

Annual Report 2008

March -Celebrating Soil and Water Conservation

Changes in the Soil and Water District



Pictured (from left) Commissioners Ray Wilson, Curt Behrends, Greg Zellmer, Fred Kay and Brian Follman.

It has been a busy year with the Cass County Soil and Water Conservation District. We have had new Commissioners learning the roles and duties of commissioner, along with the Secretary learning her position. We have also had some staff changes in the Natural Resources Conservation Service office also. Jeff Sporrer, Soil Conservationist, accepted a new position as Resource Conservationist and will be splitting his time between the Cass and Audubon County field offices. Jack Bucklin has joined the

Atlantic field office staff as Soil Conservationist. Jack came to the Atlantic field office from Guthrie County, where he was a technician for five years. The District board has also acquired a couple of Assistant Commissioners in 2009. Alan Peterson of Atlantic was appointed in July and Tracy Marshall of Lewis was appointed in November 2009. Wel-

Soil see page 2

Photo contributed

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How do I
measure up?
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Cass County Soil Survey Update nearing completion

By Richard Lensch
Soil Scientist

The staff at the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Southwest Iowa Soils Office is happy to report that the field work for the Cass county soils survey update is nearing completion. To date over 99 percent of the field work has been completed. Richard Lensch, Cass County Project Leader commented, "A few field visits this spring will be needed to wrap-up a few loose ends, then we will be finished".

Soil scientists are now making digital edits to the soil maps using the data and information gathered through the field investigations. The changes seen in the soil survey update will include a new soil map unit naming scheme, employing soil series that were set-up after the original survey was completed, increased level of detail in the mapping scale, and changes to the soil delineations where the soil properties have changed or need to be combined. The goal is to complete the digital editing by July of 2010 at which time the digital soils information will be sent to the digitizing unit in Madison, Wisconsin for quality assurance checks.

Once the information has been reviewed, the soil survey maps and interpretative data will be published in three forms: hard-copy soil survey book, DVD, and through the internet. The new soil survey books will be published in limited quantities with larger maps and improved management and engineering data. The DVDs will include an interactive program called SoilView, which allows users

Survey..... see page 3

Resource Conservationist-Jeff Sporrer

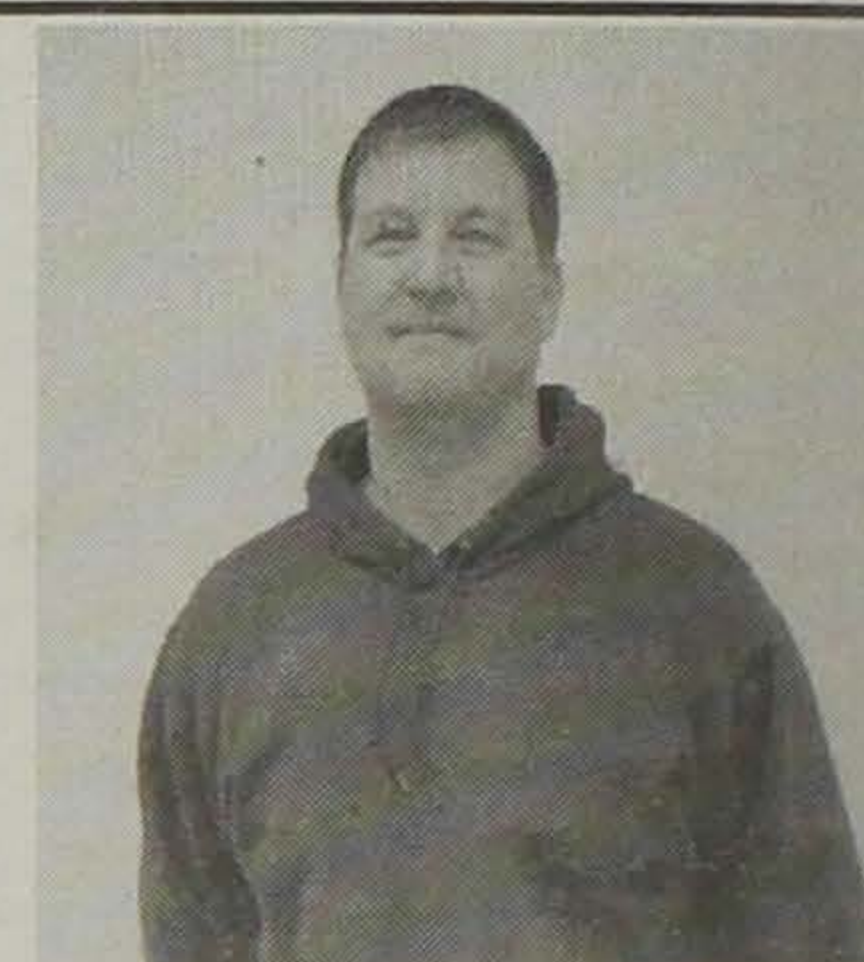
I have accepted a new position with NRCS as a Resource Conservationist. My responsibilities have been expanded to both Cass

County and Audubon County. My duty station is now in the Audubon office but I will be traveling between the two locations as necessary.

Please contact me at either office: Audubon 712-563-4248, Atlantic 712-243-3180, or by email jeff.sporrer@ia.usda.gov I can schedule

time to meet you at the office of your preference.

(Pictured at left)
Jeff Sporrer



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Soil...From page one



(Above) Alan Petersen and
(Below) Tracy Marshall.



come to all, and Congratulations on your accomplishments. The Cass County SWCD administers the state cost share programs, Low Interest Loan programs. The District is also a partner in the operation and maintenance of watersheds in Cass County. The Cass County Soil and Water Conservation District meets the fourth Thursday of each month.

NRCS/Cass County Soil and Water Conservation District Field Office Personnel



Pictured are NRCS/Cass County Soil and Water Conservation District Field Office Personnel (from left) David York, District Conservationist, Scott Breach, District Employee, Jana Coughlin, State Secretary, Randall Larsen, Federal Technician, Steve Fluckey, State Technician, Jack Bucklin, Soil Conservationist, Jeff Sporrer, Resource Conservationist.

Photo contributed

NRCS Soils Staff



Pictured from left are Richard Lensch, John Hammerly and Dan Pulido.

Photo contributed

SurveyFrom page one

to find soils information for specific areas and generate interpretive soil maps. They will also include an electronic reproduction that matches the hard-copy soil survey page for page called Web Soil Survey.

In August of 2005, the USDA launched the Web Soil Survey (<http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov>) to provide the public with a way to access and analyze the data in the National Soils Information System. The first information released from the Cass County soil survey will be through Web Soil Survey. The benefit of using the Web Soil Survey is that the user is assured of getting the most up-to-date published soils information available, that is, any changes

made to the soils information for Cass County will be updated here immediately, whereas the DVD and hard-copy versions will be updated less frequently.

The finished digital product is expected to be available in late 2010 and publishing of hard-copy books and DVDs will become available in sometime 2011. People with questions regarding the soil survey and soils information can contact Richard Lensch at the USDA-NRCS Southwest Iowa Soils Office. It is located within the Cass County USDA-NRCS Service Center at 503 W. 7th St., Ste. 3, Atlantic, IA or call (712) 243-1576.

New Soil Scientist

John Hammerly, from the Storm Lake area, will be working with Dan Pulido and Richard Lensch on the soil survey update of Dickinson and Cass counties, as well as other special soil related projects in western Iowa. Originally from a family farm outside of Newton, John went on to Iowa State University where he graduated in 2007 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Agronomy. After graduation, he began working for the Natural Resources Conservation Service as a soil scientist in Storm Lake. In his spare time, he enjoys biking, hiking, and fishing. He also likes listening to music, and watching movies. John is looking forward to meeting new people

and discovering the many opportunities Atlantic has to offer.



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- 200 Acres, M/L: Located 1 mile south of Red Oak. 167.6 cropland acres. Remodeled 2-story home, 6 acre building site. \$3800 per acre.

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Cass County Soil and Water Conservation District FY09 Budget and Finance

1-M Budget (Office Supplies/Expenses/ Commissioners Expenses) July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009	Meeting Registrations \$40 Printing and Printed Materials \$82.12 Advertisement \$120.81 Meeting and Workshop Ex- penses, Dues \$1,717.18 Fair Booth \$110.46 Total Expenditures \$4,648.10 *Any amount over allocation was paid from District's Revolv- ing Fund	Tree Sales \$4173.61 Watersheds \$200,052.02 Cass County Auditor \$10,000.00 O & M Reimbursement \$3041.41 DSC-Farm Bill \$8760.83 Total Receipts \$229,027.87 Expenditures Postage \$494.12 Miscellaneous Supply \$1,554.04 Commissioner Mileage/Ex- penses \$730.86 Entry Fees \$105.00 Scholarships \$1,200.00 Sales Tax 689.84	Fair Booth \$119.96 District Payroll \$4,000.00 Tree Expense \$2,116.29 Dues and Memberships \$1,645.00 Watershed Expenses \$200,109.84 Total Expenditures \$212,764.95 Balance on hand June 30, 2009 \$27,533.94 Grass Drill Fund Balance on hand July 1, 2008 \$6,557.90 Total Receipts \$4596.50 Total Expenditures \$2,799.67 Balance on hand June 30,	2009 \$8,354.73 Iowa Financial Incentive Pro- gram Conservation Practices IFIP Budget 2008-2009 Allo- cation \$170,579.95 Cost-share warrants paid \$102,092.30 Obligated Expenditures \$68,380.00 Balance of Unobligated 2008- 2009 Funds \$107.65 REAP-P (Practices) 2008-2009 Allocation \$20,326.26 Cost-share warrants paid \$11,717.13 Obligated Expenditures \$8,430.00 Balance of Unobligated \$179.13 REAP-F (Forestry/Native Grasses) 2008-2009 Allocation \$4,811.70 Cost-share warrants paid \$3,042.00 Obligated Expenditures \$1,768.50 Balance of Unobligated \$1.20
Annual Report - 2009 Budget and Finance				
Fiscal Year 2008 Allocation \$3,000.00				
Postage/Bulk Mailing \$494.12	District's Revolving Fund (Period covers from July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009) Balance on hand \$11,271.02 Receipts 1M Allocation \$3,000.00			
Miscellaneous Supplies \$1,353.09				
Mileage and Expenses \$730.32				

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the Farm
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Conservation sponsors watershed tour

The Cass County Soil and Water Conservation District sponsored a watershed tour on Wednesday, June 24. The Cass County Supervisors were also invited to attend the tour of sites located in Turkey Creek Watershed so they can see how important it is to continue in partnership in the operation and maintenance of the structures that help in flood control for the surrounding area. Turkey Creek sites that were toured were; 58D belonging to Jim and Kathi Mailander, 50D belonging to Art Hoskins, and 57 belonging to Brad Suhr. When the commissioners visited the Mailander property, Jim and Kathi Mailander were on site to show the commissioners what improvements to the property they had made to ensure the integrity of the site. Jim and Kathi has recently done a extensive tree planting around the property. All their dedication to conservation is greatly appreciated.



Earth team volunteers

Students at the Griswold Community School Web Design class were recognized for their volunteer efforts in creating a website for the Cass County Soil and Water Conservation District. Eric Baker, Business and Technology teacher, helped the students along with information being provided by the Cass County Soil and Water Conservation District. The students created many versions of

sites, and the District choose one to use. These students have become Earth Volunteers in which any time they use to do updates to the site is tracked for their volunteer hours. The Cass County Soil and Water Conservation District Chairman, Fred Kay and Commissioner, Ray Wilson presented the students with certificates and provided rolls and juices to the group at the Griswold Community School. Visit our website at cassswcd.org to keep updated on programs and announcements.



2009 Contractors Meeting

The Audubon/Cass County SWCD's held a joint contractors meeting Feb. 17, 2009 in Atlantic at the Pizza Ranch. Technicians in the field offices contacted suppliers along with having the Iowa DOT available for area contractors to get information on products and regulations. David York, District Conservationist, with the NRCS presented information on Civil Rights, and Programs available through the office. Kevin Holcomb, Civil Engineering Technician with the Area office provided information about Quality Control/Assurance of projects. Field office technicians provided information about how to complete construction notes for proper processing. The Audubon/Cass County SWCD commissioners supported this meeting by providing a meal to all the contractors who attended the meeting.

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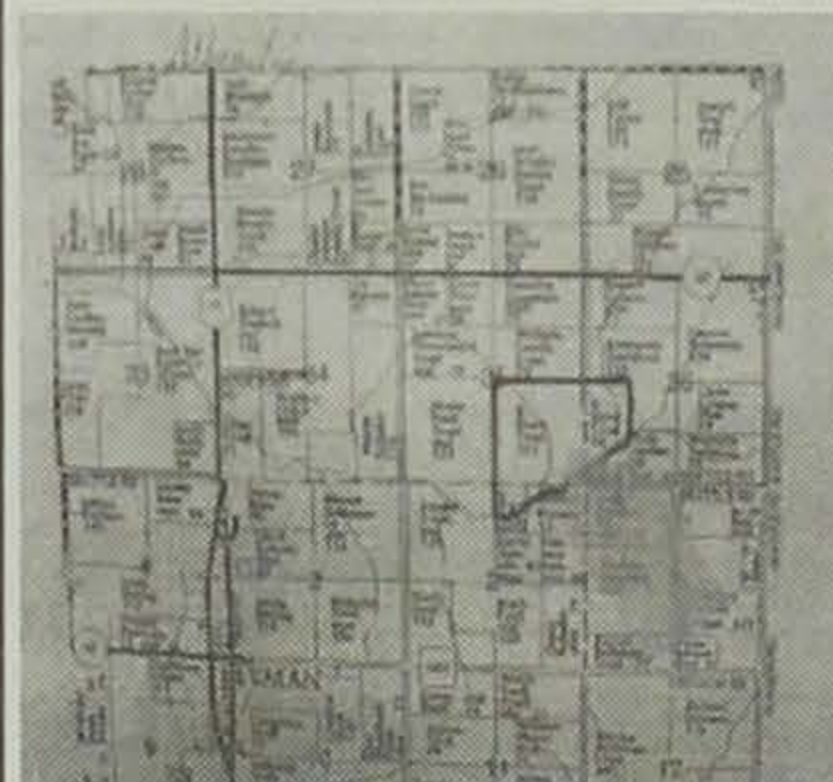
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237 Acres M/L Bear Grove, Noble TWP • Cass County, Iowa

Tuesday March 23, 2010 10:00 AM

***Sale Location: Cass County Community Center, Atlantic IA**

Property Location: 8 miles South of Atlantic IA on Hwy 71 to Hwy 92, East 2 miles to 650th St, South ½ mile. From Cumberland IA: South to Hwy 92, West 4 miles to 650th St, South ½ Mile. From Lyman IA: 2 miles north on Hwy 71 to Hwy 92, east 2, south 2. (Sections 35 & 36 Bear Grove TWP and Section 2 Noble TWP) Brief Legal: SE ¼, Sec 35 T-75-N R-36-W and SW ¼, SW ¼, Sec 36 T-75-N R-36-W and 24.6 acres N ½, NE ¼, 2 T-74-N R-36-W • FSA: Farmland 237 acres - Cropland 207.1 2009 Crop Certification: 182.1 row crop



25 acres CRP \$4095 / Yr. Expires: 2017

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Court House: 230.9 Taxable Acres \$4082 / Yr

Note: This is a very nice tract of bare farmland with an average CSR of 73.2. There is 140.7 acres with CSR of over 80 (92/A has a 91 CSR) (Approximate, obtained NRCS USDA) Stalk ground has been chisled and NH3 has been applied to bean stubble. Buyer will agree to pay for the NH3 product at closing.

Buyer to have full Possession for 2010 Crop Year

TERMS: Successful Bidder will sign real estate contract immediately after the sale and deposit 10% of the total sale price, earnest money to be held in Broker Trust Acct. Balance will be due on or before April 20, 2010 in exchange for Deed and Abstract showing merchantable title subject to any easements of record. Full Possession to be given at closing. Buyer may enter property April 15, 2010 at their own risk. Buyer will be responsible for their own Title Opinion. Bids are not subject to finance. Financing arrangements must be made before auction date. Property taxes prorated to closing date. **Note:** Property Connection Real Estate represents the Sellers

at this auction. Any announcements made sale day will take precedence over all printed material. All information provided was gathered from sources deemed reliable but not guaranteed by Property Connection Real Estate. Bidders are urged to inspect the property and verify any information to their satisfaction.

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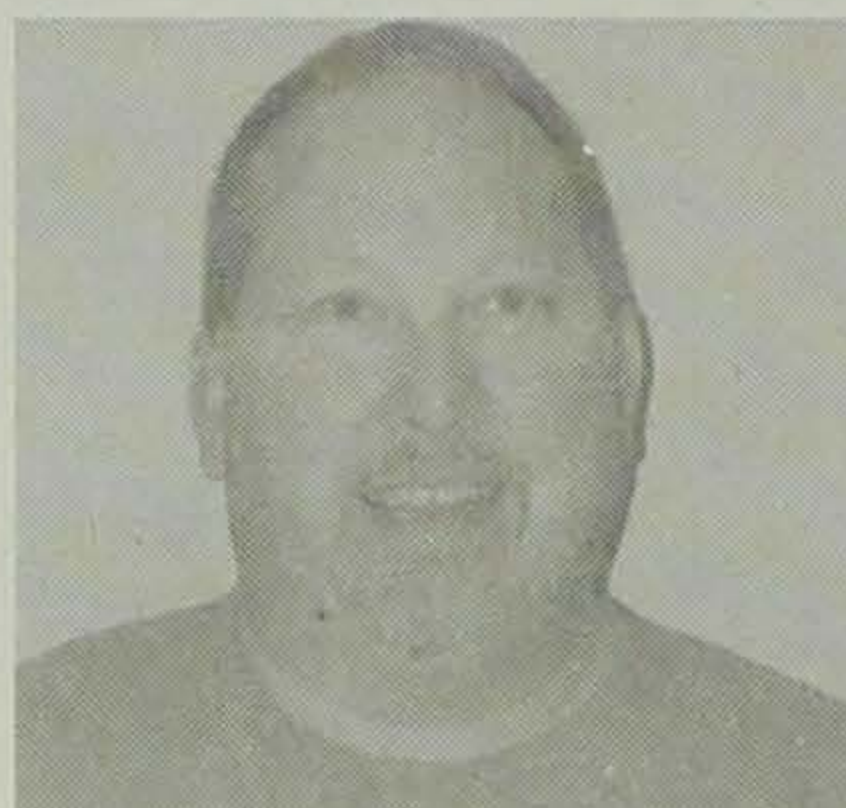
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Down on the Farm



By Tom McLaren

March- Lamb, Lion or Fish?

We have all heard the adage about March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb or vice versa, I really don't care as long as spring is close. This year someone might want to add a fish or amphibian of some sort to the equation because of all the water. I know by now I should expect it after that tremendous snowfall we have had, but wow! I don't think the farmers will have to worry about subsoil moisture this spring - there seems to be plenty. Those mudholes that you had to sneak around cautiously - well this year you better stay the heck away because it will be - "I sunk her to the axles and there was no moving anywhere" time.

March always make me think of basketball because of the many

cold Sunday afternoon in the barn playing basketball. Dick Anstey had a huge barn that we used to play full court in. The reason I remember this in March is because that was the first month that it wasn't so blasted cold. We played through the winter, but sometimes it was just so darn cold when you would be going up and down the court you couldn't see for your breathe. I had the opportunity to play basketball with many different characters and friends in the true "barn." My dad played- I still haven't decided if he was very good or not but he got up and down the court okay. One of my favorites was always Kent Berry who remains a good friend and fellow hoopster for many years after we moved up to the YMCA old guys noon league. Kent always played very hard and he fouled hard too as I recall. There is also a misnomer out there that I might have fouled a bit as well. Of course there was the home court favorites Tim, Kevin and Bob Anstey - for a shorter guy old mouse (Tim) could really shoot and usually with a plier pouch on too, impressive. Every once in awhile Bob and I were convinced that we as eighth and ninth graders could whip old Kent, sometimes when you are young you should think things through just a little bit more, because suffice it to say we couldn't whip him, in anyway shape or form. There were also guys like Byron Dinkla, Dan Becker, and Steve Edwards who played all good players however

Byron and Steve seemed to need a few more cigarette breaks than the rest of us thought necessary. I even remember Larry Swartz playing a time or two. There was usually some screaming and an occasional profanity uttered loudly but all in all it was a good time. I often attribute my flat shot when I was younger to playing in the barn because of the cold, it was hard to get arch on your shot with no feeling in your hands. Speaking of the cold, it was always interesting after you got into the warmth to see which fouls, usually from Kent, hurt the worst because you weren't numb anymore, the pain came out. I have to give Kent credit- he showed me that there were no easy shots in the lane, if you came in there you paid the piper, part of the game that came in handy later on. Kent also coined me with the name Lloyd, as in Lloyd Free, the 76ers guard from the 80's who was an awesome scorer. I think he was just jealous of my pretty shot- he maintains that it was because I shot too much. However as I told young Evan Schuler last weekend at a youth tournament good shooters have to shoot their way out of a slump. I never saw a shot I didn't like.

It's almost April and the good lord willing, even though the creek is rising it will be warm by next month and everyone will be hot and heavy in the field. Be safe and be ready to go while the goings good.

Envirothon Workshop

The Adair and Cass Counties SWCD sponsored a workshop for youth from Adair and Cass County to attend to prepare for the Envirothon Competitions. The Workshop was held on March 4 at the American Legion Hall in Massena. The following people presented information: Julie McMichael, NRCS-Soils, Randy Goerndt, DNR-Forestry, Don Sievers, DNR-Aquatics, Micah Lee and Lora Schwendinger, Cass ACCB-Wildlife. Schools from CAM and Orient Macksburg attended the workshop. This workshop gives the students a chance to review information and also test on information to prepare for the Regional Competition. The Cass County SWCD provided funding for schools in Cass County that entered a team in the Regional Competition.

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Using cover crops to heal the land

(Information provided
by Thomas Hurford Area
Resource Conservationist)

In the last two years Iowa has received exceptionally high rainfall. Much of this rainfall has come in very intense events, which have caused extremely high amounts of erosion.

As a result, rills and ephemeral gullies have shown up in areas where they have not been a problem in the past.

This has prompted many to perform spot tillage in fields to smooth these areas out in order to plant. The problem with this is that the tillage has further loosened the soil and made these areas even more susceptible to erosion when the next extreme rainfall event occurs.

Thus in many of these fields we are caught in a vicious cycle of erosion, tillage to smooth out the effects of the erosion, and even more erosion when the next event occurs.

The first question that should be asked is: Is this erosion truly caused by extreme events unlikely to occur in the future to the extent they occurred over the past few years?

If the answer to this question is no, than grassed waterways should be planned and installed.



If the answer is yes, than at a minimum, consideration should be given to seeding a cover crop such as oats, wheat, or rye to provide temporary cover in order to allow the soil to re-consolidate after tillage. By far the best option is to plant either winter wheat or rye in the fall early enough to allow some fall growth prior to the onset of winter. For this to work, the cover crop should be seeded prior to the middle of October. If this is not possible, than the second best alternative is to seed a small grain cover crop in the early spring. Any small may be seeded, however in the spring; a higher

seeding rate should be used than is normally recommended for cover crop purposes. Two to three bushels of oats to the acre would be the recommended seeding rate.

The crop can be planted through the cover crop but should be allowed to grow until it provides sufficient cover to control erosion, generally until it reaches eight to 12 inches in height.

The cover crop can then be killed with the first post emergent herbicide application.

"If a farmer wants to only seed down a filled in ditch, a grass cover such as rye can be an effective choice. It grows very aggressively and has less risk to the crop by being on only a small area." This according to Steve McGrew of McGrew Brothers Farm located in Mills County. The McGrew Brothers have successfully used cereal rye cover crops for several years now, to heal ephemeral gullies.

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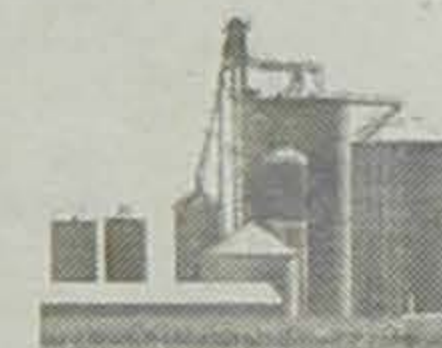


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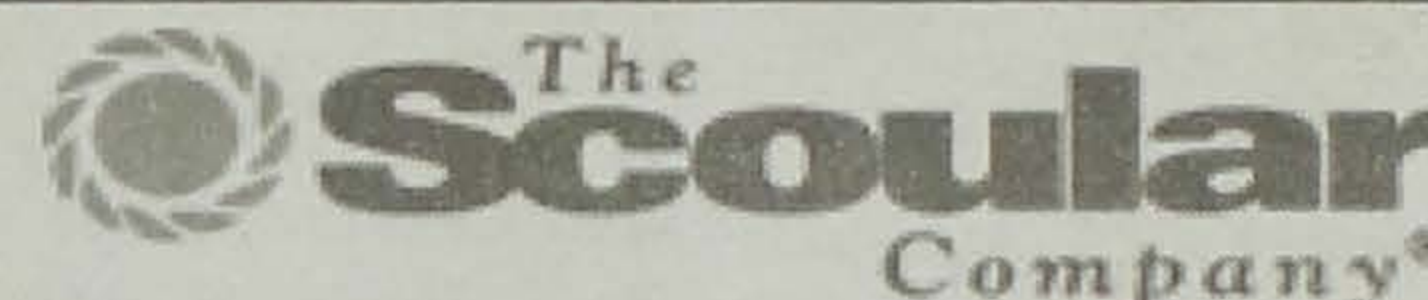
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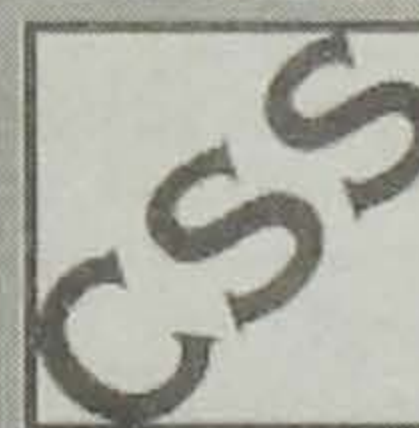


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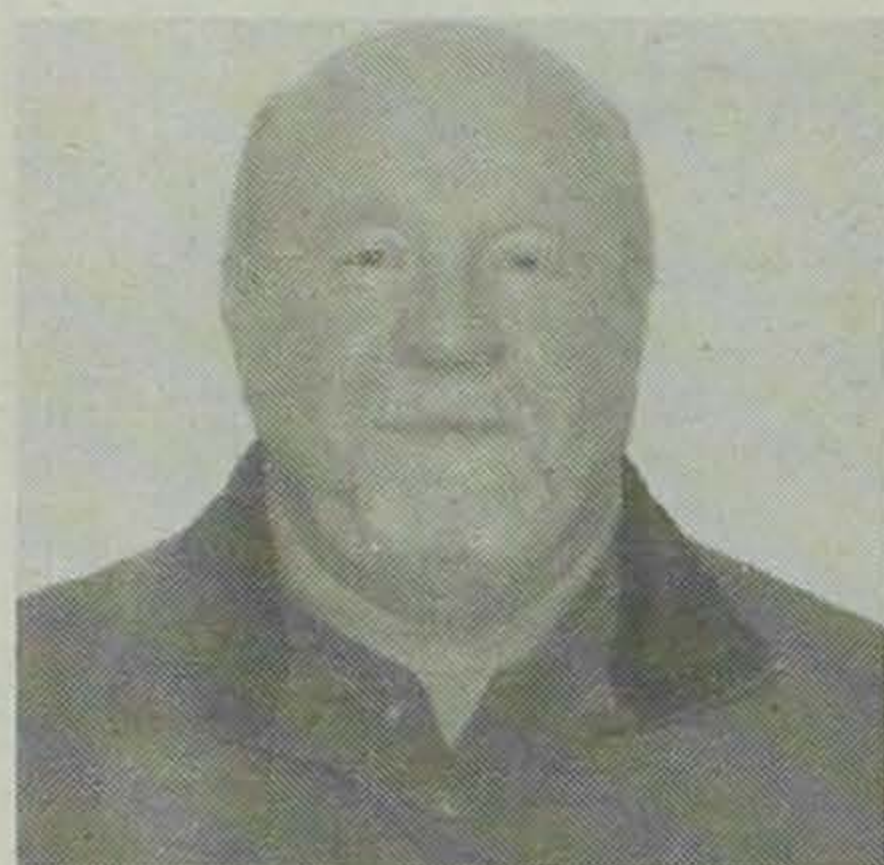
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How do I measure up?



By James Gillespie
Bureau Chief

Iowan's have faced a lot of challenges this past year, but have stepped up to confront those challenges and taken conservation to heart. Protecting the soil and water of this state are ever apparent by looking at the landscape and water quality.

Over 95 percent of this land is in private ownership and most of it is used for some form of agricultural production. The balance is in urban, roads, utilities and infrastructure that keep our people and commodities moving. All of these things are needed because I don't think there are many other states or parts of the country that rely on all of their land and its resources to do this.

That is why it is so important that all of us (rural and urban) alike do all we can to protect the soil and water. You all have tremendous resources available to you locally in your Soil and Water Conservation District and the

USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service to assist you with your conservation needs. These people have both the technical assistance and financial opportunities that can help address your concerns.

Your district has over 50 years of expertise in working with soil and water resources and the sound technical solutions to resource concerns. If you have a conservation plan, it is a great time to review it to see if it still addresses all of the resource concerns and your land use objectives. If you don't have a plan or can not find yours, contact the local office for assistance.

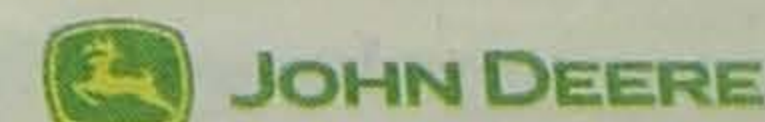
As you begin this next year, (2010), take some time to walk around your property, looking at your land use decisions, and are there some conservation needs that need to be addressed. Do you have erosion occurring and is that sediment leaving your property? Have you identified your land with the watershed that you live in, and are you having any impact on that watershed from your land?

If you had to evaluate your own resource issues, how would you say I'm doing? What would your peers think of what I'm doing? Am I doing all I can to protect the soil and water, while maintaining the productivity and use of my property? Evaluate yourself and your land use to see how you measure up!

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Inside- Scholarships See page 4



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Atlantic Farm Monthly

Celebrating Soil Conservation

March 2009

Serving Cass, Shelby, Guthrie, Audubon and Pottawattamie Counties for over 130 years.

Vol. 48 - No.3

Atlantic, Iowa, (USPS 036220) 50g

2009 Commissioners



On Jan. 2, the District Organizational Meeting held was held at the Cass County Soil and Water Conservation Office. Newly elected members Curt Behrends and Brian Follman and Ray Wilson received the oath of office for a term of four years. Election of officers was the first item of business for this meeting and Fred Kay was nominated as Chairman, Curt Behrends for Vice Chairman, Greg Zellmer as Treasurer. The Soil and Water Commissioners are the governing body of the local Cass County SWCD. Jana Coughlin, State Secretary serves as Secretary to the board.

Photo contributed

Staff members



Staff members are (front row, left to right) Steve Fluckey, Jeff Sporrer and Jana Coughlin; and (back row) Scott Breach, Randall Larsen and David York.

Photo contributed

Calendar of Events -2008

January

On Jan. 7, the Organization Meeting was held at the Cass County Soil and Water Conservation District. Election of Officers was done with the following positions.

Ray Wilson, Chairman
Mike Hall, Vice Chairman
Connie Esbeck, Secretary
Fred Kay and Connie Esbeck, Co-Treasurers

Gary Miller, Voc. Ag teacher at CAM, requested the support of the District for one team to participate in the Environthon Contest. Duane Ortgies, Watershed Inspector reported to the Board on various watershed sites.

The regular January meeting was held on Jan 22. A bill from Lindeman Tractor was discussed on the district drill. Memorandum of Understanding between the District and NRCS and E.E.O was reviewed briefly. DSC's budget proposal submitted to the Iowa legislature was distributed to each commissioner and reviewed.

February

State Technician Steve Fluckey, calculated the average costs from the 2007 construction season. Based on these figures, the SWCD adopted their average costs for 2008. The CDI Regional Meeting will be held at the First Baptist Church in Harlan on March 13. Esbeck and Zellmer will attend. Jeff Zimprich gave an update on new District Conservationist for Audubon and Cass County. He also spoke about the Griswold Flooding Project and the State Office is working on a proposal. A cooperative contractors meeting was held with Adair, Guthrie, Audubon and Cass counties at the Nodaway Diner in Greenfield. Cost share applications, amendments and CRP Plans were approved.

March

Esbeck was the only one attending the Regional Meeting held at Harlan on March 13. She reported that the speakers were all very good. The Adair, Cass and Guthrie Counties Contractor's meeting was held March 4th at the Nodaway Diner in Greenfield. Only two contractors from Cass County were represented. Bob Waters gave a brief review of the flooding problem in the City of Griswold that prompted the need for assistance. Supervisor Chuck Rieken talked about enlarging the drainage district so funds could be used to build up roads, etc. Waters explained about the grant application submitted. The N.R.C.S. State Office "Plan of Work" was reviewed and discussed. The estimated cost for an assessment would be \$22,764. The plan would identify sites, etc. and funded by IDALS. After an onsite assessment of components needed is completed, another grant will be applied for to install the conservation structures. He emphasized the need of local support. Problems with the Turkey Creek Watershed Site 24-1 were discussed with the landowner in attendance. Property tax exemptions applications were brought to the meeting. Esbeck reported that information was sent to the schools saying the District's scholarship would no longer be combined with the CDI scholarship. Esbeck reported that the tree sales have been slow. They are to arrive April 7th with customer pick up on the 8th. Commissioners Wilson, Zellmer and Kay will help.

April

Jeff Zimprich introduced David York who transferred from the Carroll Field Office. David will be the District Conservationist for the Audubon and Atlantic Field Offices. He began his duties April 14. Zimprich also gave an update on the Baughman Creek, Griswold Flooding Project.. Senior Scholarship applications presented for approval were from Adam Bierbaum, Griswold, Christopher Steinbeck, Griswold, Daniel Olsen, Atlantic and Emily Ullerich, Atlantic. Low interest loans, windbreak applications approved, and cost share claims

Calendar..... see page 2

New faces at NRCS



The Atlantic Natural Resources Conservation Service in Atlantic has some new faces, including David York joined the staff as the District Conservationist on April 14, 2008. He will split his time between the Atlantic and Audubon Field Offices. Welcome aboard!

David has been the District Conservationist for Carroll County for the past 11 years. He originally grew up on a farm near Riverton. He is a graduate of

Iowa State University, majoring in Agricultural Studies/Farm Operation. David, his wife Kristy and children Katie and Bryan live in Atlantic. In his spare time, David enjoys pheasant hunting, and collecting John Deere toy tractors. David is excited about the challenges that Cass and Audubon Counties have and he looks forward to meeting those challenges head on! Feel free to stop in and visit with him next time you are in the office.



Jana Coughlin started with the Cass County Soil and Water Conservation District on Nov. 3, 2008 at the new State Secretary. Jana resides with her husband, Brian and two sons, CJ and Andy in the Elliott area. She had previously been employed in Omaha, Nebraska with TigerDoor, LLC. She looks forward to meeting and working with everyone in the Cass County area.

Calendar

& maintenance agreements along with CRP plans were approved.

May/June

David York gave a report from the NRCS that there will be \$5.8 million in EQIP funding coming to Iowa under the new Farm Bill. August 1, 2008 is the first cut-off date. A new practice code has for the Air Resource Management is 370. Dave York gave a overall update on the Baughman Creek watershed, that an assessment/plan has been drawn up with a budget of \$27,000. \$8,600 will be provided by NRCS/DSC with a balance of \$18,400 sought. It is hoped to have the final word on this by 7/1/08. The assessment has started and staff is in the field analyzing tillage, rotation and conservation practices.

Timeline: Alternatives are to be presented: Fall: 1) Presentation of alternatives to partners; 2) Presentation of alternatives to landowners.

Winter: 1) Work with landowners and seek implementation funding; 2) Aim for implementation/construction to start in 2009. Commissioners were asked if they had any particular theme

they would like to carry out in the fair booth this year. A schedule will

be set up at the next meeting. The fair will be held July 26 - Aug. 1, 2008. Notice was received today that commissioners may now received \$ 0.39/mile to attend meetings, etc. to conduct business. Tree Sales report was given by Esbeck that the last of the trees were sold just a week ago and as soon as the money for them has been collected, she will submit a report. Duane Ortgies gave a update on inspections of watershed sites. Cost share, low interest loans, amendments and applications, along with CRP plans were approved. There is a new CED for Farm Service Agency who is Aaron Eades.

July

Connie Esbeck announced she will be retiring as the State Secretary in the Cass County SWCD effective July 31, 2008 after a total of 37 1/2 years with IDALS. An open house will be held in her honor on July 31 from 1-3 p.m. in the conference room of the USDA building. Duane Ortgies has finished the inspec-

tion for Crooked, Troublesome and Turkey Creeks with the exception of one structure he was unable to get to. The reports show need for several repairs. Copies of the report were distributed to each commissioner and will be sent to the Board of Supervisors. The fall meeting will be held on Monday, Aug/25, 2008 at The Villager in Walnut. Registration will begin at 4:30 p.m. with the meeting at 5 p.m. and dinner at 6 p.m. Neither Terry Hoskins nor Mike Hall has chosen to seek another term as a commissioner. Hall said that Brian Follman is interested in taking out nomination papers for one of the positions.

August

Baughman Creek was discussed and a watershed development agreement was signed. Fred Kay gave a report on the Fall Regional. Information was shared about the CDI Annual Conference to be held Nov. 19 and 20. The proposed resolutions were released. Ray Wilson and Brian Follman submitted their election paperwork to the Cass County Auditor. Troublesome Creek

Watershed sites 21 & 28 Project agreement was discussed. Amendment 1 to designate a liaison between the Sponsor and the NRCS. 1M allocation of \$3,000 was received on July 31, 2008. All Farms signed applications are due by September 15, 2008 for them to issue funds to.

September

Dave York gave a report on the budget for the NRCS and that is will most likely continue operating on continued resolution budget until after the election. EQIP will continue to take applications even though funding won't be available for short time. Ray Wilson and Brian Follman submitted their election paperwork to the Cass County Auditor. Secretary position was reviewed and David York shared the list of names and commissioners provided their input. The three commissioners that attended the CDI meeting voted on the resolutions. Troublesome Creek Site #21 was reviewed that Acker's portion was built. An invoice should be sent to him for reimbursement to the District in amount of \$2,532.08.

October

David York gave the following report from the NRCS: Budget, still operating under continuing resolution. Farm Bill programs such as CSP, EQIP, & CRP are in the rule writing process. Wet fall is slowing construction. Ray Wilson and Brian Follman submitted their election paperwork to the Cass County Auditor. Jana Coughlin is the new secretary with a start date of Monday, November 3rd. The district chose not to participate at this time in the District Initiative funds. David York distributed handouts showing a power-point presentation on Sustainable Funding for Natural Resources.

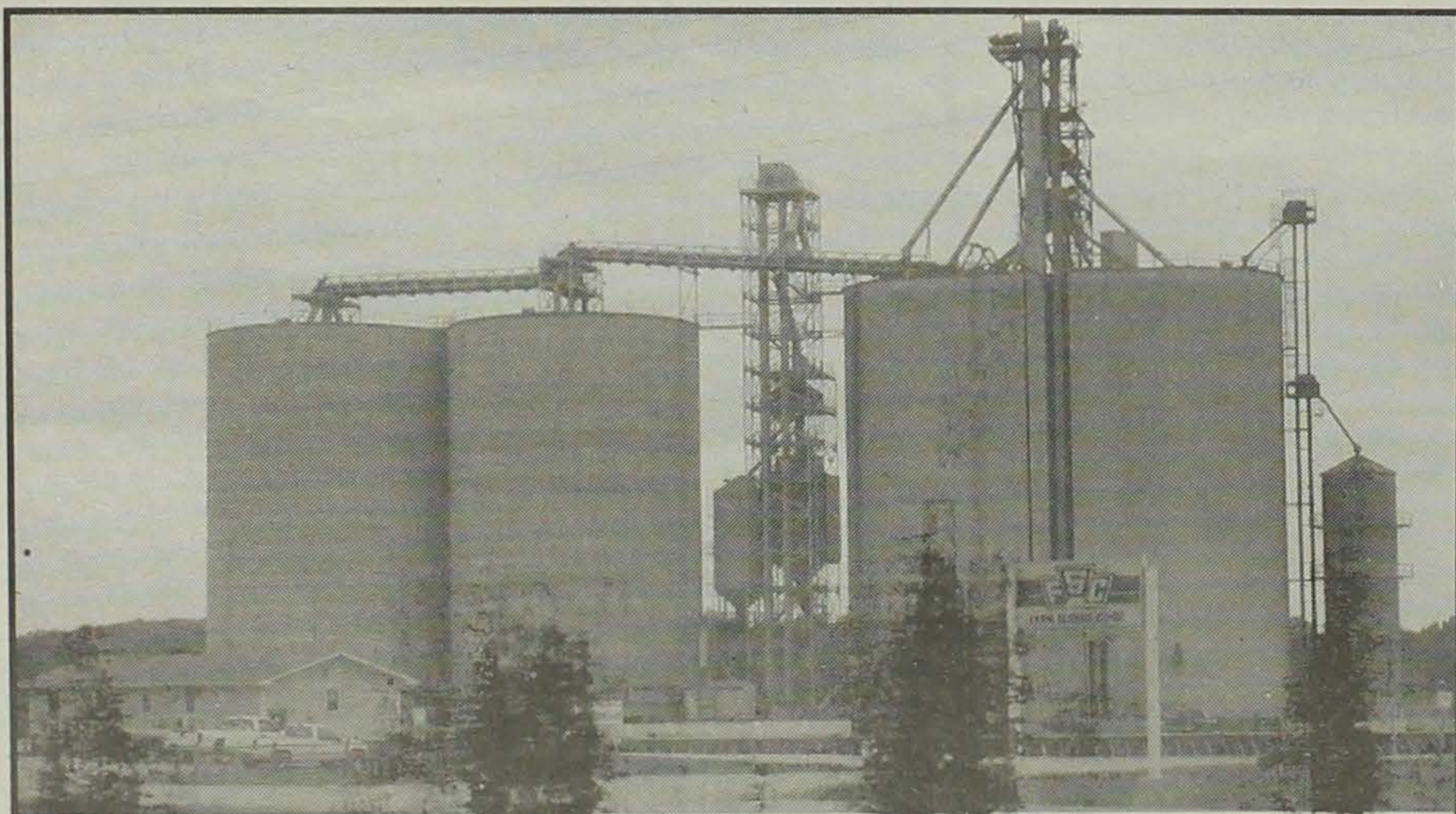
November

Dave York gave a report on the audits being performed in office. EQIP program sign up has begun for the 2009 year. Update on Troublesome Creek Site 21 and 28 that the contractor has to submit a release of claim before final payment can be made.

Pay estimate was issued. It was discussed to advertise for a new drill operator. The secretary will place ad in newspaper and distribute an updated job description to workforce development. Tree program will be suspended for the length of 1 year. Farm Bureau has notified the Cass County Soil & Water district that all policy holders must now be a member of the Farm Bureau to ensure coverage remains in force. Curt Behrends and Brian Follman and Ray Wilson were elected to fill vacancies. Thanks to Commissioners Mike Hall and Terry Hoskins for their service to the Cass County SWCD board.

December

The NRCS office is currently doing audits on EQIP and CSP contracts. Items that are being audited are entity authorizations on producers. Some of the remaining contracts are awaiting copies of by-laws to prove entity authorization for producers. EQIP program starts in January. Project Agreement Amendment #2 on Troublesome Creek Watershed will expire on June 30, 2009 of after final payment is made from NRCS to the CLO for sites 10-1, 21, 28, whichever is first. Job service was issued the job description for the drill operator and a classified ad was placed in the Atlantic News-Telegraph during the week of Dec. 15-19 for the position. Job is posted with Iowa Workforce Development till Jan. 16. Tabled till next meeting when job posting has closed. Mike Hall and Terry Hoskins was recognized and presented plaques in appreciation of their service on the board. Cass County Soil and Water Commissioners will be offering scholarships to area youth. Scholarship applications are due back to the office by March 1, and will be reviewed for the selection of applicants in the March commissioner meeting. Secretary will send out letters to the schools in Cass County. A letter from Pelgrow has been received for notification of their new location.



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From page one

New faces at NRCS

Dan Pulido, MLRA Team Leader has joined the staff in the Soils office in Atlantic as of November 2008. Dan came from the Storm Lake office. He joins Richard Lensch who is our Soil Scientist, Project Leader.

Dan has been a Soil Scientist for the past eight years. He originally grew up in Davenport. He graduated from Iowa State

University with a Bachelors and Masters degree in Soil Science. Dan, his wife Kat and children Cael and Kylie live in Atlantic. In his spare time, Dan enjoys woodworking, fixing up cars, and golf. Dan is excited about the challenges the newly re-structured Soil Survey will bring him.



Esbeck retires



Connie Esbeck held the position of State Secretary in the Audubon SWCD field office for 29 years prior to moving to the Atlantic field office where she continued to work for eight and one half years. She retired in July and will stay busy in her retirement baking cakes, sewing along with her continued activities and support of Eastern Star. Congratulations to Connie and best wishes.

Soil Survey Update

By Richard Lensch
Project Leader

The Cass County Soil Survey update is approximately 47 percent complete. Field work for the soil survey update is done for the Northern half of the county. This spring survey work will take place in Bear Grove, Franklin, Grove, and Lincoln Townships.

The soil survey team has taken the field data and 5 new soil series to formulate new soil map units for the county. The addition of new soil series and proper use of the original ones means improved interpretations and information for users in Cass County. The purpose of the soil survey update is to improve the soil survey information that is 40 years old.

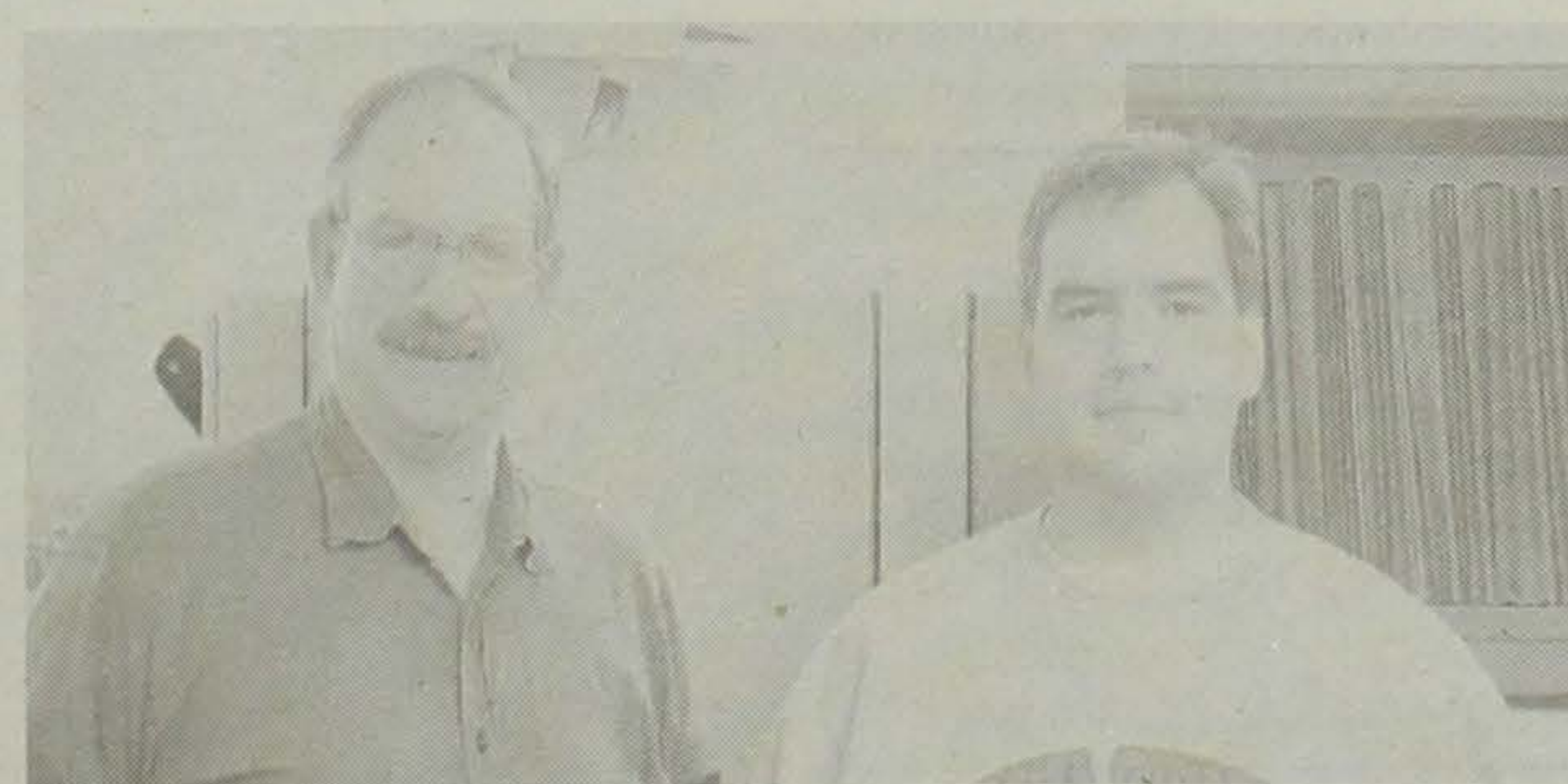
Another tool that is being implemented into the soil survey update is Lidar. (Light Detection and Ranging) LIDAR is a high quality remote sensing system that is used to detect changes in elevations of soil landscapes. Combined with a Global Posi-

tioning System (GPS) vertical accuracy is generally within 6 inches. LIDAR digital photo imagery will greatly help to provide improved flooding frequency categories for the soil types on the Nishnabotna River system and Griswold areas.

The soil maps are being digitally edited at the Southwest Iowa soils office in Atlantic, Iowa. This process is scheduled to be finished January 1, 2009. After that the soil information will be sent to Madison, Wisconsin for quality assurance checks. The soil survey staff will deliver a finished digital product to the

Cass County commissioners January 1, 2011, and it will be uploaded to the internet shortly thereafter. Compact discs containing the soil survey information for Cass County will be released later in 2011.

Pictured are Soil Survey project members Richard Lensch and Dan Pulido. They are responsible for all soil updates in Southwest Iowa including sections of Northwestern Missouri, Eastern Nebraska, and Southwest Minnesota.



Great Plains Drill available

The Cass County Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners have a grassland drill that is available for seeding of warm and cool season grasses. A fee of \$10/acre is the cost to rent the drill with a fifty dollar nonrefundable deposit required at the time of application. The deposit will be applied to the seeding bill upon completion of the seeding. This drill was designed for native grasses, but works equally well in seeding cool season grasses. With a continuous sign-up for contour buffer strips and filter strips, the drill is always in demand during the spring. Please contact the office, by calling SWCD office at 712/243-3180 for more information on the use of the drill.

FARMS FOR SALE

- 78 Acres, M/L: Borders south city limits of Atlantic. Currently all in pasture with large pond & good underlying soils. \$3000 per acre.
- 596 Acres, M/L: Located 1/2 mile east of Highway 71 and Grant in Montgomery County. 89% tillable. Estimated CSR=66.4. Well Tiled. Farmed all in one contiguous tract. \$4027 Per acre.
- 144 Acres, M/L: Located 5 miles south of Panora. Approximately 70% Tillable with **SOLD** of 62. Remainder in timber/Recreational land. Older building site. \$2925 per acre.
- 280 Acres, M/L: Located 3-1/2 miles N.E. of Wiota. 155.7 crop acres with 119.6 acres enrolled in the CRP, mostly native grasses. Balance good quality permanent pasture. \$2500 per acre.
- 370 Acres, M/L: Located 9 miles S.E. of Indianola in Warren County. 332.8 acres FSA cropland, nearly all high quality bottomland with an average CSR of 71.5. Building improvements & pasture land could be added. Full possession for 2009. \$4138 per acre.
- 39 Acres, M/L: Located 2 miles north of Harlan. All level bottom cropland. 33.0 crop acres 88.0 CSR. \$6675 per acre. **SOLD**
- 80 Acres, M/L: Located 1 mile north of Harlan. Second bottom and terraced hill top farm. 78.2 crop acres 76.0 CSR. \$6675 per acre. **SOLD**
- 76.5 Acres, M/L: Located 1 mile north of Harlan. All level bottom cropland. 66.6 crop acres 87.2 CSR. \$6750 per acre. **SOLD**
- 35.0 Acres, M/L: Located 1 mile north of Harlan. Bottom and rolling hill crop farm. 27.9 crop acres 64.9 CSR. \$4825 per acre. **SOLD**
- 35.5 Acres, M/L: Located 1 mile north of Harlan. All level bottom cropland 28.4 crop acres 87.9 CSR. \$5925 per acre. **SOLD**
- 504 Acres, M/L: Located 3 miles NE of Little Sioux. All level Missouri River bottom cropland. 434.3 crop acres with additional 60 acres of hay. Cropland CSR=58.2. Three center pivots, wells and engines. \$4085 per acre.
- 253 Acres, M/L: Located 5 miles NE of Little Sioux. All level Soldier River bottom cropland. 242.4 crop acres 59.4 CSR. New center pivot well and pump. \$4950 per acre.
- 160 Acres M/L: Located 2-1/4 miles S. of Massena on highway 148. Approximately half CRP land to expire 2009, balance permanent pasture. 1-1/2 story home, livestock barn grain bin. Building site can be purchased separately, immediate possession. \$2650 per acre.

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Cass County Soil and Water Conservation District receives Water Quality Grant for Baughman Creek



On Jan. 16, at the Griswold Community Building, Ray Wilson received on behalf of the Cass County Soil and Water Conservation District a check from Karey Claghorn, Iowa's Deputy Secretary of Agriculture and Cathie Graves, Field Services Representative for Iowa Department of Ag & Land Stewardship-Division of Soil Conservation. This grant will aid in the development of the Flood Prevention Plan for the Griswold area. Ray Wilson, Commissioner for the Cass Soil & Water Conservation District stated, "We are pleased to receive this important grant. We will use the grant to define some of the flooding issues that have plagued Griswold for decades and identify areas where flood prevention practices can be installed. We will also assist in finding funding sources to install those practices throughout the watershed." Landowners and non-landowners in the affect area should continue to look for future meeting notices and updated information as the planning continues.

News Briefs

Cost share programs available

State Cost-share Program (IFIP)

50 percent cost share is available up to \$7,500 to build terraces. Producers need to come into the Cass County SWCD to inquire about this program.

Resource Enhancement And Protection Program (REAP)

Funds are available for terraces and structures in the Turkey Creek and Baughman watershed area at a 50 percent cost-share rate. This fund also supports the creation of windbreaks, tree planting and native grass planting at a 75 percent cost share rate.

Low interest loans for conservation practices

Are you thinking about that field that is in need of some terraces or grassed waterways, and have applied for state cost share, REAP or EQIP funds to help get them installed and wonder how to pay for the rest of your project? Well consider the Low Interest Loans that are available through the Local Water Protection Program. Producers can apply for loan assistance in which the producer would be eligible for five to fifty thousand dollars, with loan terms up to 10 years and animal feeding operation loans terms being up to 20 years. You could also fund your whole project through the Low Interest Loan Program if state and federal funds are not available. Interest rates of no more than 3 percent and the funding is available when you need it and the producers can sign up any time during the year. Use the lender of your choice or go to www.ifaprograms.com to view the list of current participating lenders. Loans to implement practices for animal feeding operations can only be made to operations that are under 1,000 animal units and are not required to have an NPDES permit. This program has been around since

Briefs see page 6

Senior scholarship winners

The Cass County Soil and Water Conservation District presented 4 scholarships to area youth in Cass County. Graduating seniors in the Cass County school districts who wish to continue their education in any field of agriculture or natural resources could apply for these scholarships. 2008 seniors receiving scholarships were Emily Ullerich, Daniel Olsen, Adam Bierbaum and Christopher Steinbeck.



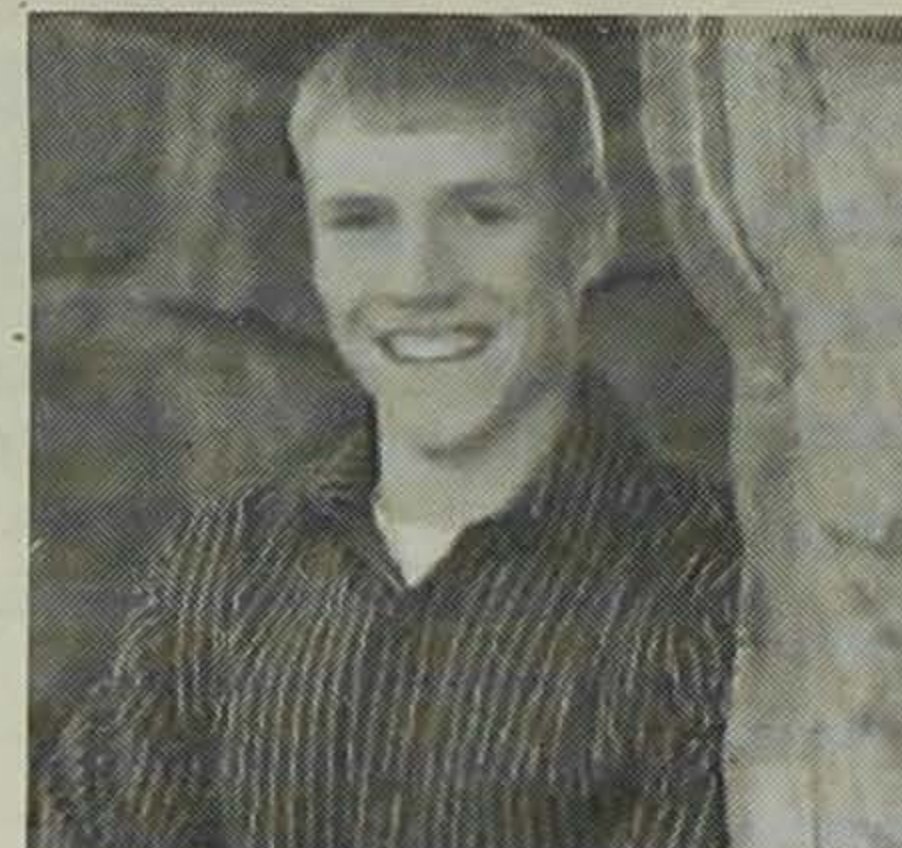
Emily Ullerich

Emily's parents are Chris and Gwen Ullerich of Wiota. Emily has one brother. She plans on attending Iowa State University. Emily was a member of National Honor Society, Student Council, FFA, Student Initiative Mentoring Project, marching band, Pep band, Concert band, Jazz I and II. She also was a member of 4-H, Cass County Cowpokes and 4-H Youth Council the Cass County Youth Action Committee. Emily attends First United Presbyterian Church. Upon graduation from college she hopes to find employment in a livestock production field.



Adam Bierbaum

Adam's parents are Brent and Marsha Bierbaum of Griswold. Adam has 1 sister and 1 brother. Adam plans on attending Iowa State University. Adam was active in National Honor Society, FFA, 4-H and was Secretary of his class. He also participated in football, basketball, track, baseball, and band. He is a member of the Faith Lutheran Church. After graduation from college Adam plans on returning to the area and farming.



Daniel is the son of Steve and Laura Olsen of Marne. He has three brothers and one sister. Daniel plans on attending Iowa State University where he plans to earn a degree in animal science. Daniel is active in National Honor Society, track, football, cross country, FFA and Chorus. He has been a member of the Brighton 4-H Club. Daniel has been very active with the Elk Horn Luther League. After completing his studies Daniel plans to farm.



Christopher is the son of Tim and Jana Steinbeck of Griswold. Chris has one brother. He plans on attending Northwest Missouri State University to pursue a career in agriculture industry. Christopher would like to be an agronomist. He is a member of National Honor Society, Student Council, and Class President and also participates in Basketball, Golf, Baseball, FFA, Jazz Band, and Show Choir. Christopher has also been active with Church Youth group. Upon completing his studies he hopes to return to the area and work in the family business.

Annual Report Accomplishments

Terraces 124,401 foot
Ponds 6
Windbreak 1
Pasture and Hay Planting 389 acres
Filter Strip 35 acres
Grassed Waterway 49 acres
Prescribed Grazing 253 acres

Thanks to the local conservation office for information and pictures for the March Farm Monthly!

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Annual Report -2008 Budget and Finance

1-M Budget
(Office Supplies/Expenses/Commissioner Expenses
July 1, 2007 –June 30, 2008

Fiscal Year 2007 Allocation	\$2,100.00
Commissioner Mileage/Expenses.....	\$ 597.13
Office supplies/expenses.....	\$18,239.98
Association Dues.....	\$ 775.00
Total Expenditures.....	\$19,612.11
*Any amount over allocation was paid from District's Revolving Fund	

District's Revolving Fund
(Period Covers from July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008)

Balance on hand July 1, 2007.....	\$10,651.38
Receipts	
1-M Reimbursement.....	\$ 2,124.81
Tree Sales.....	\$ 9,542.12
Watersheds.....	\$63,426.35
Miscellaneous.....	\$17,065.20
Contributions.....	\$00000000
Total Receipts.....	\$102,809.86

Expenditures:

Commissioners Mileage and Expenses.....	\$ 597.13
Postage.....	\$ 454.50
Fair Booth.....	\$ 1278.83
Office Supplies/Expenses/Education/Misc.....	\$ 18,239.98
Association Dues.....	\$ 775.00
Trees/Shrubs.....	\$ 6,873.53
Watersheds.....	\$ 63,418.59
Total Expenditures.....	\$ 91,637.56
Balance on hand June 30, 2008.....	\$ 11,172.30

Grass Drill Fund

Balance on hand July 1, 2007.....	\$3,389.89
Total Receipts.....	\$7,100.01
Total Expenditures.....	\$ 3932.00
Balance on hand June 30, 2008.....	\$6,557.90

Iowa Financial Incentive Program

Conservation Practices	
IFIP Budget 2007-2008 Allocation.....	\$150,559.27
(Period covers July1, 2007-June 30, 2008)	
Cost-share warrants paid.....	\$ 47,125.55
Obligated Expenditures.....	\$102,861.25
Balance of Unobligated 2007-08 Funds.....	\$ 572.47

REAP-P (Practices)

2007-2008 Allocations.....	\$17,269.00
Cost Share Warrants Paid.....	\$10,975.00
Obligated Expenditures.....	\$6,294.00
Balance of Unobligated.....	\$ 000.00

REAP-F (Forestry/Native Grasses)

2007-2008 Allocation.....	\$10,247.17
Cost Share Warrants Paid.....	\$ 1,856.05
Obligated Expenditures.....	\$2,007.77
Balance of Unobligated.....	\$6,383.35

2008 Commissioners

On Jan. 7, 2008 the district held its District Organizational Meeting at the Soil and Water Conservation office. Ray Wilson was nominated Chairman for the S.W.C.D board. Mike Hall was nominated as Vice Chairman of the S.W.C.D and Fred Kay and Connie Esbeck was nominated by the Chairman as Co-Treasurer and Connie Esbeck nominated by Chairman as Secretary. Pictured below left (front row) Fred Kay and Greg Zellmer; and (back row) Terry Hoskins and Ray Wilson; and below right Mike Hall.



Envirothon contest

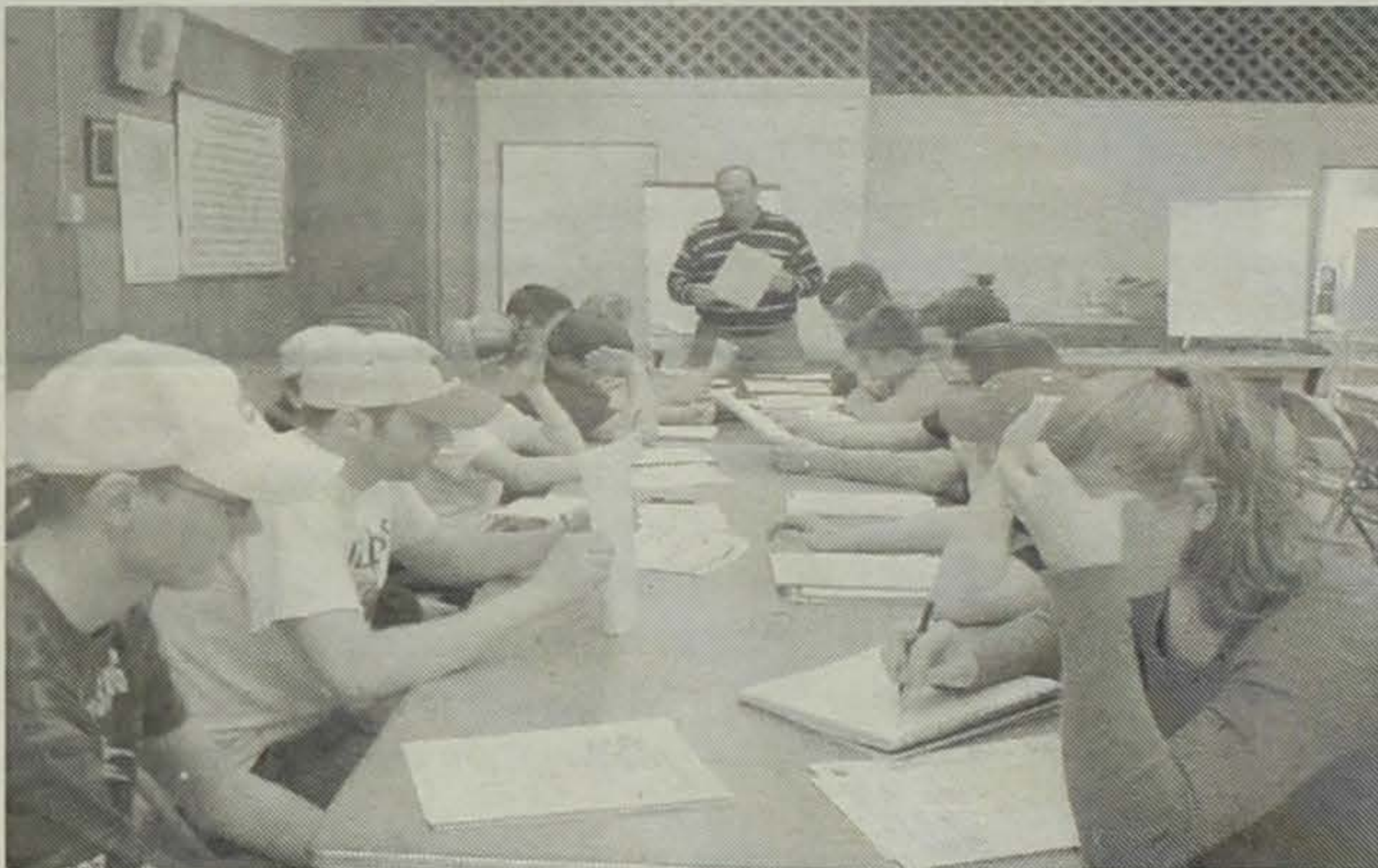
The Envirothon is a contest that is held each year to have students learn about five different environmental areas. There is a four level competition with the state finalist qualifying for the national competition in North Carolina this year. The students are tested in Soil conservation, water conservation, aquatic animals and water quality. Wildlife management and identification are also included in which the students have to ID animals from either the pelt,

tracks or the sounds they make. Forestry is also included which is a little harder for the students as we don't have a large number of commercial forest in Iowa. Besides those areas the student has to id tools and equipment use in environmental management. The contest is a great experience for the students who participate and for the instructors who teach it. The Cass County Soil and

Contest see page 6



(Above) Alan Carr talks to students about animal pelts, and (below) John Klein speaks about aquatics.



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Briefs

From page five

2005. Landowners can loan 100 percent of project cost through this loan program also. Conservation practices that producers could use these loan for are grade stabilizations structures, terrace systems, prescribed grazing systems, grassed waterways and waste management projects. Producers must work with their local bank to administer the loan. Stop in the SWCD office for more information.

No interest loans revolving loans

The 1983 State Legislature established the conservation practices revolving loan fund to provide loans to eligible landowners at no interest for the construction of permanent soil conservation practices. Eligible landowners may borrow up to \$10,000 for a 10-year period. Repayment is made in 10 annual payments equal to 10 percent of the initial loan amount. In the event of land ownership transfer, payment is due immediately.

The Revolving Loan Fund is an alternative to the traditional cost share programs. It allows a landowner to put a conservation practice on the ground today, with payments extended out over a ten year period. For some landowners, it also provides tax advantages.

Fund allocations are made to soil and water conservation districts, commissioners set priorities for their use, and field office staff assures the technical quality of practices built. These practices are also subject to maintenance

agreements. Unlike the cost share program, management practices are not authorized. This type of loan has been useful for producers when all cost-share funds under other programs has been spent or obligated. For more information, please contact the District office.

Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)

EQIP is the federal cost sharing program. Applications are taken continuously through out the year. Dates are announced periodically and applications received prior to that date are considered for that round of funding. All applications are ranked and application funding is based on this ranking score. Payment rates have been established for each practice using average prices from a common resource area.

Here are just a few practices that are eligible for cost share under the EQIP program:

- Terraces
- Prescribed Grazing
- Grade Stabilization Structures
- Ag Waste Structure
- Critical Area Planting
- Sediment Basins
- Pasture and
- Hayland Planting
- Ponds

Stop in the Cass County NRCS office in Atlantic for more information on these programs.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

While a general sign up (typically the whole farm, whole field type of sign up) is not on the horizon, the continuous sign up is still active. Through the continuous sign up, landowners may enroll specific environmentally sensitive practices into CRP. Contour buffer strips, filter strips, grassed waterways, shallow water areas for wildlife, windbreaks, and wetlands are some practices that can be signed up for at any time. Amounts vary according to soil types. Contour buffer strips and filter strips also receive a bonus. Rental rates have recently increased for the CRP program which makes this a viable option. Rental rates could be over \$200 per acre in certain cases.

The wetland restoration practice is a particularly good alternative to cropping wet or flood-prone areas. If you have areas like this, and areas you are having to replant two or three times over the last few years, come in and take a look.

Native Grass Seed

Are you considering installing filter strips, putting ground into CRP or just need a field border, well think about planting native grasses that will also promote wildlife. You may order seed from the Pheasants Forever Native Grass Seed Program. All the seed that is sold is bought from Iowa native grass seed dealers and producers. Through a unique agreement with Iowa dealers, local Pheasants Forever chapters also benefit from seed sales. A percentage of each sale will go towards native grass habitat projects with your local chapter. These types of grass seed may also be used with our Great Plains drill. Stop in your local SWCD office for information on grass types and costs. If you need assistance with seeding your CRP Acres or help with any habitat project, contact Matt Dollison, Cass County Pheasants

Forever Habitat Coordinator at 712-243-2699.

Tree Sales

The Cass County Soil and Water Conservation District started the tree and shrub sales program in 2001. Anyone can purchase bare root or potted trees from the district. The sales dollars generated from this program supports our education programs such as the scholarship program that the Cass County Soil and Water Conservation District makes available to seniors in Cass County school districts. Trees are great protection from winter wind for farm producers around their farmsteads and feedlot areas. Producers can apply for cost share dollars through the REAP program in which they can receive up to seventy-five percent cost share. Any producer can receive up to 75 percent of actual cost and cost share not to exceed \$1,500/windbreak per year to install a windbreak according to N.R.C.S specs. The Tree Program is not limited to anyone from purchasing of the bare root stock or potted trees just because you do not own the ground on which you want to plant the trees and/or shrubs. Anyone can purchase these trees and shrubs, whether you live in town or in a rural area. Each year the district tries to bring in something new. If you have a certain species your needing to replace trees that have died or been damaged from wind or storms, please let us know to ensure that they will be available for purchase. This year the district would like to try to pre-sale as many trees as possible, so reserve your trees now. For orders of \$100 or more a fifty percent deposit is required. You can place your order with the Cass County Soil and Water Conservation District at 503 West Seventh Street or by calling 712/243-3180.

Cass County Fair

The Cass County Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners sponsor a booth at the Cass County fair. People can stop by and visit with commissioners and inquire about

the district operations. You may also get information about the Tree Program and pick up order forms. Stop by the booth and see what is going on in your area.

Contributions

The Cass County District has not solicited contributions during this fiscal year; however, those who wish to do so voluntarily are certainly welcome. All contributions to the district are earmarked to support the educational needs of the district and support of our Cass County youth through the scholarship program. The District has also sponsored teams in the Envirothon for local school districts. You may help your local district by sending a donation to: Cass County Soil and Water Conservation office, 503 West Seventh Street, Ste. 1, Atlantic, Iowa 50022.

Terrace Maintenance

An important part of farm maintenance is properly maintaining your terrace system. A system that is poorly maintained can cause more soil erosion than no terraces at all. Broken terraces can funnel runoff causing large gullies. With adequate maintenance, the life span of a terrace system can be extended.

Periodically perform tile, terrace and intake inspections, particularly after a significant rainfall. Repair any damage as soon as possible. Remove excess sediment from around inlets and terrace channels as needed. Repair or replace damaged inlets immediately. Repair any caused by rodents or farm machinery. Maintain vegetation by reseeding when necessary. Brush and trees should be cut and sprayed with approved herbicides.

Developing and maintaining an effective operation and maintenance program will ensure that your terrace system is an asset to your farm for years to come. If you have questions about developing an effective maintenance program, contact your local Natural Resources Conservation Service office.

Contest.....From page five

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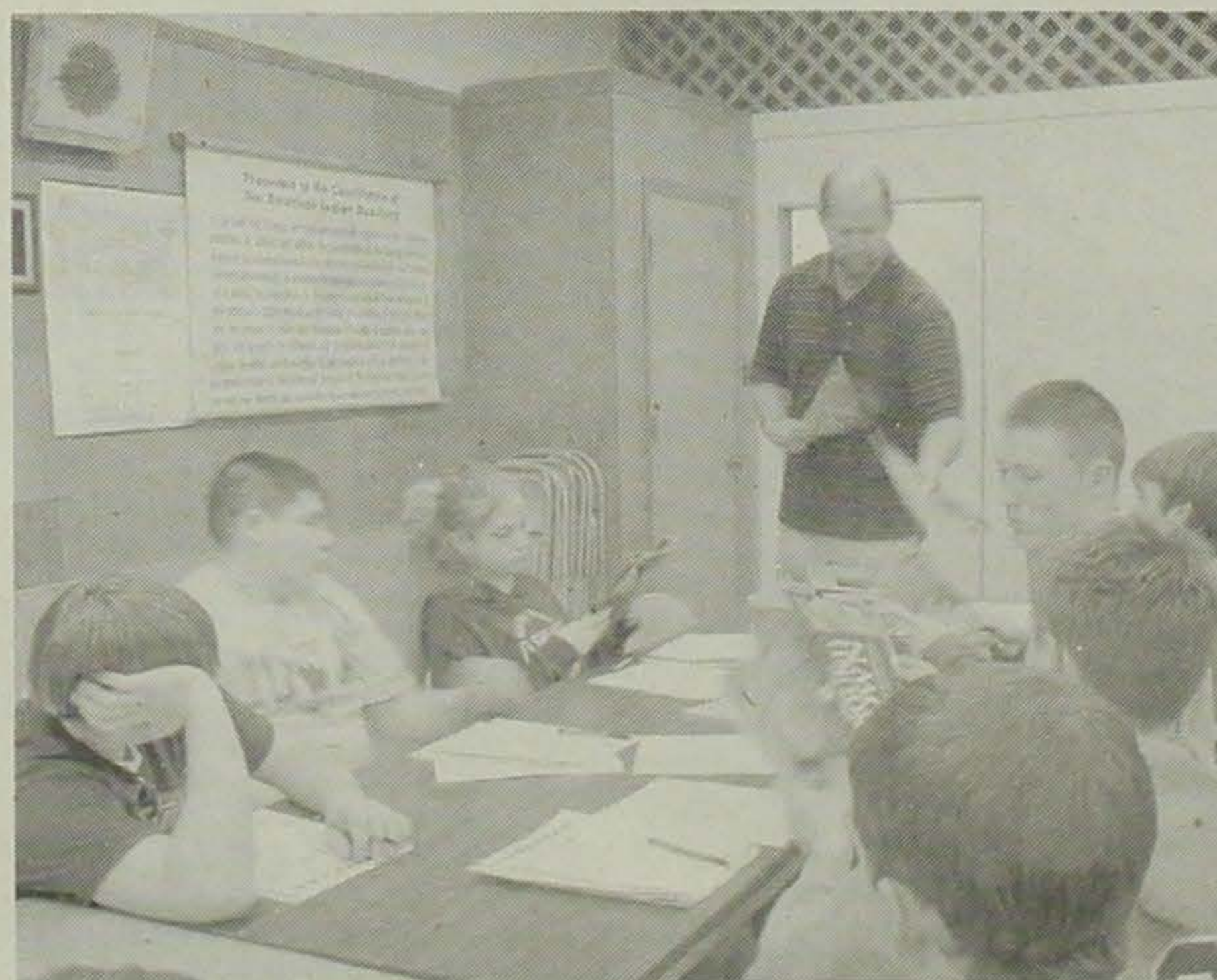
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Water Conservation District has sponsored teams from the Cass County school district in the past. This year CAM Community School District participated with the support from the SWCD district. Workshops are planned prior to the competition to help area teams prepare for the Regional competition. This workshop was held in conjunction with Adair County SWCD at the Massena Legion Hall. Get your school involved in conservation by getting a team entered into the Envirothon.

(Left) Mike Suscik talks with the students about Iowa soils.

New incentives for CRP Wetland Restoration Practice - increased rental rates for all CRP

By Matt Dollison

Iowa DNR/NRCS-
Private Lands Wildlife
Biologist

The USDA Farm Service Agency has added 3 important incentives to the CRP CP-23 Wetland Restoration practice. They are the 20 percent annual rental rate incentive, one time \$100/acre signup incentive payment, and the practice incentive payment that covers 90 percent of the cost of installing the prac-

tice. It is now common for annual rental payments for the CP-23 practice to be over \$200/acre and often times land that is eligible for the program is hard to farm because of frequent flooding.

To be eligible for CP-23 your land must have cropping history and a portion of the soil must be considered hydric. Hydric soil is soil that traditionally supported wetlands and hence has enough clay in it that water will pond on it rather than infiltrating. Hydric soils in southwest Iowa are usually found on flat bottomlands

near rivers and streams. Adjacent upland soils can also be enrolled into CP-23 at a ratio of 3 to 1 upland to hydric. The degree to which the wetland is restored is up to the landowner and could range from ditch plugs, excavation, and installation of water control structures all the way down to just seeding the area to a mix of native grasses and wildflowers. Either way approximately 90 percent of the cost of this work will be covered.

The USDA Farm Service Agency recently increased the

annual rental payments for all CRP practices in Iowa. The average annual rental payment for practices like CP-33 Quail Buffers, CP-15A Contour Buffer Strips, and CP-9 Shallow Water Areas that do not include the 20 percent soil rental rate incentive for all the land in southwest Iowa is around \$145/acre/year. For practices like CP-21 Filter Strips, CP-22 Forest Riparian Buffers, CP-8A Grassed Waterways, and now CP-23 Wetland Restoration the average annual rental payment for all the land in

southwest Iowa would be around \$173/acre/year. Keep in mind that these averages are for all the land in southwest Iowa, if you have better soils you can expect your rental rates to be quite a bit higher.

For more information or to sign up go in to your local USDA Farm Service Agency or Natural Resources Conservation Service office or contact me at (712) 243-2913 ext. 211.

The Wild Turkey: Falsely Accused

Everywhere I go I hear the same thing. "I hear turkeys are the reason for the decline in pheasant and quail populations". Since I hear this statement so much I thought it would be a good topic to write on. Wild turkeys have nothing to do with the decline in pheasant and quail populations. Wildlife biologists and researchers have been examining turkey crops, tracking pheasant and quail chicks with telemetry, and monitoring nest predation with cameras for over 40 years and they have never documented a turkey killing a chick or damaging a nest. One specific study done in Florida by Dr. Bill Palmer monitored 400 quail nests with micro-video cameras in an area that had 30-60 wild turkeys per acre and not once did they document a turkey destroying a nest or killing a quail chick.

Wild turkey populations have been on a coincidental rise in the past 30 years. This is mainly due to their reintroduction into areas that can support a great number of birds because of available food and roosting trees. In western Iowa for instance we can support a great number of turkeys because of available waste grain and more roosting trees than ever before. When the settlers came to western Iowa there was hardly a tree to be found except for along a few larger stream and river courses. Now there are trees everywhere because of fire suppression and the lack of grazing across much of the landscape. Also, turkeys thrive in a much broader assortment of habitats than do pheasant and quail. They can use mature woodlands much more and do not need the larger grassland areas for nesting that pheasant and quail do. They are also more resistant to predation and adverse weather because they are much larger and heartier birds. All of this has led to a healthy and every rising population of Wild Turkeys in Iowa.

Turkey see page 8

Status Review on CRP Waterways

By Scott Breach

This spring we are doing status reviews on CRP waterways and trying to get them done before planting time so farmers can get in the field and work on the waterways from the heavy rains that we had this past year. We are going out to the fields and making sure the CRP waterways are still there and functioning right. We are seeing if the width and the seeding are there. If the waterways are not there then it is up to FSA county committee to give out the penalties. Then it is the landowner or operators responsibility to maintain the waterway. Grass

waterways are designed to move surface water to minimize the risk of soil erosion.

There are some recommendations farmers should use to keep waterways working properly. Some of the things you can do is lift implements out of the ground before driving across the waterway, not spraying herbicides in the waterway; avoid planting up and down and long the waterway.

Other ways to maintain grass waterways is after heavy rains to make sure there are no gullies starting. One last thing is just keep monitoring the waterway and if they need reshaped then do as needed and reseed them when grass is getting thin in the waterway.

Organic Farming

By Randall Larsen

Soil Conservation Technician

Organic farming is a system of agriculture that relies on crop rotation, green manure, compost, biological pest control and cultivation to maintain soil productivity, control pests, limit use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, livestock feed additives and G.M.O's.

All that said, it is a form of agriculture that is growing more and more all the time as people become more interested in knowing where and how their food is produced. That can range from free-range livestock and poultry to organically grown fruits and vegetables. We all know that yields do suffer to some point when crops are produced organically. However, organic systems require no commercial fertilizer or pesticides and when figured in with premiums received for organically

Organic see page 8

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Left to right: Randy Sandage, Scott Small, Jeremiah Thompson, Don Dreager, Kelvin Kopp, Clair Marnin

Challenges bring opportunities

By James Gillespie
Bureau Chief

Well, what can we say about what happened this past year? Who would have guessed we would have had the weather we all experienced, the damage it caused and how it impacted both rural and urban areas?

We saw record snowfall in parts of northeast Iowa and heavy rainfalls across most of the state all summer. This was

the fourth wettest year on record in 135 years of recordkeeping. All but one county was declared a disaster area by either the Governor of Iowa or the President of the United States.

Damages to conservation practices totaled over \$40 million dollars. 2,284,000 acres suffered erosion of 20 tons per acre or more, and there were 636,000 acres of bottomland scouring. Numerous sites suffered infrastructure damage and homes and businesses were flooded. A lot of these damages are still out there

and are in need of financial and technical resources to help repair and restore.

As a community, rural and urban, we need to think about our actions and their consequences. The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, and our conservation partners are committed to building a "Culture of Conservation" across the state. We all need to consider our "footprint" on the Iowa landscape. Evaluate the land use for current and future needs and wants. There is a reason a flood-

plain is called a floodplain; it is prone to flooding. We must all manage the land as consistently as possible to its natural capabilities. We cannot expect the land to produce more than it is reasonably able to nor should it be used in ways that do not maintain soil quality and provide conservation benefits. Consider your "hydrologic footprint"; what happens to the rainfall that lands on your property? We should try to absorb as much as possible to slow runoff to minimize flooding and improve water quality.

Contact your local soil and water conservation district to discuss these challenges and take advantage of opportunities to reduce these types of resource concerns in the future. Iowans have taken great pride in protecting the resources of this state. Let us continue to build a "Culture of Conservation" that will sustain us in the future. Thank you for what you do and what you can do!

Organic..... From page seven

produced crops and livestock, their profits are as high or more as on conventionally grown crops and livestock.

The question for some farmers who might try organic farming is, can I meet compliance issues on my conservation plan when I may have to rely on mechanical cultivation and more tillage? You may very well be able to stay in compliance with the right conservation system in place on the land. The important thing is to meet with your NRCS office and make up a new conservation plan on the track of land on which you want to go organic. The NRCS can figure projected soil loss and soil quality with different tillage and conservation practices.

On Feb. 3, the Secretary of Agriculture announced a pilot project where certain fruits and vegetables can be grown on a farms base acres. This may also help someone decide to try organic. Sign up for this program started Feb. 3 and can be done at your local Farm Service Agency office. The State of Iowa has 1,000 acres for this pilot program.

Turkey..... From page seven

The real reason for the decline in pheasant and quail numbers over the past 50 years is habitat related. Gone are the days of small weed filled crop fields separated by often cut fencerows and abundant waste areas that no one mowed. Also gone are the recently established CRP fields that were filled with weeds mixed with 3 foot tall brome grass. Now those fields are 6 inch tall stunted brome grass with no weeds at all. Luckily though we still have enough pheasant and quail around that if you own a decent sized piece of land and you focus on the real issue, lack of adequate habitat, you can have a population of birds that will remind you of yesteryear. Give me a call and I can help you find a government program that will help you pay for this turning back of the clock. (712) 243-2913 ext. 211.

National Ag News Briefs

Centennial Farms transferred to foundation

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) - The Lewis and Clark Fort Mandan Foundation is taking over the North Dakota Centennial Farm Program.

The program recognizes farms and ranches that have been in the same family for 100 or more years.

The state Agriculture Department had overseen it. Agriculture Commissioner Roger Johnson says that with its emphasis on history and education, the Lewis and Clark Fort Mandan Foundation can do a better job promoting the program as an important historical asset.

Officials say the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center in Washburn will have a permanent Centennial Farms display.

South-central Kan. man to reopen landmark eatery

PRATT, Kan. (AP) - A co-owner of a farm machinery business has taken over a landmark restaurant in the south-central Kansas town of Pratt.

Marvin Pfeifer is co-owner of Kincheloe's Inc., a farm machinery sales and service business north of Pratt. He acknowledges he has no experience running a restaurant.

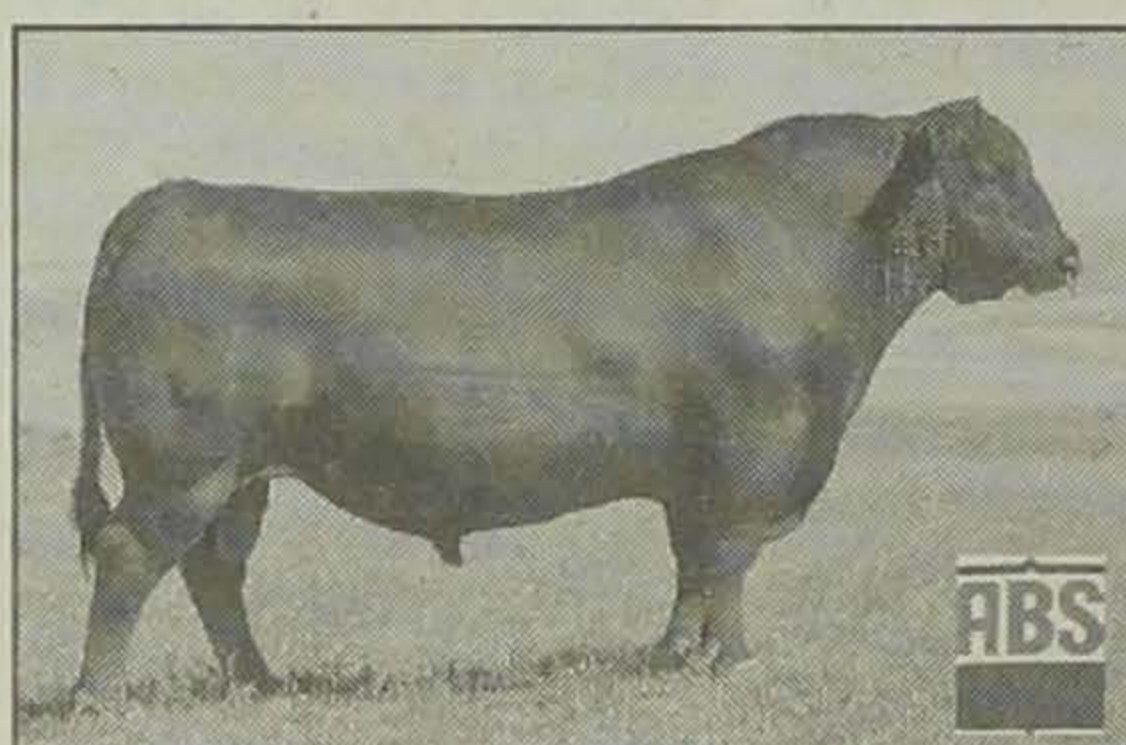
But the longtime customer of Donald's Servateria has bought the buffet-style restaurant, calling it "a business adventure."

The restaurant on U.S. 54 closed in December 2008, after 56 years in business under different names and owners.

Pfeifer expects to reopen the restaurant in the next week, under the name The Famous Servateria.

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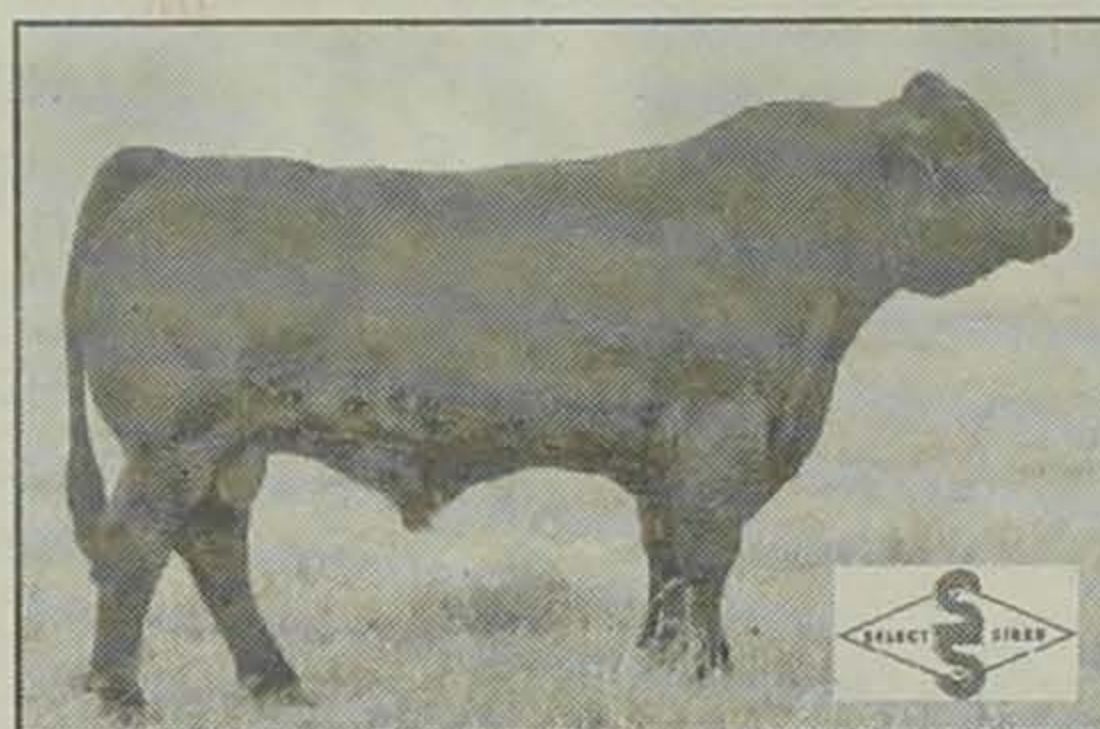
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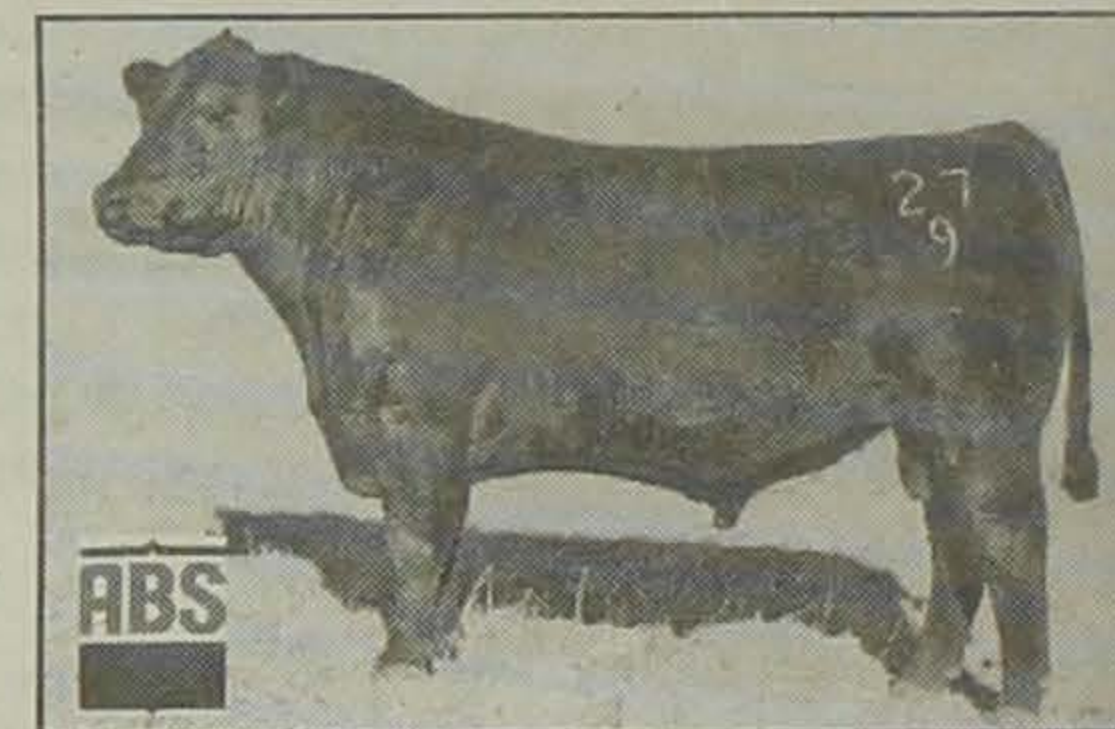
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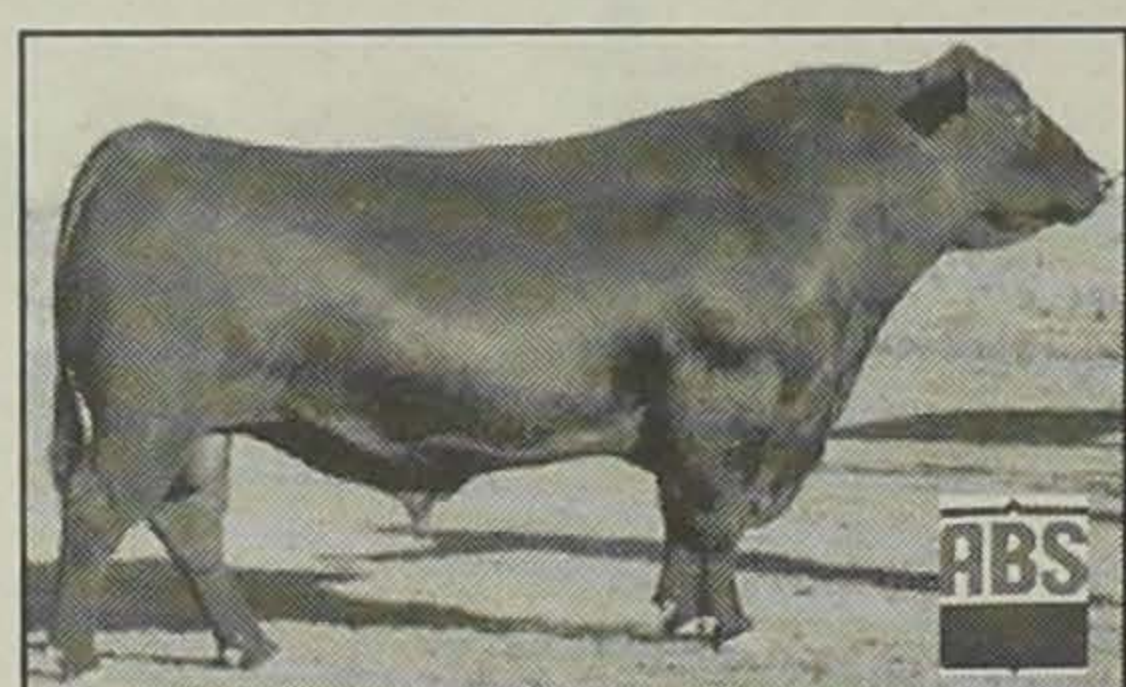
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