSA's commodity loan and LDP programs can be obtained from local county USDA Service Centers.

FSA committee requests emergency release of CRP

The Monroe County FSA Committee recently requested emergency release of CRP acreage for haying and grazing due to continuing drought conditions in Southern Iowa.

The Committee believes releasing CRP for emergency use early in the growing season will assist area farmers by making available the needed forage to maintain foundation herds throughout the spring and summer and also replenish hay stocks that will carry livestock the winter months.

Forage production in the county

has been severely reduced this spring because of the lack of adequate moisture. Climatological data obtained from the State Climatologist Office indicates Monroe County has received only 16.09 inches of precipitation since July 1999. This represents precipitation that is only 56 percent of normal or 12.3 inches below normal during the last ten months.

The Committee's recommendation has been forwarded with supporting data to the Iowa FSA State Committee and will be considered

for approval by FSA's National Office in Washington, D.C.

Area farmers will be immediately notified upon receiving a decision. If approved, CRP participants would be required to make written request to the Monroe County FSA office, located at 1701 South B Street in Albia.

State planting, calving seasons near perfect

The last week of April and the first two weeks of May brought warmer weather to Iowa with continued below normal precipitation levels, leaving Iowa farmers in need of rain.

The combination of warm, dry weather, however, has created a near record pace in corn and soybean planting and one of the best calving and lambing seasons in history.

Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Patty Judge stated, "Despite below normal precipitation levels Iowa farmers are still far ahead of the planting schedule in the fields."

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Farm/Business

5.16.00

Report crops to FSA soon

Monroe County producers should consider reporting their 2000 crops to the FSA office as they complete spring planting, according to David Wynn, County Executive Director for the USDA Farm Service Agency. The acreage reporting requirements depend on what FSA programs a farmer participates in. Wynn said crop acreage reports are required in the following situations:

- Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acreage must be reported.

- Acreage of fruits and vegetables planted by producers participating in the 7-year Agricultural Market Transition Program (AMTA) must be reported.

- Producers in the AMTA program growing feed grains or wheat and all soybean producers desiring nine-month crop loans or Loan Deficiency Payments (LDP's) after harvest need to report acreage for those crops. LDP's are payable when the market price for the commodity is less than the county loan rate.

- Acreage of crops eligible for the Non-insured Assistance Program (NAP), which are crops for which Federal Crop Insurance is not available, must be reported. NAP operates similar to catastrophic crop insurance policies and provides comparable protection for producers on crops that cannot be insured.

Producers with these situations should stop in at the FSA office at their earliest convenience to report their acreage. Timely reporting is



***FIFTY-ONE FARM BUREAU** women from across Iowa attended the National Women's Conference May 6-8 in Colorado Springs, Colo. Those attending the conference from this area included from left, Patricia Findley, Lovilia; Jackie Beard, Chariton; Geri Hanson, Centerville and Mabel Moore, Melrose,*

District 8 women's chairperson. Participants enhanced their leadership skills by attending seminars on leadership development, political influence, communications and technology. They also learned about biotechnology and farm and food safety.

necessary to determine and maintain eligibility for USDA program benefits. Producers reporting after June 30, 2000 are subject to late filing

Don't jeopardize potential program benefits by not timely reporting planted acreage on all farms. Farmers needing more information about crop reporting should contact the FSA office (515)932-7134.

Conservation tillage gaining ground among Iowa farmers

DES MOINES - Conservation and farm group leaders announced today results from two surveys that indicate soil-saving conservation tillage methods are holding their own, and may be gaining ground in Iowa.

Results from a 1999 survey of 340 corn and soybean producers in 18 Iowa counties show the amount of no-till acres and the proportion of farmers using no-till changed little from 1997 to 1999. Preliminary results from a field survey collected in the same 18 counties this year shows conservation tillage and no-till have increased significantly since 1998.

"In the last few years there has been speculation within the agricultural and conservation communities of a decline in the use of conservation tillage and no-till in the state. Part of that speculation may be due to a sharp peak in residue management use in 1997 followed by a drop in 1998," says Leroy Brown, State Conservationist for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Iowa. "We are encouraged by the results of both surveys, that show there is not a downward trend in conservation tillage and no-till. The farmer survey results will help us better understand producers' thoughts and attitudes, so we can further increase the use of these tillage systems in Iowa."

Conservation tillage is the practice of leaving the stalks and other

residues from the current year's crop on the surface of the soil after harvest, to protect the soil from falling raindrops until the next year's crop can protect it.

The 1999 survey of farmers' tillage practices and attitudes was conducted by the Iowa Residue Management Partnership (IRMP), an informal partnership of private and public organizations that promotes and addresses issues related to conservation tillage and no-till. The survey focused on measuring tillage trends and identifying possible causes of any trend changes among this sample of Iowa farmers. Although there was some small annual fluctuation, results indicate tillage preferences among those farmers have remained stable over the past three years.

The 2000 field survey of crop residue levels was conducted by the Conservation Technology Information Center (CTIC), a nonprofit public/private partnership, and the NRCS in every Iowa county. Currently, results are only available for the same 18 counties sampled in the IRMP survey. "The 2000 survey results revealed some pleasant surprises in these 18 counties, including significant increases in no-till," says Dan Towery, Natural Resources Specialist for CTIC. "Since 1998, no-till corn increased by 204,600 acres, representing an 85 percent increase. No-till soybeans are up 166,000 acres in these counties, or 40 percent from 1998."

"Although the total acres planted to no-till corn and soybeans in 2000 within the 18 Iowa counties was still less than the peak high in 1997, committed Iowa growers are recognizing the many benefits of no-till production systems," says Towery. "In order to continue increasing no-till acres growers need to look for "weather-proof" systems, such as strip-till, that will perform well regardless of spring planting conditions."

The results of the IRMP and CTIC surveys were released today at the West Des Moines Marriott during the annual meeting of the Conservation Districts of Iowa. Final statewide CTIC data will be released later this fall.

IRMP members include: Conservation Districts of Iowa, Inc.; Conservation Technology Information Center; IDALS, Division of Soil Conservation; Iowa Chapter, American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers; Iowa Chapter, Soil and Water Conservation Society; Iowa Department of Natural Resources; Iowa Farm Bureau Federation; Iowa State University; Monsanto, Inc.; Novartis Crop Protection, Inc.; Agren, Inc.; Soil and Water Conservation Society, Inc.; USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service.

For more information on the surveys or to join the IRMP contact Larry Beeler, NRCS, 515-284-4371.

An old-fashioned threshing bee



A PAIR OF BELGIAN horses from Drakesville, driven by Carol Ann McNeese with relief driver Bill Collins and McKenzie Beaird, ride past threshers, Lyle Haselhuhn and Cindy Reed Shull, Joe Hoover and Tyler Shelquist pitching bundles, with Dave Reed and John Spencer looking after the oats wagon.



THE THRESHING MACHINE and straw stack build up as the shocks of oats wait patiently in the fields for threshing.

Photos by Dave Paxton



LYLE HASELHUHN, thresher operator, keeps things oiled up.



A TEAM OF MULES pulling a cart, owned by the Jeff Wilson family of Ottumwa, rides past one of the many tractors from GATR (Great Albia Tractor Ride).



EMIL KRABER, left, and Dave Reed, check out the condition of the oats on the wagon.



Working the thresher and bundle wagon were Stuart McDaniel (left) and Ron Spencer (right).

Fall is a good time to soil test

By MARK CARLTON
ISU Extension

Harvest 2000 is nearly 100 percent complete. What's next? Soil test.

Applying phosphorus, potassium, and lime does not make much sense without a soil test. Many fields with a history of manure or heavy applications of fertilizers over the past years are testing very high in phosphorus and potassium. Research at ISU has shown that fields with phosphorus and potassium levels above the "optimum" level do not benefit from applications of phosphorus and potassium. In addition, excessive applications of crop nutrients is detrimental to the

environment.

Fall is an excellent time to soil test. Fall soil testing allows enough time to collect samples, study the analysis, and make nutrient application decisions before winter sets in. Global Positioning Systems (GPS), Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and Variable Rate Technology (VRT) have made soil testing somewhat complicated but can provide producers with valuable information.

Keep in mind that soil testing is not an exact science no matter which method of sampling is used. A good soil sample should be representative of the area of the field

being sampled. Soil test results are only as accurate as the sample that is submitted to the laboratory.

When collecting soil samples, consider cropping history, soil type, manure applications, tillage and drainage. If lime applications are being considered, sample areas along gravel roads separately. Sample areas should not exceed 10 acres in size. Each sample should consist of 15 to 20 cores taken six inches deep. Sample fields every three to five years.

Producers with yield monitors and GPS should study yield maps and sample areas of fields that yield poorly. While you are pulling soil samples for phosphorus and potassium, save some of the soil and test your fields for soybean cyst nematodes. Many soil-testing laboratories can now test for these.

For more information on soil testing and applying crop nutrients, contact your ISU Monroe County Extension Office at 107 Benton Ave. East or call 932-5612. You may also find the following publications on the internet at www.extension.iastate.edu: Pm-1310, "Interpretation of Soil Test Results," and Pm-1688, "General Guide for Crop Nutrient Recommendations in Iowa."

Pheasant Hunting Facts in Iowa

Season

Oct. 28 through Jan. 10

Hunters

170,000 opening weekend

Harvest

1,000,000 birds



Tuesday, February 15, 2000

One million tree and shrub seedlings available

Landowners considering the purchase of nursery stock this spring need to look no further than the State Forest Nursery in Ames according to Mike Brandrup, state forester for the DNR's Forests and Prairies Division.

"The State Forest Nursery in Ames has one million tree and shrub seedlings available this spring for wildlife shrub plantings, riparian buffers, shelterbelts and other conservation plantings," said Brandrup.

The inventory includes large numbers of dogwood shrubs for wildlife areas; silver maple, willow and poplar along streams; and spruces and scotch pine for shelterbelts. These species can be used for several Conservation Reserve Program practices including wildlife shrubs (CP4D) and riparian buffers

(CP22). Supplies of some upland hardwood tree species like walnut and oak are limited

For landowners interested in planting smaller areas, songbird

packets of 20 plants and wildlife packets of 200 plants are available.

Landowners can easily order by calling the toll-free number (800) 865-2477. Stock prices range from \$20 to \$40 per hundred seedlings depending on species and size. There is a minimum order of 500 plants except for songbird (\$20) and wildlife packets (\$65).

Study shows Iowa farmer saving more soil, development rate grows

Iowa farmers have continued to slow the flow of topsoil from farmlands into waterways across the state, according to a recent study released by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Estimated annual soil erosion from wind and water on Iowa's cropland fell 21 percent, from 6.7 tons an acre in 1992 to 5.3 tons an acre in 1997, according to preliminary figures compiled in the 1997 National Resources Inventory (NRI). The inventory shows erosion by water was reduced from 5.4 tons in 1992 to 4.7 in 1997; erosion by wind fell from 1.3 tons to .6 tons an acre in the five-year period. The 1997 rate is nearly a 50 percent cut in total erosion from the 10.4 tons per acre per year rate in 1982.

"We're pleased to see this steady progress in better soil protection," said Leroy Brown, NRCS State Conservationist. Keeping topsoil in place is the key to continued production, cleaner water, and a better environment for all of Iowa's citizens. Brown said "the latest study also shows farmlands are being converted to non-agricultural uses at an accelerated rate." NRI figures show that one out of every 14 developed acres in Iowa was developed since 1987.

"In fact, the annual rate of land development increased by 400 percent during the last 10 years," said Cory Brockmann, NRI Specialist for NRCS in Iowa. NRI figures show land was converted to urban and other uses at a rate of about 5,000 acres a year between 1982 and 1992, but that average acceler-

ated to more than 20,000 acres a year since 1992. Now, about 1.8 million acres, or about 5 percent of the state is developed land.

The NRI study, completed every five years, looks at land cover and use, soil erosion, prime farmland, wildlife diversity, selected conservation practices and other land conditions on more than 800,000 random sample sites on nonfederal, rural land in the US. The goal of the survey, directed by Congress and completed by NRCS, is to evaluate the conditions and trends of the nation's soil, water and related resources. The latest inventory looked at land conditions in 1997.

Other preliminary NRI data show the following changes since 1992: Cropland increased 1 percent to 25.3 million acres.

Pastureland dropped 6 percent to

3.6 million acres.

Forestland increased 5.5 percent to 2.1 million acres.

More NRI figures are available at the NRCS website:

www.nhq.nrcs.usda.gov/CCS/NRI/se.html. NRCS provides technical assistance to farmers and other private landowners to help them conserve and protect natural resources.

Deadline to obtain FSA loans or LDP's approaching

The window of opportunity for producers to obtain marketing assistance crop loans or loan deficiency payments on 1999 corn or soybeans will close Wednesday, May 31, according to Bob Soukup, State Executive Director of USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA).

"Producers may obtain a marketing assistance loan or receive a loan deficiency payment (LDP) on all or part of their eligible corn or soybean crops during the loan availability period which ends on May 31, 2000," Soukup said. "Producers with 1999 soybeans or corn in storage should consider taking out a nine-month marketing assistance loan or obtaining a loan deficiency payment (LDP) before the deadline

passes."

Marketing assistance loans provide eligible producers with low interest interim operating capital and allow the producer to hold the commodity for future sale, he explained. The loans have a nine-month term and variable interest rate which is currently 7.25 percent.

"Producers who obtain a marketing assistance loan on their 1999 corn or soybean crops can still take advantage of benefits available if prices fall," Soukup emphasized. "This can be done through the repayment options available to them before their loan matures."

The actual loan repayment rate would be the lesser of the county loan rate plus accrued interest, or

the posted county price (PCP) for the day the repayment is made. The difference between these two options is the market gain that producers earn when repaying their loan.

"The market gain they earn with a PCP repayment option is similar to the benefits earned from LDP's," Soukup said. "It is important to note these options are only available to producers that have not already received LDP benefits or have not repaid a loan at a discount previously on the same bushels."

More information on FSA's commodity loan and LDP programs can be obtained from local county USDA Service Centers.

FSA committee requests emergency release of CRP

The Monroe County FSA Committee recently requested emergency release of CRP acreage for haying and grazing due to continuing drought conditions in Southern Iowa.

The Committee believes releasing CRP for emergency use early in the growing season will assist area farmers by making available the needed forage to maintain foundation herds throughout the spring and summer and also replenish hay stocks that will carry livestock the winter months.

Forage production in the county

has been severely reduced this spring because of the lack of adequate moisture. Climatological data obtained from the State Climatologist Office indicates Monroe County has received only 16.09 inches of precipitation since July 1999. This represents precipitation that is only 56 percent of normal or 12.3 inches below normal during the last ten months.

The Committee's recommendation has been forwarded with supporting data to the Iowa FSA State Committee and will be considered

for approval by FSA's National Office in Washington, D.C.

Area farmers will be immediately notified upon receiving a decision. If approved, CRP participants would be required to make written request to the Monroe County FSA office, located at 1701 South B Street in Albia.

State planting, calving seasons near perfect

The last week of April and the first two weeks of May brought warmer weather to Iowa with continued below normal precipitation levels, leaving Iowa farmers in need of rain.

The combination of warm, dry weather, however, has created a near record pace in corn and soybean planting and one of the best calving and lambing seasons in history.

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FSA seeks candidates

The Farm Service Agency is looking for candidates for the farmer-elected County Committee election this fall, and is especially interested in identifying people who have not been active participants with the FSA in the past.

The County Committee is an important part of the delivery of USDA services to farmers, and FSA wants to include farmers in non-traditional operations and people whose livelihoods are made on farming. These people could include beginning farmers, specialty crop farmers, truck farmers, spouses or business partners, or anyone who would be able to add some new or different experiences to the local County Committee.

According to the FSA, the County Committee system needs everybody, from voters to active participants as candidates for committee membership. With one-third of the nationwide membership of county committee members up for election this fall, it is time to begin planning on getting involved.

"We're looking for the broadest possible participation from anyone within the farming community," said David Wynn, CED. "There's a lot of skill and experience that we haven't tapped into in the past and that we could really use."

The FSA County Office Committee is the most direct link between USDA farm programs and local producers. The County Committee system helps shape nationwide programs into programs that work at the local level by making decisions on things like commodity price support loans and payments, and establishing allotments, yields, and marketing quotas for some crops.

"To make the system work, it must represent all of the different parts of local agriculture," said Wynn. "This means the business side of the operation, the small farmer, people in specialty crops, truck farmers, new farmers, women...all people with unique and valuable insights and perspectives to the business. We need their help and experience."

For further information, contact the Monroe County FSA office.

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Soil fertility concerns experts

As breakthrough technologies continue to sweep agriculture and commodity prices remain low, fertilizer may not be the first thing on growers' minds this fall. But proper soil fertility should be a top priority, no matter what the agronomic or economic conditions, experts caution.

"Approximately one third of historical crop yield in the U.S. is attributed to fertilizer," says Dr. Scott Murrell, Northcentral director for the Potash & Phosphate Institute (PPI). "Farmers considering cutting this critical input may impair the potential for

higher yields and profits."

He adds that maintaining proper soil fertility is essential for long-term profitability, a goal not achieved by cutting corners.

A four-year Iowa Soybean Association survey examining returns to direct costs revealed that nearly 70 percent of increased income from top growers was attributable to higher yields, while only one fifth of increased income came from cost reduction, Murrell says.

Murrell explains that today's cropping practices remove large amounts of phosphorus (P),

potassium (K) and other nutrients every season, and this year is no exception.

"Soil testing is the single most important tool for long-term, strategic P and K planning," says Dr. Ray Hoyum, vice president of market development and communications, IMC Global. "Fall is an ideal time for soil testing because samples collected immediately following harvest provide the best assessment of the minimum P and K levels available for next year's crop."

Local conservation commissioner attends national conference

Officials from the Monroe County Soil and Water Conservation District, joined over 1,700 leaders from across the nation to discuss natural resource conservation issues on private land in America. Findley, commissioner of the Monroe County district, attended the 55th annual meeting of the National Association of conservation districts in Fort Worth, Texas, in early February.

The meeting, held Feb. 4-7, was organized to set policy, discuss conservation issues, elect officers and recognize national award winners. The theme of the meeting was "Bullish on Conservation."

"While our local conservation work will help ensure continued quality of life for our children and future generations, we have a responsibility to make sure our conservation programs help our producers on the land remain economically viable today," she said.

Findley said they are working with local farmers, ranchers and other landowners to improve conservation practices on the land that will benefit water quality, clean air, and wildlife habitat.

One practice is creating conservation buffers to help the farmer or rancher stay profitable and protect their most valuable asset, the land.

Keynote speaker Bruce Vincent challenged conservation offices to lead local discussions on issues so

that economic and ecological choices can be in harmony. He reminded them that 50 million rural citizens in America can have a strong voice and should be offering policy makers a reasonable, practical approach to land management decisions.

Association president Rudy Rice challenged the group to reach out, listen, learn and lead, and "never give up on taking steps necessary to improve the quality of life for all Americans."

Since the conference was held in Fort Worth, known as "America's cow town," much of the focus of the annual meeting was on economic and environmental challenges of livestock grazing. Conservation districts believe that sustained

yields and multiple use of renewable natural resources should be basic principles of public and private grazing land management.

A special forum on carbon sequestration and bioenergy addressed what is to become a major emerging conservation issue. Using plants to trap carbon from the air may be a way to help the environment and financially reward America's farmers and ranchers. Plants have the ability to trap carbon both above and below the ground, thus creating a win-win situation in terms of economics and conservation for the farmer.

For more information contact the district at 1701 South B St., Suite 100, Albia, or telephone 641-932-5144.

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AGRICULTURE



ALBIA UNION-REPUBLICAN

EQIP funding approved for soil district

The Monroe and Appanoose County Soil and Water Conservation Districts have been informed by the Natural Resource Conservation Service that their application for an Environmental Quality Incentives Program priority area for the Rathbun watershed has been approved.

With this approval comes federal cost-share dollars for landowners within the Rathbun watershed.

The priority area includes privately owned land over a total of 31,360 acres located in the Rathbun

Lake watershed in Monroe and Appanoose counties.

A steering committee comprised of landowners, SWCD commissioners and representatives from the Rathbun Land and Water Alliance worked together to determine the priority area boundaries and resource concerns to be addressed.

The resource concerns to be addressed include grazing land management, soil erosion, water quality and riparian area enhancement and protection. Requirements of the program include development of

five to ten year contracts to treat resource concerns.

Cost share rates of 75 percent are available for conservation practice installation as well as incentive payments for grazing land management and nutrient and pest management on cropland.

Local NRCS offices will be ac-

cepting applications through June 8 for this year's funding. Each application will go through a ranking process similar to previously held EQIP sign-ups for statewide concerns. Approved contracts will begin Oct. 1. For more information, contact the NRCS office in Albia at 641-932-5144.



AT THE LAKE MIAMI wetland site, Mr. Preston's and Mrs. Wright's classes met with District Conservationist John Frieden, Soil Technicians Mike Gibbs and Ronald Peterson, Conservation Aide Gail Wirtjes and State Secretary Diana

Williams. Fish were provided for the children to stock the wetland and trees were distributed after the event. All third graders of the Albia Community School District received young trees for planting.

A few precautions can keep Iowa safe

By PATTY JUDGE
Iowa Secretary of Agriculture

Recent outbreaks of foot and mouth disease in Europe and South America have caused all of us to become much more concerned about the possibility of foreign animal disease being found in Iowa.

Here in the Department of Agriculture we are taking steps to make certain Iowans can identify, contain and eliminate the disease from our livestock herds if that should be necessary.

We are receiving daily calls asking about the disease, so I want to take this opportunity to share a few facts with you. Foot and mouth disease (or as I thought until recently -- hoof and mouth disease), is caused by a fast spreading virus. All cloven-hoofed animals are susceptible and nearly 100 percent of animals in an exposed herd will become ill.

In Iowa these animals would include swine, cattle, sheep, elf, captive and wild deer, bison and llamas.

According to the State Veterinarian, the disease is identified by blisters that form in the animal's mouth or muzzle causing slobbering or drooling. These blisters eventually break, leaving raw patches on the animal's mouth.

Blisters can also develop on the animal's teats and feet. Affected animals will be reluctant or unable to drink, eat or walk. Any split-footed animal that shows these symptoms should be reported to the state veterinarian here at the department immediately. We would much rather investigate a case that proves to be uninfected than to miss one case of this virus.

The good news is that **foot and mouth disease does not affect human health**. The bad news is that a single case of FMD found in the United States would impact every segment of our multi-billion dollar animal and animal product market.

Here in Iowa the livestock industry accounts for over 5.5 billion dollars per year. FMD could cost us 6-8 billion dollars. The livestock industry would have a very difficult time recovering.

Foot and mouth disease can be transmitted in a variety of ways, the most common being direct contact with an infected animal. Once infected, animals become "virus factories" capable of spreading particles to other animals and into the environment.

The virus can become airborne and can be breathed-in by nearby animals. Persons who have been around infected animals are also capable of carrying the virus in their nasal passages for several days. It can also be spread when animals come in contact with feed, feeding utensils, vehicles, shoes and clothing. The virus is also carried in the raw meat, or in milk from FMD exposed or infected animals.

If you are planning on traveling abroad this summer, please take the following precautions and help us keep Iowa free from FMD: 1. Avoid farms, zoos, fairs, sale barns, stockyards, animal labs and packing houses. 2. Before returning to the U.S., launder all clothing and outerwear. Clean shoes and luggage and personal items with a damp cloth dampened by a bleach solution of five tablespoons of household bleach to one gallon water. 3. Avoid contact with livestock and wildlife for five days after arrival back to the U.S.

If we work together I believe we can keep FMD out of our state and all enjoy a great Iowa summer.

If you have questions or concerns you'd like to share with Secretary Judge to address, e-mail her at www.state.ia.us/agriculture or write

her at: ASK PATTY, Iowa Department of Agriculture, Henry A. Wallace Building, Des Moines, Iowa, 50319.

USDA to re-locate new office building in Albia

Oskaloosa, Centerville rural development offices to be consolidated

The United States Department of Agriculture announced plans Friday to re-locate two offices to Albia later this summer.

Existing offices in Centerville and Oskaloosa will be combined into one larger office which will be housed in a new building in the Albia industrial park adjacent to the existing USDA building. The existing USDA building, built in 1999, is located near A.Y.M. manufacturing in southern Albia.

John Pyle, Rural Development Manager for this area of the state, announced the consolidation and relocation of the two effected offices last week.

According to Dan Tometich, Community Development Specialist with Albia Industrial Development Corp., the group has been working with USDA for the last year to make land available for the project. "AIDC has worked closely for many years with USDA Rural Development and we are pleased they chose Albia as the site for this consolidated facility.

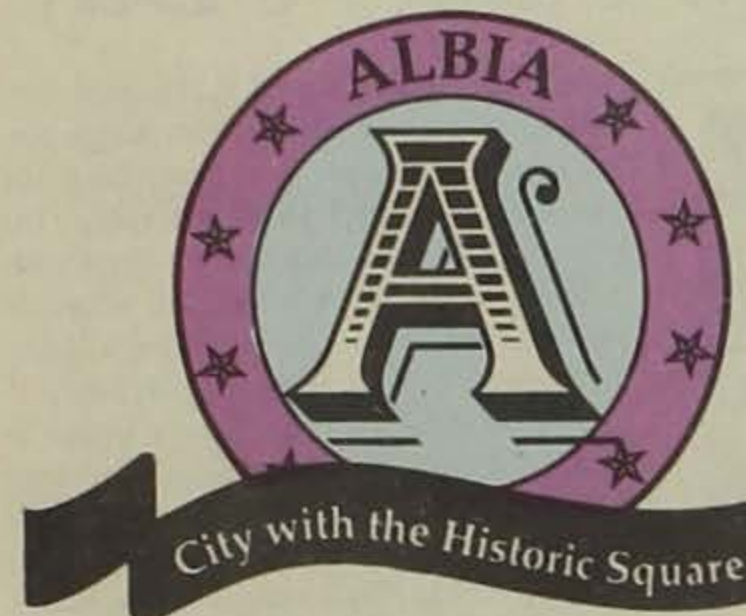
AIDC president Dave Johnson noted the importance of having USDA located in the community. He said that the existing Farm Service Agency and Soil Conservation Service provide valuable services to our agricultural community and,

with this announcement that Rural Development will also locate here, "We believe Monroe County stands an even better chance that we will be able to retain these offices as future consolidations of government facilities are considered."

USDA Rural Development provides a wide array of low interest loans and grants to rural areas for housing, community facilities, water and wastewater disposal, health care, fire and rescue equipment, and for other rural development projects.

According to Pyle, the new facility should be built and ready for occupancy by August 1.

5-15-01



UNION-REPUBLICAN

www.albianews.com

Albia, Iowa 52531 Vol. 139 No.24, Thursday, June 14, 2001

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Crop outlook brightens...but thousands of acres unplanted

As incredible as it may seem, the southern tiers of Iowa counties enjoyed a seventh straight day of dry weather—through Wednesday, missing several predicted thunderstorms along the way, including a devastating hail storm that pounded the Des Moines area.

Farmers in Monroe and other South Central Iowa counties finally got back into the fields late Saturday and into Sunday, working non-stop to prepare fields for last-minute soybean planting. For the first time this spring, farmers were also able to cut, rake and bale hay.

June 15 is a critical deadline for farmers who want to sign up for prevented planting through their crop insurance agent. Most farmers in South Central Iowa have already signed up for prevented planting on parts of their corn acreage. That deadline was June 1.

However, if the lights shining in the fields deep into the night are any indication, Monroe County farmers are attempting to plant as many acres as possible. If soybeans are planted by June 15, yield prospects are still excellent.

Iowa Ag Secretary Patty Judge reported Tuesday that crop conditions improved thanks to the warm, sunny weather experienced much of the week.

"Corn is greener and actively growing under the warmth of the sun. We still need additional dry, warm weather to make steady



THE HIGH SCHOOL FFA chapter waited out the miserable weather to finally get its test plot planted Wednesday. Joe Hoover, Tyler Shelquist, Luke Ammons, Roger Stewart, Dan Baker and Jeremy Peterson were joined by FFA Advisor Daryl Schofield and Bob and Martha Hoover, planting 18 varieties of soybeans. Curt

progress," Secretary Judge commented.

Across the state, corn acreage planted by Iowa farmers was 97 percent complete for all acres as of

June 10. The south central and southeast districts have the most acreage left to be planted. Reports Sunday had over a million acres of corn unplanted, most of it in South

Peterson donated the planter and tractor and Joe Hoover did the tillage work. Soybeans were donated by Quality Ag, John Crall, Steve Crall, Bob Scott, Larry Clark, Richard Davis, Roermers, Mahaska County Farm Service and Bob Beary. The plot should be ready for harvest around Oct. 1.

Central and Southeast Iowa. Clarke County was mentioned as the county with the most acres unplanted.

Corn had emerged on 92 percent of the total acres as of Sunday, com-

pared to the average of 97 percent emerged by the same date. Corn condition ratings increased slightly with the sunshine and warm temps to rate three percent very poor, 10

percent poor, 36 percent fair, 46 good, and five percent excellent.

Soybeans planted reached 81 percent of Iowa's intended acres, approximately 12 days behind the five-year average of 93 percent planted by the same date. Less than half of the soybean acreage has been planted in the South Central and Southeast districts.

Statewide, soybeans had emerged on 58 percent of the total acres as of Sunday, behind both the previous year of 98 percent, and the average of 82 percent emerged by the same date. Soybean crop conditions increased slightly to rate two percent very poor, 13 percent poor, 39 percent fair, 42 percent good, and four percent excellent.

Iowa's oat crop was headed on 13 percent of the total acres as of June 10, compared to the previous year of 54 percent and the five-year average of 19 percent headed by the same date. Iowa's oat crop condition increased to four percent poor, 28 percent fair, 58 percent good, and 10 percent excellent.

Iowa's livestock remained in mostly good condition, though there have been reports of pinkeye in cows and calves, and flu in hogs.

Pasture conditions remained virtually the same as the previous week at 3 percent poor, 22 percent fair, 57 percent good, and 18 percent excellent.

USDA Rural Development office complete ^{11/13/01}

Open house planned for Monday, Nov. 19

Construction is complete on the new United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development area office in Albia. An open house has been scheduled for Monday, Nov. 19 from 2-4 p.m., to allow the public and community leaders an opportunity to view the new facility and meet employees.

The location will serve as USDA Rural Development's main area office for a 13-county region covering southeast Iowa. The new office is a consolidation of two offices formerly located in Centerville and Oskaloosa, according to USDA Rural Development Manager John Pyle.

The new building is located next to another new office, the USDA Farm Service Agency, built in 1999 at the Albia Industrial Park near A.Y.M. manufacturing in south Albia.

USDA Rural Development operates federal loan programs designed to strengthen rural business, finance

new and improved rural housing, develop community facilities, and maintain and create rural employment. Direct or guaranteed loans are made available for housing, rural businesses, community facilities and telecommunications.

Pyle said that the Rural Development office does not compete with local lenders, but "helps people and groups that can't meet requirements of lenders, but are still worthy of credit."

According to Pyle, Rural Development also works to provide more than just financial assistance. The service works with many agencies and groups to help provide a starting point to address business, community or housing needs.

The office has helped to finance construction of many projects, such as a number of hospitals in the area (including the Monroe County Hospital), Rathbun Rural Water projects, as well as the construction of



CONSTRUCTION HAS BEEN completed on the new United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development office in the Albia industrial park. The new building, pictured in the background, is adjacent to another USDA office constructed in 1999

over 90 rental housing projects creating over 1700 apartments in southeast Iowa.

Funding for a new sewer system in Avery came from the office as well.

Rural Development has also helped to provide some of the funding for the study of switchgrass as an alternative energy source.

The two USDA offices now located in the south Albia industrial

that houses the local Farm Service Agency. An open house to allow the public to see the new Rural Development office has been scheduled for Monday, Nov. 19 from 2-4 p.m. The new Albia office replaces two offices formerly located in Oskaloosa and Centerville.

park are part of what was once the Farmer's Home Administration, with offices located on South Clinton Street in Albia.

That building was donated to the Carnegie-Evans Public Library by

owners Loren and Rowena Hardinger.

The library board sold the building and it is now being converted in a multi-unit apartment building.

Local meeting set to discuss ^{9/12/02} farm programs

A locally led work group meeting has been set for those interested in providing input and guidance for new farm programs.

The meeting, conducted by the Monroe County Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners, will be held on Tuesday, Sept. 17 at 7 p.m. in the Albia Community High School library.

Included in the discussion will be the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) and the Conservation Security Program (CSP).

The public is encouraged to attend.

REAP funds available ^{10/8/02}

The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship has announced funds available for the Resource Enhancement Protection Program (REAP).

This program covers 75 percent cost share funding for timber stand improvement, tree planting, field windbreak, native grass planting and planned grazing systems.

Application for interested parties must be filed by Nov. 10 with the Monroe County Soil and Water Conservation District at the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service office, 1701 South B Street, Albia. Call 932-5144 with any questions.

October 17, 2002

It's Soil and Water Conservation Week

Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Patty Judge announced last week that Gov. Vilsack has signed a proclamation proclaiming the week of October 14-20, 2002 as Soil and Water Conservation Week.

Judge commented, "It is fitting, at harvest time, to re-affirm our commitment to improving and protecting our water and soil for future generations," Secretary Judge continued, "We are all aware of the need to improve water and soil quality. Iowa producers have always been good stewards of the land and work diligently to improve soil and water conditions, and to reduce soil erosion and ag chemical run-off in our lakes and streams. They should be encouraged and applauded for their continuing efforts."

The Soil Conservation Division, partnering with the Soil and

Conservation Districts across Iowa, are working together to implement clean water measures and protect Iowa's resources while at the same time maintaining the best food production system in the world.

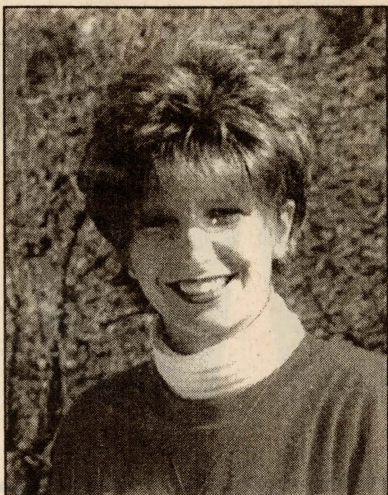
There are several conservation initiatives that the Iowa Department of Agriculture administers to protect and improve our water and soil. One of these important initiatives is the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP.) This water quality partnership of the Iowa Department of Agriculture, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and the USDA is a huge step in protecting and improving water quality in Iowa.

Iowa CREP provides incentives to landowners to voluntarily establish wetlands for water quality

improvement. The program is designed to reduce the movement of nitrate and other agricultural chemicals from croplands to streams and rivers.

In addition to CREP, the Iowa Department of Agriculture is administering a Buffer Strip Initiative Program to protect soil against erosion. Grass buffer strips can reduce soil erosion by more than 50%. Buffer strips can also remove nitrates and some agricultural chemicals before they enter our waters.

To find out more about these, and other conservation programs, contact the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship's Soil and Water Conservation Division at 515/281-5851, or log on to: www.agriculture.state.ia.us.



Jennifer Tometich

Open house set to honor Tometich

There will be an open house to say farewell to Jennifer Tometich on Thursday, Oct. 12 from 2 to 4:30 p.m. at the USDA Service Center located at 1701 South B St. in Albia.

Tometich has served as the State and District Secretary for the Monroe County Soil and Water Conservation District and the Natural Resources Conservation Service for the past three years.

She and her daughter, Jessica, relocated to Central Iowa and she will begin her new job in downtown Des Moines in the Grimes Building working for the Department of General Services in the printing and imaging division on Oct. 13.

Water quality meetings set for Miami, other lakes

The public will have an opportunity to comment on plans to improve water quality at six Iowa lakes at a series of meetings Oct. 29-31. The six lakes are Silver Lake in Delaware County, Rock Creek Lake in Jasper County, Arrowhead Pond in Pottawattamie County, Yellow Smoke Lake in Crawford County, Bobwhite Lake in Wayne County and Lake Miami in Monroe County.

All six lakes are on Iowa's "impaired waters list" and are primarily impacted by siltation and excess nutrients. The biggest benefit to improving water quality at all six lakes would be improvement of recreational opportunities.

The plans to be discussed at the public meetings are part of the TMDL, or Total Maximum Daily Load, program mandated by the federal Clean Water Act that

addresses waters considered to be "impaired" by pollution to the point that water quality standards are not being met. The TMDLs to be discussed at the upcoming meetings determine the maximum amount of a pollutant the water body can receive and still meet water quality standards for specific uses such as swimming or fishing.

"Water quality and the recreation opportunities provided at lakes in the state are very important components to our overall quality of life here in Iowa," said Bill Ehm, coordinator of the DNR's TMDL program.

"All of these lakes offer the potential to provide significant recreational benefits in their respective areas. In the case of Rock Creek Lake in Jasper County, we have a major recreational resource for the entire state. It is second only to campgrounds in the Iowa Great

Lakes region for the number of campers each year," Ehm said.

Ehm said the TMDL meetings should be of interest to people using the water bodies, local business and tourism officials and residents within the watershed.

The meeting schedule for the TMDL meetings is as follows:

Lake Miami in Monroe County, 1:30 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 31 at the Knights of Columbus Hall.

Tour of Lake Miami wetlands shows flora and fauna

A number of people involved in conservation efforts in Monroe County, along with people interested in seeing the development of a wetland, gathered at Lake Miami's wetland for a walk through.

The group identified several native prairie species including Big Blue Stem, Indian Grass, Rattle Snake Master, Purple Cone Flower, False Indigo, Switchgrass and Yellow Cone Flower.

Kevin Anderson, Iowa DNR Private Lands Biologist described the Lake Miami Wetland and other wetlands as giant sponges, soaking up pollutants delivered to wetlands from watershed runoff, having a great influence on improving water quality.

The walk-through was part of a 21-county tour in recognition of July as Wetlands Month in Iowa.

As a dragon fly hovered near the group, Anderson said, "Raise your hand if anyone here tonight has been bitten by a mosquito or has seen a mosquito." He went on to explain that many people believe a wetland is a "polluted swamp" but in reality, the dragon fly and other species prey upon mosquito larvae, which controls the population.

He also discussed mammal population in a wetlands including the Lake Miami River Otters. For more information contact the Monroe County Natural Resources Conservation Service, 932-5144.



VISITORS AT THE Lake Miami Wetland look over some of the beautiful Yellow Cone Flower growing there.



THE LAKE MIAMI WETLANDS tour group is entertained by Kevin Anderson, Iowa DNR Private Lands Biologist as he talks about wetlands and its wildlife.

Wetlands appreciation month observed

Editor's note: This is the first of four articles on wetlands appreciation by the Monroe County NRCS field office.

Twenty-one counties across southeast Iowa are joining together to promote awareness and appreciation of the hard working, high quality purifiers of our local groundwater resources – wetlands. The Iowa Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), an agency of the United States Department of Agriculture, invites southeast Iowans who enjoy clean water to join in celebrating "Wetlands Appreciation Month" throughout all of July.

In observance of "Wetlands Appreciation Month", the Albia NRCS Field Office will be holding a wetland tour at the Lake Miami Wetland on Tuesday, July 31. Those attending should gather at the parking lot west of the Lake Miami Dam by 6 p.m. Representatives from NRCS will tour and talk about wetland restoration and other wetland issues. Refreshments will be provided by the Monroe County Soil & Water Conservation District. Please call the Albia NRCS Field Office with any questions, 641-932-5144.

The Lake Miami Conservation Area in Monroe County provides many opportunities for all types of recreation and education for all people. The wetland restoration north of the Lake Miami Dam was originally completed in 1995 with an expansion

to the restoration in 2002. The wetland restoration included a dike on the north and west sides of the wetland, a water control structure, native prairie planting and tree planting.

Wetlands provide much more than recreation, wetlands provide habitat for mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians. Wetlands have also proved to enhance water quality by

intercepting surface runoff and filtering out excess nutrients before reentering the watershed. A second wetland restoration was completed south of Lake Miami in 2005.

THE LAKE MIAMI wetland located just to the north of Lake Miami. The wetland is home to dozens of wildlife species.



ALBIA THIRD GRADERS visit the Lake Miami Wetland earlier this spring.



A SHOOTING STAR is just one of dozens of native flowers growing at the Lake Miami Wetland.



Local work group to meet to discuss EQIP program funds

11/12/02

The Monroe County Locally Led Work Group will meet Thursday, Nov. 14 at the USDA Service Center in Albia at 7:30 p.m.

Items to be discussed are the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funds to be allocated to the Monroe County Soil and Water Conservation District for obligation to Monroe County EQIP applicants.

Those who attended the Sept. 17 meeting at the ACHS library are encouraged to attend, however all public attendance is welcome. Call the NRCS at 932-5144 for more information.



ALBIA'S GIFT of Green steering committee members are, from left, Dave Crall, Joe Crall, Dan Tometich, Lois Mick, Dave Mick, Bret Tratchel, Dave Peterson and Dave Johnson.

Vermeer's Gift of Green benefits Albia project

In honor of Vermeer Manufacturing Company's 50th Anniversary, employees of Vermeer in Albia will be volunteering to roll up their sleeves with members of the community to participate in the Gift of Green project. Vermeer is kicking off the Gift of Green project to coincide with National Arbor Day, April 24, and National Volunteer Week, April 19-25.

Vermeer's Gift of Green has taken root in the form of a significant donation of trees to be planted in conjunction with the Albia Recreational Trail Project. A total of 5,011 trees are scheduled to be planted in the former rail yards between Benton Avenue East and Third Avenue East. Tree species will include chanticlear pear, shade master honey locust, regent service berry, Armstrong maple, purple sandcherry, mentor barberry and variegated redwing dogwood. Vermeer's Gift of Green will beautify this community betterment project coming to fruition this summer.

Albia's Gift of Green steering committee members are heading up the volunteer planting efforts. Committee members include Vermeer employees Dave Peterson, Merrill Peterson, Dave Crall, Bret Trachel and Jim Henderson, along with seven representatives from the community: Joe Crall, Don Crall, Dave and Lois Mick and Ray Vitko, as well as Dave Johnson and Dan Tometich of Albia Industrial Development Corporation.

Vermeer's Gift of Green is being planned and executed under the leadership of a special 50th Anniversary committee headed by Vermeer Charitable Foundation executive secretary Lois Vermeer and Vermeer Charitable Foundation trustee and medical director Dale

Andringa. This \$100,000 program is designed to assist the tree needs of seven key communities where a majority of Vermeer employees reside.

Other communities included in the employee volunteer program are Pella, Oskaloosa, Knoxville, New Sharon, Sully and Monroe.

"We realize there are a number of tree projects that smaller communities could make happen with financial assistance," Lois Vermeer said. "And with the tree damage some towns experienced last year, and the availability of our brush chippers and tree spades, we felt like a tree planting project was a natural contribution.

"The project also was selected because of the positive impact trees have on our earth," said Andringa. "I read recently that in one year the average adult urban tree inhales 26 points of carbon dioxide, the amount put out by one automobile during an 11,300 mile trip. That same tree exhales enough oxygen to keep a family of four breathing for a year.



DIANA WILLIAMS HAS been named the new District Secretary for the Monroe County Soil and Water Conservation District and the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service. Williams will begin duties on Friday, Feb. 16. Williams replaces Jennifer Tometich, who is now working with the Iowa Department of General Services printing and imaging division in Des Moines.

LARGE PRINT

Farm/Business

USDA Accepts 81% of Iowa CRP Acres

USDA has accepted 178,997 acres of Iowa land in the 20th Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) general sign-up. This is approximately 81 percent of the total 221,835 acres offered during this sign-up in Iowa. Secretary of Agriculture, Dan Glickman announced that 2,460,238 acres, of the 3,490,323 acres offered, were accepted into the CRP nationally.

"A review of the offer sign-up data truly shows the high quality of the offers made by Iowa producers when they offered land for the 20th CRP sign-up. This demonstrates conclusively that Iowa farmers believe in the CRP program and in protecting the environment and our valuable natural resources," stated Bob Soukup State Executive Director for the USDA, Farm Service Agency (FSA). "Many producers improved their EBI (Environmental Benefits Index) scores, for example, by lowering the offer rate, enhancing the seeding to improve wildlife habitat, and by offering only the more sensitive cropland acres," says Soukup. EBI is the index USDA uses to compare and rank CRP contract offers in terms of environmental benefits, protection of natural resources and cost. "Iowa producers and USDA Service Center employees worked together to insure that the CRP program remains a viable, efficient, environmentally friendly, and cost effective program," stated Soukup.

"The Conservation Reserve Program continues to be an excellent tool for controlling soil erosion, protecting water quality, and providing wildlife habitat on Iowa land," says Leroy Brown, State Conservationist for the USDA Natural Re-

sources Conservation Service (NRCS). "Landowners are having a positive environmental impact by using the regular CRP and the continuous CRP in combination with other conservation practices," says Brown.

Iowa's land accepted in this sign-up represents 7.2 percent of the national total. The average rental rate paid to landowners in Iowa is \$103.13 per acre (the highest State in the nation) compared to \$52.76 per acre national average. Iowa

ranks 5th in the number of acres accepted compared to other states. USDA will soon begin notifying farmers whether their offers were accepted.

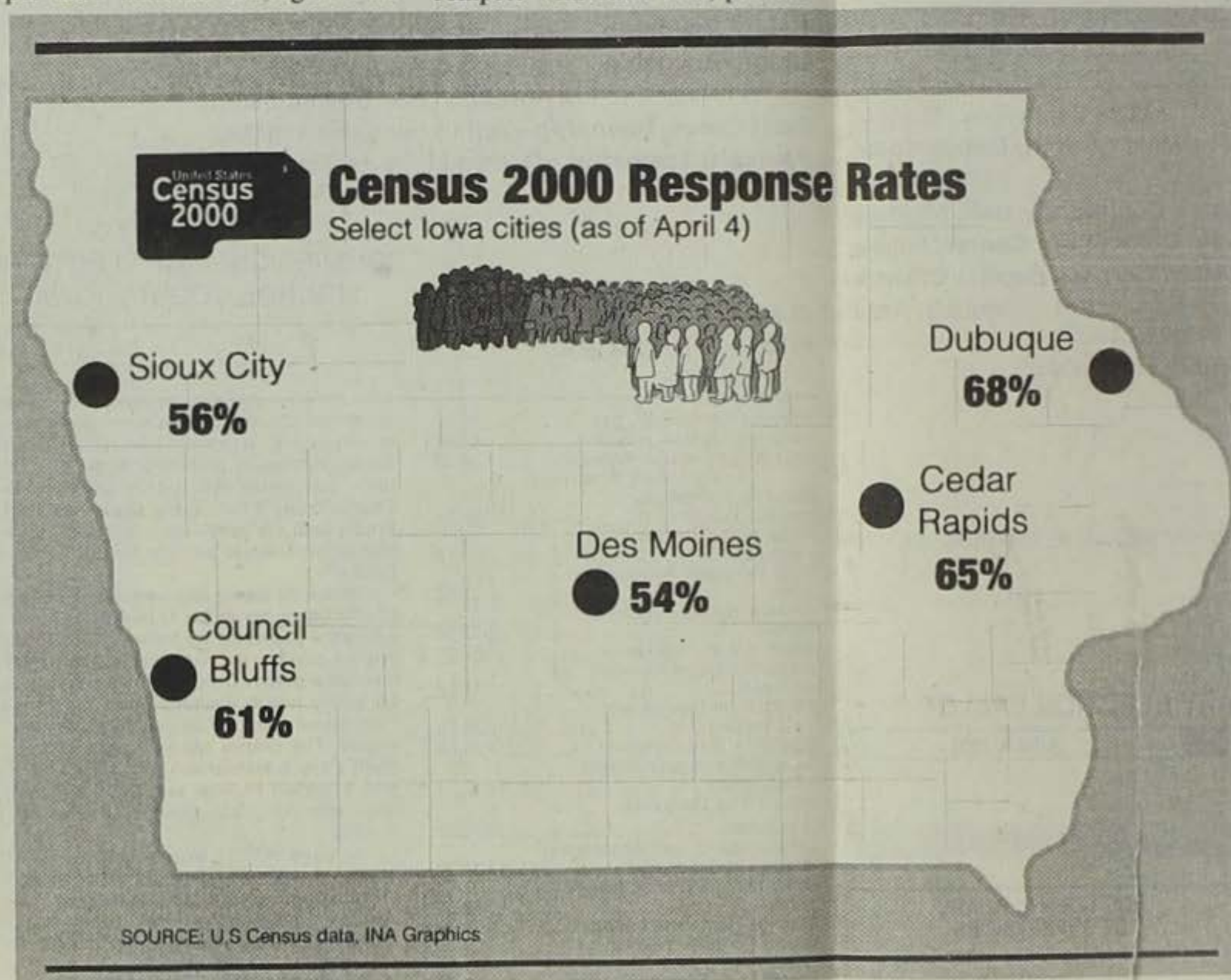
Including land accepted in this 20th sign-up, Iowa will have a total of 1,733,323 acres in the general CRP, on October 1, 2000. As of April 2000, landowners have enrolled approximately 194,000 acres in the continuous CRP. Under the continuous CRP, landowners don't compete with other bids, provided

land eligibility and producer requirements are met, the offer is accepted.

Answer Line
1-800-262-3804

Questions related to home and family answered by
Iowa State University
Families Extension.

Call Answer Line toll free
1-800-262-3804
M-F, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.



Farm and Business

Improving next year's pastures

This is the time to start improving both the quality and quantity of your pastures for next year. ISU Extension Field Crop Specialist Carroll Olsen said that landowners should start by making an inventory of the species and health of those species you presently have in your pastures.

If you have weeds, now is the time to start to work on perennials, do the job on biennials, and promise to do better on annuals, according to Olsen. Most of the perennials are still preparing for winter by unloading food from the leaves to the roots. There is no need to work on perennials in the spring. You can piggyback chemicals on the food to kill the roots.

Some perennials, he said, such as Canada thistle, may still not die, but they will be weaker for next year. Biennials, such as musk thistle, are in the rosette stage and are pretty vulnerable right now. Annual weeds are dead...we'll try to thicken our good species to smother the annuals, he noted.

The most common translocated herbicides for pastures are phenoxy products such as 2,4-D and Banvel. Check with the Monroe County ISU Extension Office for help in identifying weeds and selecting proper herbicides.

The spade will also work if you don't have too many weeds and you need the exercise.

Winter annuals, such as mustard, are the fourth type of weed you may be concerned about. They sprout in the fall and flower in the early spring. Good pasture health will also take care of them.

If your pasture species is mostly smooth brome grass or bluegrass but is a little thin and you can see the soil, consider application of some nitrogen fertilizer in late summer or early fall, Olsen said. These two grasses spread by underground roots in the fall. Spring applied nitrogen tends to promote top-growth at the expense of root growth.

Some people like to do a fall interseeding. "Fall" seeding is

probably not the best term since we'd prefer that "fall" seedings be completed by mid to late August to allow the root and plant time to develop before a killing frost pays a visit, he said. Always a risk, of course, but you might be better to

wait for an early spring attempt to thicken the stand.

It just seems to boil down to creating and maintaining a proper environment for the desired plants, and they'll respond to their best ability, he added.

Where have all the quail gone? Pheasants Forever, DNR, soil conservation looking for answers

By DAVE PAXTON
Publisher

By most accounts, the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) has been an overwhelming success, keeping fragile soils covered in sod, providing income for farmers and creating lots of habitat for game and non-game species.

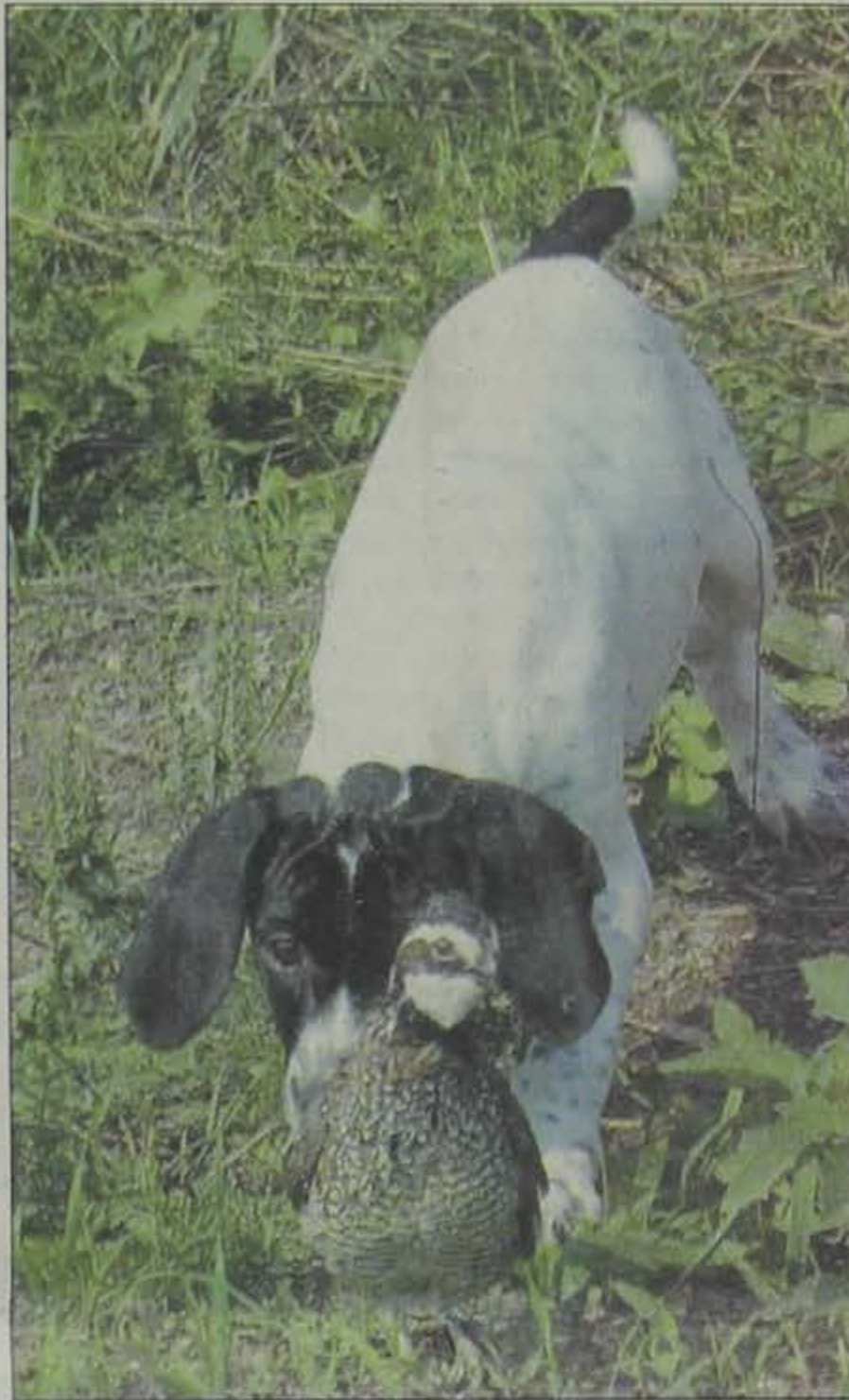
But quail hunters in southern Iowa can point to the CRP program, which started in the mid to late 1980's as the beginning of the end of large numbers of quail – the prime upland game bird in this part of the state. Numbers have been on a downward spiral since the early 1990's (four years into CRP) and with two brutal winters, wet and cold springs and summers and the loss of a lot of native vegetation, the number of coveys in Monroe County continue to shrink.

Thursday, about 35 landowners, hunting enthusiasts and conservation experts gathered at Trinity United Methodist Church in Albia in a Pheasants Forever-sponsored meeting to discuss the loss of quail population and the strategies to bring them back.

John Frieden, Monroe County Soil Conservationist, Stacey Slater, a Natural Resources Conservation Services conservationist and planner and Kevin Anderson, a private lands biologist with the DNR discussed in length the demise of the bobwhite quail, a bird native to southern Iowa, and how private landowners along with the state are making inroads to increase numbers.

Frieden, who grew up in northeast Iowa and worked in southwest Iowa before coming to Monroe County in 1972, described pheasant hunting as a boy near West Union and around Red Oak to work with the soil conservation service in 1971. "Red Oak was considered the hot spot in the nation for pheasants in 1971," he said.

"But when I moved to Monroe County in 1972 I was introduced to quail in numbers I had never imagined," he said. "In 1972, most of our farms were between 200 and 500 acres, had livestock, corn, soy-



-Photo courtesy of John Frieden

beans and alfalfa with lots of interior fences. In those interior fence rows were wild plum, Osage orange and hedge and there were all kinds of field borders. He was perfect quail habitat."

The other thing going for the quail were weedy fields. "Cultivation was the main source of weed control," said Frieden. "This created two things – weeds and bare ground." Frieden also said pelts from trapping were at an all time high and fur-bearing predators were not an issue.

"But nothing stays the same," he said. "More acres were needed for farmers to stay alive, fences were dozed, hedge rows removed and a lot of bugging and brooding areas disappeared. When CRP was introduced in 1985, it was a boon to wildlife for a while. At one point we had 24,000 acres enrolled in CRP. What we didn't consider about CRP as it affected quail, was that quail spend most of their lives running on the ground and as CRP became more established, the ground cover became more dense and quail were unable to move through it."

Private land biologist Kevin Anderson agreed with Frieden's description of the problem. "Habitat destruction is the number one cause for the loss of quail population," he said. Later in the meeting

he discussed the raptor and fur-bearing predator problem. "A lot of people blame the resurgence of hawks and owls, along with fur-bearing animals, but quail are literally at the bottom of the food chain. Regardless of predation, we're going to lose 80 percent of the hatch – from weather mostly," he said. "In years past, we simply had the habitat to hatch enough to keep numbers healthy."

Anderson has been working with private landowners in a 10-county area throughout the southern tier of counties and has had good suc-

QUAIL REPOPULATION, Continued to Page 16

Biologists, conservation people think they can bring bobwhite back

QUAIL REPOPULATION
Continued from Page 1

cess in bringing back multiple coveys by simply creating low-cost habitat. "Quail are an edge species," he said. "They spend most of their lives in an area less than 100 acres in size, mostly along fence rows and at the edge of fields. If we can create diverse native vegetation along the edges of fields, we can get quail to return."

Anderson said that diverse vegetation has to include weeds and bare ground. "Grass that is too thick is the worst possible kind of habitat for quail," he said. "They're too small to get through it. That's why we encourage disking and burning of CRP and replanting with short native grasses. CRP was a great idea, but you can't let it grow unattended for 20 years and think it will continue to provide good wildlife habitat."

Iowa State University Extension Crop Specialist Mark Carlton said that early CRP planting included brome grass (for the rapid creation of sod) and legume planting (for nutrient enhancement), mostly alfalfa. "What happened was two different plant species competing against each other," he said. "Alfalfa died out over time and the brome got so thick it eventually stunted its growth." Kill the brome is the new quail habitat battle cry.

"Mid-contract management" is an important term in discussing CRP and experts now agree that brome grass has to be disturbed to open up the soil and encourage weed growth.

Anderson said that mowing works as part of a management plan, but if all farmers do is mow, it simply creates a denser ground cover. "Prescribed burns, strip disking and strip spraying are really a better way to create the kind of ground cover quail need for bugging and brooding," he said.

Anderson said planned timber cuts near the edge of fields is also

important in creating good quail habitat. "Edge feathering is the very best way to create instant quail cover," said Anderson. Edge feathering basically has a farmer or landowner burn, disk or burn the edge of a field, then drop trees in the affected area. Anderson said an edge feathering of 10 feet is often all that is required. Some landowners will feather out 60 feet. This issue with that is the amount of money NCRS will pay a farmer — \$80 an acre for creating good quail habitat by edge feathering competed to the \$150 to \$180 per acre a farmer would get for planting it in corn or soybeans.

Anderson said the biggest mistake in edge feathering is farmers doing it for just a year. "You have to keep working at it," he said.

One of the major questions is, "How do you replenish quail if there are no coveys around?" Anderson said that stocking quail was not a viable answer. "It's way too expensive to trap wild birds, and releasing pen raised quail has proven a complete failure. They just won't survive."

Anderson the best way to insure a growing population is to work at connecting farm fields with good habitat.

NCRS Conservation Stacey Slater went over a number of funding opportunities for farmers and landowners including WHIP (Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program), EQUIP (Environmental Quality Incentives Program) and REAP, a program for forestry and native grasses planting. Jim Nelson, president of Cedar Creek Pheasants Forever in Monroe County, said there is funding available through PF for quail habitat improvement.

All of the conservation planners said that people looking to improve quail habitat should remember that whatever you do for quail is good for improving pheasant population, but that what you do to establish pheasant population is not necessarily good for quail.

More information is available at county soil conservation offices or through the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.