

1946

THIRD ANNUAL REPORT

WEST POTTAWATTAMIE COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Ia-SCD-39

Council Bluffs, Iowa.

We, E. H. Harms, Don Anderson and Wm. C. Strohbehn, Commissioners of the West Pottawattamie County Soil Conservation District, submit this, our third annual report of the District activities and our further plans and needs, for your review and consideration.

ORGANIZATION

The second election of Commissioners was held on June 8th, 1946. Balloting was conducted at Neola, Treynor and Council Bluffs from 1:00 to 5:00 P.M. Don Anderson was elected for the two year term and Wm. C. Strohbehn for the six year term.

Nine regular monthly Commissioners Meetings were held during the year with all commissioners present at every meeting.

COMMUNITY GROUPS

The policy of working with groups was formulated by the Commissioners when the district was first formed and has been strictly adhered to with very good results.

Ten new groups were organized in 1946, bringing the total of organized groups to twenty-three (23) since work started in August, 1944. These ten groups were all organized by farmers who desired assistance on their own farms and formed the groups due to the Commissioners policy of working with groups. Four individual farm plans were written for grape growers. We have felt that due to specialized nature of this work and the great importance of planting grapes and other fruits on terraces, this exception to our

policy was desirable.

Farm Conservation Plans have been completed on the farms in six of these groups this year. This makes eleven (11) groups that are planned to date. Group 7 which has a special drainage problem which must be worked out as a group enterprise has not been planned as yet. Group 12, the last one planned was organized in the spring of 1945 and the farmers have been anxious to get their plans worked out and in operation. A total of seventy-five (75) farm plans have been prepared during 1946.

We definitely feel that with twelve groups, comprising 167 farms remaining to be planned, more technical assistance is needed to keep interest in farm plans high. With the present personnel in the District, it will require nearly two years to complete plans in these groups. We also know that other groups will be formed and many farmers adjoining existing groups will also want assistance.

DEMONSTRATIONS

Eight terrace building demonstrations were held during the year, supervised by the District Technicians, with an attendance of 103. Farm tractors and plows were used in all of these demonstrations. The construction of grassed waterways was also emphasized at these demonstrations. Ninety-six (96) farmers built 107.2 miles of terraces in 1946. This makes a total of 184.8 miles of farmer built terraces in the District.

The Commissioners cooperated with the East Pottawattamie Commissioners in sponsoring a contour plowing contest. 120 farmers, many from West Pottawattamie were present and showed a lot of interest in this method of plowing.

EXPERIMENTAL WORK

In order to have better information for making recommendations on land use, the commissioners have cooperated with the Experimental Station and the Soil Conservation Service in several studies. Seed bed preparation for corn on brome grass sod by plowing, listing, surface tillage and discing alone were studied and yields obtained.

Rye grass, sweet clover, rye and vetch were broadcast in five corn fields before and after the last cultivation of corn to find out the best time to sow cover crops. The rye grass apparently gave the best cover this year, with very good results obtained from rye and vetch. Due to leaf hoppers and other causes, sweet clover gave poor results as a winter cover this year. A number of farmers sowed sweet clover in their corn and feel that it is a worthwhile practice and will continue to sow winter cover crops in fields that will be returned to corn the next year.

WORK WITH COUNTY SCHOOLS

Bulletins and other information was given to the County Superintendent of Schools for use by all rural school teachers in the county in their school curriculum during the year. Also some of the high schools in the county are teaching conservation in their schools and colored slides were shown to some of the high schools in the county. A Smith-Hughes Vocational Agricultural Department has been added to the Underwood Public Schools.

HORTICULTURE

The Commissioners are receiving a number of requests from fruit growers for terracing previous to planting of grapes and other fruits. As this territory is considered one of the best fruit and grape areas in the country, we

feel that we should give these fruit growers all the assistance available with the development of soil and conservation plans on their farms. Thirty-nine (39) miles of terraces were built by the farmers this year on six farms and planted to grapes and other fruits. We are also cooperating with the Horticulture Experimental farm in the District with the establishment of conservation practices needed previous to fruit planting.

We are in definite need of information to present to the fruit growers on the kinds and the value of cover crops to use in vineyards. One fruit grower seeded twenty-two (22) acres of a newly planted vineyard to rye and vetch in the fall of 1946, as a cover crop.

EQUIPMENT

The Soil Conservation Service loaned the District a five foot grain drill with grass seed and fertilizer attachments. This drill is too small for large field operations, but has proved very helpful in small experimental plantings.

TEN ACRE CORN YIELD CONTEST

The Commissioners sponsored the third annual Ten-Acre Contour Corn Yield Contest. Seventeen (17) contestants completed the contest. The highest yield was 163.0 bushels to the acre, but was withdrawn from the contest because it was a seed corn production field. A yield of 150.3 won the first prize which was a \$25 bond furnished by the Council Bluffs Nonpareil. 134.8 won the \$15 second prize from the Council Bluffs Chamber of Commerce and two farmers had yields of 121.9, each receiving a bushel of hybrid seed corn donated by the West Pottawattamie Hybrid Seed Company. Twelve (12) entrants had yields over 110 bushels to the acre and three (3) others had yields over 100 bushels to the acre.

SOIL CONSERVATION SURVEYS

The mapping consists of the simplified detail soil conservation survey, 20,990 acres were mapped in 1946, making a total of 53,210 acres that have been mapped in the District. Some of this acreage is located on the Missouri River bottomland, secured in connection with the resource unit areas.

Farm Planners have been practically caught up with the soil surveys throughout the entire year. Completion of soil surveys further ahead of farm planning would be a distinct advantage and these Commissioners request that the entire district be mapped as soon as possible as it will further our program materially.

ACTIVITIES OF DISTRICT GOVERNING BODY

The Commissioners have spent considerable time besides the regular Commissioners meetings in visiting other areas to learn more about soil conservation work. They were present at the District Commissioners meeting of South West Iowa held at Atlantic. Mr. Strohbehn gave a talk on how the groups are operating in West Pottawattamie District that created much interest among the other Commissioners. Mr. Anderson was elected as a representative from the Southwest Iowa District to assist the State Soil Conservation Committee in their work.

The Commissioners were represented on a tour of grass land farming in Monona District centering around the Experimental farm that has been established there. The Commissioners and thirty-eight (38) other farm leaders attended a field day at the Clarinda Experimental farm in July where experiments utilizing grass have been started. Some of the same men also attended the follow up field day held this fall.

A soil conservation booth was set up at the Frontier Days celebration at Council Bluffs and attended by one of the Commissioners. An exhibit of soil conservation activities has been maintained throughout the year in the lobby of the County Courthouse.

Eighteen (18) farmers were nominated for the World-Herald Contest. The Commissioners, after studying and inspecting the farms, chose Wm. C. Strohbehn, E. H. Harms, and Louie Fahrenkrog as the farmers who have done the most work and have the most complete soil conservation program on their farm.

We, as Commissioners, feel that during the year 1946, we have again made quite satisfactory progress toward our goal -- A Soil Conservation Plan in operation on every farm in the District. We appreciate very much the help and support we have received from the Soil Conservation Service, the State Soil Conservation Committee and District Conservationist. During the year we have lost one farm planner, which we regret very much, but we have gained two conservation aids who are a big aid to us in getting practices layed out on the plans which have been adopted. However, in order to make satisfactory progress toward an increased number of farm plans, we are badly in need of an additional P-2 farm planner. With the present help available at the District Office, we are going to be in the position of having farmers who have requested assistance from the District waiting for more than two years for farm plans. We feel that this delay in planning farms will be very detrimental to active interest and participation in soil conservation activities.

We wish especially to commend Earl New, formerly Farm Editor of the Council Bluffs Nonpareil, who has been of tremendous assistance to us in getting the District program in operation and has given much publicity to soil conservation work, not only in West Pottawattamie District, but all

Southwest Iowa. Mr. New resigned to accept a better position elsewhere.

We also wish to express our appreciation to other Governmental Agencies, the Extension Service, A.A.A. for their support and cooperation and to the County Board of Supervisors for supplying office space for the District Office. We appreciate the fine publicity we have received in the Council Bluffs Non-pareil and other papers in the District.

To all our city friends: The Chamber of Commerce, Kiwanis and Rotary Clubs, we say may you carry on your interest as shown in Soil Conservation, in bigger and better ways another year.

To all members of the district, we say, "Thank You", and may 1947 see more progress on the road to Soil Conservation.

Signed: E. H. Harms
E. H. Harms, Chairman
District Governing Body

Date: Jan. 16, , 1947

TOTAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN THE DISTRICT - 1946

<u>PRACTICE</u>	<u>UNIT</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>ATTENDANCE</u>
Contour Intertilled crops	Acre	47,119	
Grassed Waterways	Sq. Ft.	4,312,500	
Terraces	Mile	107.2	
Brome-legume	Acre	3,500	
(This makes a total of 10,000 acres brome-legume established).			
Reed's Canary Grass	Acre	30	
Southern Brome Harvested	Lb.	18,000	
Lime spread	Ton	450	
Nitrogen fertilizer	Ton	95	
Superphosphate	Ton	209	
Mixed fertilizer	Ton	200	
Open Ditch Established	Mile	6.3	
Soil saving dams	No.	71	
No. & kind of meetings held:			
General educational	No.	9	725
Interest or group	No.	12	177
Planning with groups	No.	6	47
News stories	No.	140	
Farm plans written	No.	75	
Requests for farm plans on file and approved by District Commissioners on Dec. 31, 1946	No.	167	
Demonstrations	No.	8	103
Kind of contests sponsored by the District:			
Ten-Acre Contour Corn Yield			
Contour Plowing Contest			
Goals set for 1947:			
Farm Plans	No.	100	
News stories	No.	200	
Tours and field days	Kind	Summer tour, Horticulture farm and tour for leaders.	

We are cooperating with the County Board of Supervisors with the sloping of banks on county roads and seeding them down to grass legumes. Also high-way structures.

Soil Conservation District
ANNUAL REPORT OF EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

DISTRICT West Pott. Soil Cons. District Council Bluffs, Iowa
(Name) (Hdqtrs. of Dist Gov. Body) (State)
Period Jan. 1 1946 to Dec 31, 1946

ACTIVITY		This Year	To Date
Educational Meetings	Number	9	16
	Attendance	725	1082
Tours	Number	2	2
	Attendance	46	46
Demonstrations	Number	8	34
	Attendance	103	658
Leader Training Meetings	Number	3	21
	Attendance	16	289
Exhibits	Number	2	7
Radio Talks	Number	0	1
News Articles	Number	140	180
Commissioners Meetings held	Number	9	30
Community Group Meetings	Number	18	26
	Attendance	224	337