

SWITCHGRASS COST-SHARING AVAILABLE TO FARMERS

By: Art Roseland, Wildlife Biologist
Iowa Conservation Commission

Delaware County cattlemen interested in improving quality and quantity of forage should be interested in the Switchgrass Cost-Share Program available in the county in 1984-85. The innovative program is funded from the sale of Wildlife Habitat stamps by the Conservation Commission and designed to promote switchgrass, a forage crop good for both the cattleman, and wildlife.

Switchgrass is a tall warm-season grass once common in Iowa. Agronomists recommend switchgrass for excellent forage production during the hot summer months when cool-season grasses as bluegrass, orchard grass or fescue are dormant. A good stand of switchgrass may require a year or more to become well established, but it will last indefinitely if properly managed, and be extremely valuable as warm-season forage. A pasture rotation system that incorporates both cool-season forage and switchgrass is more efficient since cattle can be removed from exhausted pasture in late June, placed on Switchgrass during July and August, then returned to cool-season pastures during the fall. This allows continuous grazing through the growing season. Study results have shown a net gain advantage of 74 pounds per steer of animals grazed on a rotation of cool-season, warm-season pastures over those grazed on cool-season grasses alone. Iowa studies showed switchgrass dry matter yield greatly exceeding brome grass at only slightly lower crude protein and digestibility values.

Wildlife studies have shown switchgrass pastures are readily accepted as nesting cover by pheasants and songbirds. Most importantly, correctly managed switchgrass should be free from disturbance from cattle and hay harvest until after most nesting is complete. Switchgrass offers a forage crop beneficial to both cattlemen, and wildlife.

Cost-sharing for establishment of switchgrass is a maximum of \$60.00 per acre, with an additional \$15.00 cost-shared the second year for herbicide, fertilizer and application. Application deadline is March 22. Farmers interested in the program should contact the Soil Conservation Service office in Manchester for program information.

This publication was mailed to the following newspapers on 3-2-84.

Brian Nixon, News Editor
Iowa Agri-News
910 Twenty-Third Avenue
Coralville, Iowa 52241

Delaware County Leader
Hopkinton,
Iowa 52237

Dyersville Commercial
153 1st Avenue E.
Dyersville, Iowa 52040

Edgewood Reminder
Edgewood,
Iowa 52042

Farm Bureau Spokesman
Farm Bureau Office
115 E. Delaware
Manchester, Iowa 52057

Manchester Press
109 E. Delaware
Manchester, Iowa 52057

Press-Journal Office
107 W. Mission
Strawberry Point, Iowa 52076

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

INFORMATIONAL ACTIVITIES

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