



**POWESHIEK COUNTY SOIL AND WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

P.O. Box 216
Malcom, Iowa 50157-0216

(515) 528-2065

Assisted by

**U.S.D.A. Natural Resources Conservation
Service**

COMMISSIONERS

Roger VanErsvelde, Chairman
Coleen VanDyke, Vice-Chairman
Douglas W. Mikel, Treasurer
James Hansen, Commissioner
Russell Winburn, Commissioner

Rita Baustian, Assistant Commissioner

OFFICE STAFF

Darol Wilson, District Conservationist
Casey Sheley, Soil Conservationist
Clifford Foster, Technician
Dave Bedlan, Technician
Carol Brown, District Secretary

**50TH ANNUAL REPORT
1998 FISCAL YEAR**

TWO COMMISSIONERS ELECTED

In the general election on November 3, Coleen VanDyke (Sugar Creek Township) and James Hansen (Pleasant Township) were elected to serve four-year terms of office beginning January 2, 1999. Other Commissioners on the board include Douglas Mikel, Roger VanErsvelde and Russell Winburn. Roger VanErsvelde was nominated Chairman for 1999.

ESTABLISHING SWITCHGRASS

NO-TILL DRILL switchgrass seed no deeper than one-half inch. Drill switchgrass as early as possible in the spring. Late March seedings usually do quite well.

TILLED SOILS should be drilled or broadcast keeping seed no deeper than one-half inch. It is imperative that a cultipacker is used to pack the soil for a successful seeding. The best seedings in 1998 were cultipacked five times to firm the seed bed. It will hasten the germination of switchgrass which will reduce weed pressure sooner in the planting.

FROST SEEDING is another option. Rates must be increased by 50%, but this method can be used from late January to early March. Broadcast on frozen ground just before or after a light snow (let the present snow melt away first). Use this method on untilled crop residue where flood waters are not likely to occur.

**EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS PROVIDED BY
STATE OF IOWA**

1998-99 Fiscal Year

<u>1-M Budget</u>	\$3,000.00
Office Supplies	-\$144.20
Printing	-\$0
Commissioner's Expenses	-\$564.03
Ending Balance:	\$2,291.77

<u>3-M Budget (Cost-share)</u>	
Initial Allocation	\$51,603.00
Additional Allocation	\$64,253.00
Total Spent	\$27,976.34
Total Obligated	\$83,553.25
Balance	\$4,326.41

<u>REAP Practices</u>	
Initial Allocation	\$7,026.00
Balance	\$7,026.00

<u>REAP Forestry/Native Grasses</u>	
Initial Allocation	\$1,811.00
Total Obligated	\$1,462.50
Ending Balance	\$348.50

STATE COST-SHARE AVAILABLE

Each year the Poweshiek County Soil and Water Conservation District administers cost-share dollars for reshaping waterways, building terraces and sediment control basins and windbreaks. Interested applicants should call 515-528-2065 or visit the NRCS office to discuss their projects.

BACKYARD CONSERVATION— IT'LL GROW ON YOU

If you have a backyard, you will be interested in a new program called "Backyard Conservation". There are many support materials available such as a 28-page booklet showing several conservation practices, a set of 10 tip sheets including topics such as tree planting, composting, nutrient management, wildlife habitat, a 9-minute video and activity books. Stop by the local NRCS office if you are interested in any of these materials or call toll free 1-888-LANDCARE for a free packet.

R & B FARMS INC. CONSERVATION WINNER

R & B Farms Inc. was selected the 1998 Poweshiek District winner in the Iowa Soil Conservation Awards contest. The farm is operated by Michael Phillips. This farm is located in East Jackson Township, south of Montezuma.

R & B Farms Inc. is a good example of a farm with a good variety of land uses and conservation practices which have been used for a long time.

This farm was later selected as Regional winner at the regional level.

POSTER CONTEST WINNERS

District winners of the 1998 Soil and Water Conservation Poster Contest were as follows:

Megan Sorensen, Brooklyn, Division 2, **Andrew J. Kloppenburg**, Brooklyn, Division 3, **Nolan J. Malmquist**, Grinnell, Division 4 and **Tony K. Provin**, Malcom, Division 5.

These winners were selected by the District Commissioners from posters submitted by students in Poweshiek County, grades K-12. They advanced on to Regional competition. The theme this year was Wonders of Wildlife. The poster contest is sponsored by the Iowa Association of Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners Auxiliary.

PREPARE CONSERVATION PLANS ON EXPIRED CRP

Highly erodible land that expired from the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) September 30, 1998 will need to be farmed in accordance with a conservation plan to be eligible for USDA farm program benefits. A conservation plan needs to be prepared before planting time next spring. Winter time is a good time to review and revise existing conservation plans.

FILTER STRIPS AND BUFFER STRIPS

This winter will be a good time to visit about contour buffer strips and filter strips along creeks and how they could be used on your farm.

This is a noncompetitive CRP program, so the annual payment is based on established soil rental rates. There is no guess work in placing an offer. The rental rate is provided to the applicant before entering into the contract.

If you are interested as to whether you have land that is eligible for this program, call NRCS at 515-528-2065.

THE FOOD SECURITY ACT OF 1996 HAS NOT GONE AWAY

Heavy rains across Iowa in the spring of 1998 have caused many operators to work their ground to kill weeds or air out fields. These heavy rains may have also damaged conservation practices such as terraces and waterways. These conservation practices should be checked for damage and repaired this spring.

During winter months of 1999 landowners will need to look at their soil conservation plans and insure that they reestablish their conservation tillage and no-till systems if they deviated from their plan due to weather.

On fields with ruts and compaction caused by wet conditions at harvest or planting, no compliance variance will be needed for operators to repair these areas. However, only the portion of the field with ruts or compaction should be disturbed since this tillage is likely to reduce crop residue to levels below those required by the conservation plan. Contours and field borders should be in place and will be maintained. If your conservation plan requires field borders, remember that you should not plant end rows next to the field borders.



All NRCS and SWCD programs and services are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status or handicap.