

1997
55th ANNUAL REPORT
CASS COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
ATLANTIC, IOWA

1997

1997 Annual Report

- 1 Office
2 James Gulliford (Department of Soil Conservation)
3 Area Office - Natural Resources Conservation Service
1 Senator Derryl McLaren; RR 1, Box 220; Farragut, IA 51639
1 Senator Charles Grassley, U.S. Senate, 135 Hart Senate Building
Washington, D. C. 20510
1 Senator Tom Harkin, 705 Hart Senate Building, Washington, D. C. 20510
1 Congressman Leonard Boswell, 1609 Longworth Bldg., Washington D.C. 20515
1 Regional Director; Bernie Bolton, 38995 Honeysuckle Rd., Oakland, IA
51560-9686
1 Davis Conservation Library; P. O. Box 776; League City, TX 77573
SCDs in Area IV

SOIL CONSERVATION

Atlantic Farm Monthly

VOL. 36- NO. 3
MARCH, 1998

Annual Report Issue



SOIL CONSERVATION

Atlantic Farm Monthly

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Atlantic Farm Monthly Poet's Corner

A contributed collection of poetry

Can It Be Done?

We came out of warm waters,
bright, white and bold, walked on
four legs, changing our mold.

From burning heavens and animal
kinds, we made our way
north to better climes.

From caves, crouched in fear,
through gloom of the ages, sur-
vived the dinosaur, wrote history
on pages.

Sailed ships on the seas,
founded new lands, bombed the
shores safe from foreign hands.

Awed by the Bible, a guide for
mankind, heeded its teachings,
humbled our minds.

Now is a new age looking for-
ward to peace, free of racism and
hatred, God's human race. Can it
be done?

We pray.

By Goldie Hagedorn
615 Northwestern Ave.
Audubon

Hallowed Be His Name

Oh! The wonders of God, Cre-
ator, grand!
The heavens declare His Glory.
The firmament shows His
Hand,

Holy and Reverend is His
Name,

Pastor John Doe,
A man so below,
Yet he would share God's
Name

And himself to acclaim,
Lucifer, The Foe,
Was on the go,
And he desired the same,
Be like the Most High!
Was his cry,

And that was his bend,
Many now call him,
Reverend!

By C. Ray
RR 2, Box 31A
Anita

CALL 9-1-1

Down the ladder I want to go
But I find no steps are there.

What will happen? What must
I do? I fall down; I know not
where.

I lie there, then I hear, "Call 9-
1-1, they'll come I know."

I feel strong men lift me, My
arms are fine, my leg, no go!

A skilled doctor and a kind
nurse fix my leg and give ther-
apy.

Some months in the nursing
home, You know what is to be
will be.

My confused mind, unsteady
hands And those steps I cannot
see-

In the future I promise you, No
more ladder climbing for me.

O dear Lord, when my day is
done,

Hear me I pray, call 9-1-1

This poem was written by Iris
Heckman Bailey, Route 2, Box
154A, Anita, Iowa. She is 83
years old and legally blind.

▲ The focus of Ag Week

By Aaron Putze, Iowa Farm Bureau Federation

America's farmers are in the
business of growing the necessi-
ties of life -- food and fiber. With
a world population totaling 5.5
billion today and expected to in-
crease to nearly 8 billion by
2020, it's only appropriate that
"Growing Tomorrows" is the
theme of National Ag Week.

This year's celebration, to be
observed March 15-21, pays trib-
ute to the ways farmers are using
innovative production practices to
help feed this growing world pop-
ulation while protecting the envi-
ronment.

The challenge is monumental.
Since the world isn't getting
larger, farmers must do more with
what they have. Each acre of land
must produce more bushels of
grain and each animal must pro-
duce more lean pounds of meat.

Through research and changes
in production practices, farmers
are doing just that. One example
is precision farming, a technology
that boosts crop yields and re-
duces waste by using satellite
maps and computers to match
seed, fertilizer and crop protection
applications to local soil condi-
tions.

To protect the environment and
reduce costs, a weed detector
equipped with an infrared light is

used. The apparatus identifies
specific plants by the different
rates of light they reflect and then
sends a signal to the pump to
spray a present amount of herbi-
cide onto the weed.

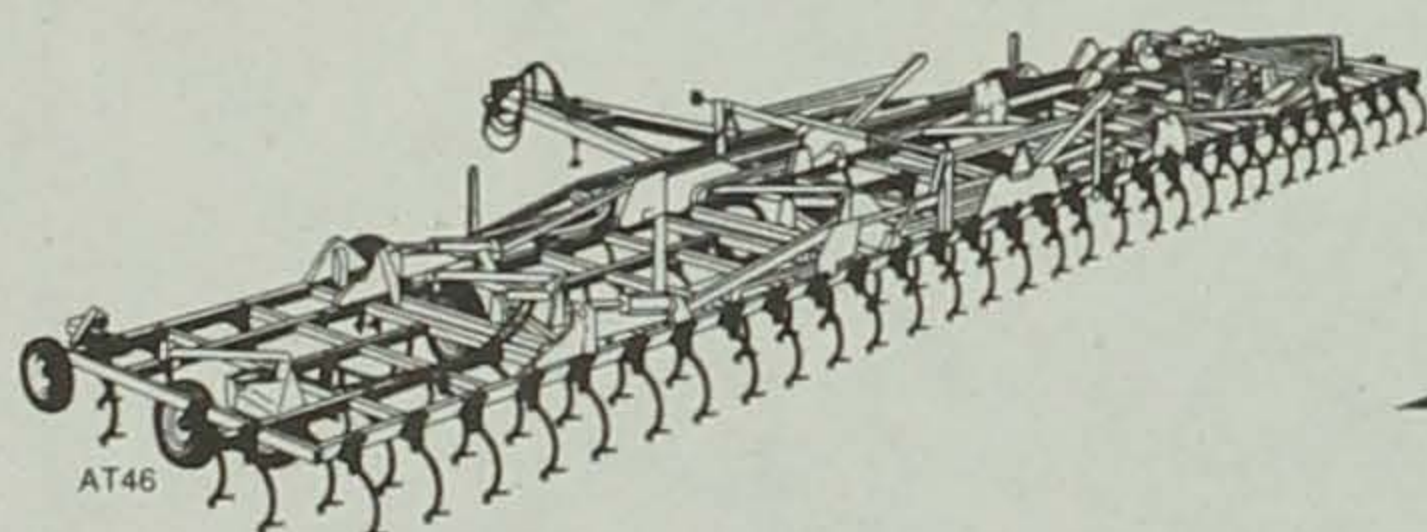
In addition, research and ad-
vancements in biotechnology are
now in the marketplace. This is
helping farmers produce tastier
fruits and vegetables that stay
fresh longer and are not damaged
by insects.

Progress is not being made by
crop farmers alone. Those who
raise livestock are introducing
meat that's lower in fat and
cholesterol. This has resulted in
retail cuts that are 15 percent
leaner, giving consumers better
value of their dollar.

For example, a pork tenderloin
now has only one more gram of
fat than a skinless chicken breast,
one of the true fat "lightweights."
Also, much leaner beef cuts are
being produced, resulting in 27
percent less fat reaching the retail
case than just 13 years ago.

Whether you produce food and
fiber or just consume them, you
can take pride in American agri-
culture. It's an industry that's
"growing tomorrows" for Iowans
and consumers worldwide.

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GOOD DEALS...AND A GOOD DEAL MORE

Wallace Foundation Learning Center, mural dedication set for March 16

The Wallace Foundation Learning
and Outreach Center located
at 53020 Hitchcock Avenue, Lewis
will host a dedication ceremony,
Monday, March 16.

The ceremony dedicating the center
and a special mural will feature
several high-ranking state officials.
VIPs and guests, from 4 - 6 p.m.,
will recognize the center and a ce-
ramic mural created by an Iowa
State University professor espe-
cially for the facility.

Governor Terry Branstad, ISU
President Jischke, Jim Ross Light-
foot, former congressman and cur-
rent gubernatorial candidate, Con-
gressman Leonard Boswell and
several members of the Iowa Gen-
eral Assembly will attend the dedi-
cation.

The Wallace Foundation Learning
and Outreach Center, part of
the Armstrong Research Farm, was
funded by the Wallace Foundation
for Rural Research and Develop-
ment, a private, nonprofit corpora-
tion providing educational oppor-
tunities and supporting rural de-
velopment initiatives in Southwest
Iowa.

Between 1988 and 1997, the
foundation raised \$400,000 to pur-
chase the Armstrong Research
Farm, and then raised another \$1
million to build the learning center.
The Armstrong Research Farm
is operated by the ISU Experiment
Station.

The center has offices for ISU Ex-
tension specialists, ISU Experi-
ment Station staff, four "incuba-

tor" offices for value-added agricul-
tural businesses, and three class-
rooms; one classroom is equipped
with the Iowa Communications
Network (ICN).

The mural, titled "Patterns for
Life," was created by Ingrid Lilligren,
professor of art and design, and
depicts the agricultural land-
scape of Southwest Iowa. Lilligren
was commissioned to create a
work of art for a curved wall in the
learning center's lobby last year af-
ter she visited the site, studied pho-
tographs of strip cropping in a
nearby field, and built a small-
scale model to present to the Wal-
lace Foundation board.

"We've received very positive
feedback on the mural," said the
Wallace Foundation's Jill Euker.
"It's very large and striking; when
people walk into the lobby, it's the
first thing they see." Lilligren be-
gan the full-scale project in April
1997.

An aerial photograph of the Arm-
strong Farm's strip cropping was
the focus for Lilligren's mural de-
sign. The mural wall is 12-feet
high, 15-feet wide, and has an 8-
foot radius.

Approximately 400 tiles were
used to construct the mural, and no
two tiles have the same size or
shape.

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Steffen leading the way in no-till farming

By Lou Waite, NRCS technical aide for public relations

Doug Steffen of Griswold considers himself a farmer, first and foremost. But like many young farmers of today, his operation is highly diversified.

While farming 1200 acres, he is also one of the partners of Triple S Engineering and he owns and operates a semi-tractor and trailer.

His business office is complete with a computer system and other modern conveniences which help keep him well-informed of every aspect of his various farm and commercial projects. One of these is a patent held on an implement part, an original invention which is among those retailed by his engineering firm.

A third generation farmer, Doug owns 470 of the acres he tends, including the family tract. His father Donald (Don), while now "retired" and living in town, still maintains an active interest in the farm operation.

It was undoubtedly from his father that Doug first learned the importance of conservation, and he has expanded and improved upon the methods used to achieve total compliance.

A number of years ago, he became interested in using a no-till system. "My conservation plan called for no-till, and I could see it could be the best option," Doug confided. But wanting to gain some prior knowledge, he attended various no-till seminars, and talked to farmers whose experiences gave the concept "more credibility".

The next season, he and his brother-in-law purchased a no-till drill, and began "experimenting" with something very much opposite to what they had done before. The success of the "experiment" is evidenced in the fact that for the past six years, a complete no-till operation has been used on the land Doug farms. He has, in fact, dispensed with all of his "big" farm equipment, and now uses only the drill and one smaller tractor.

Doug plants corn and soybeans with a 50/50 rotation. He said his yields have never dropped, and in fact, using the narrow-row no-till drill, soybeans yields have increased five to 10 bushels per acre in the hillside fields.

"Some of the reason may be that weed control is better on soybeans," Doug said, "although the corn yield has not been reduced at any time. And when you consider the savings in time, fuel and labor, it certainly has been a benefit. I have seen no increase in chemical costs, either, so all in all, it has been more profitable to use no-till.

Anhydrous is applied in the fall, and a liquid fertilizer injected in the spring, using a coultter with a nozzle which "blows" the nitrogen into the ground and does not disturb the soil. Nitrogen is also applied "over the top with a floater." "This works like a starter," Doug said, "so the roots grow on top for awhile, then go down."

He noted that "Woolly Cup" grass has been a problem in the area. "You need to use a good grass herbicide labeled for Woolly Cup, as well as foxtail, water hemp, etc., then come back later with a good post-product over the top for grass and broadleaf. This works the best for me, anyway."

Doug pointed out that one of the major differences he has noted since going to no-till has been in the structure of the soil itself, which has become mellow and easier to work with. The old residue left in place helps control erosion as well, and the compaction factor is negligible. He has also observed the effect earthworms have made in the soil.

"They take the trash down in, and this changes the structure... changes the entire concept. I think the benefit could be of more value than is realized," he stated, then added, "but you know, I don't talk about earthworms very much! People think I'm getting a little weird about the subject!"

Doug has 217 acres of land in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), which he has extended for another year. He recently was featured in several issues of the Farm Journal magazine for his two-year participation in a project attempting to find the best way to bring CRP land back into production. "I found that the easiest and cheapest way is to take grass off the year before -- burn-down in the fall and again in the spring of the first year, then no-till drill soybeans.

There are more problems with corn. I used a mold-board plow on some of the land, to have an accurate comparison, and hand-harvested enough to check the yield with each tillage method.

I really found little difference in the yield, but lots of difference in

working the plowed land in comparison to the no-tilled land."

Some of the land Doug farms is terraced, and he hopes to do more on some of the rental land. "I can understand, however, that some landowners don't feel they can afford the expense of terracing," he said, "so no-till is the best option in a case of that kind."

There is some hay raised, but Doug said he has a neighbor who is glad to do the harvesting of it, since he owns a number of horses to feed. "I just turn the hay ground over to him, and don't worry about it," Doug said with a chuckle.

He commented that he has always appreciated the assistance he received from the NRCS staff, and found them very accommodating. "I have been spot-checked a few times," he said with a grin, "but we still have a good working relationship. In fact, it's good to know I can rely on them to do the preliminaries for terracing and help me develop a conservation plan which suits my needs.

"We have to make a living at this business," he mused, with a contemplative expression, "but I don't ever want to abuse the land in doing it. When I saw that I had to do something about ero-

Continued on page 5

FARMS FOR SALE

- 30.5 ACRES, ML: Located 2-1/2 miles west of Adair. 97% tillable cropland. No buildings, \$1250 per acre.
- 198 ACRES, ML: Located 4 miles north of Grant. Approximately 92% tillable with average CSR of 64. Includes bottom and Sharpsburg soils. \$1175 per acre. **SOLD**
- RURAL ACREAGE: Located 2-1/2 miles S.E. of Griswold. Large, brick ranch-style home with full, walk-out basement. Just off the highway with great view of the valley. \$110,000 cash.
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- 267 ACRES ML: Located 4-1/2 miles south of Griswold. Mostly all gently rolling Marshall & Judson soils. High percentage of ridge. No buildings. Can be split. \$1775 per acre, cash.
- 160 CARES, ML: Located 2 miles N.E. of Grant. 98.0 acres good quality cropland, 19.4 acres CRP, balance timber. \$10,000 bushel grain bin. \$1275 per acre, cash.
- 309 ACRES, ML: Located 3 miles southeast of Guthrie Center. Cropland, pasture and timber combination. Good amount of Non-HEL bottomland. \$890 per acre, cash.
- 547 ACRES, ML: Located 2-1/4 miles south of Griswold. Appr. 99% tillable, top quality Marshall & Judson soils. Large, brick ranch home. Can split into smaller tracts & sell home acreage separate. \$2133 per acre, cash. **SOLD**
- 260 ACRES, ML: Located 2 miles south of Exira in Audubon County. Combination cropland, grass & CRP land. Nice smaller home & set of out-buildings. \$1250 per acre.
- 80 ACRES, ML: Located 4-1/2 miles west of Elliott in Pottawattamie County. Quality Walnut Creek bottom land. Gently rolling, terraced Marshall soils. Small home & full set of out-buildings. \$2400 per acre.
- 160 ACRES, ML: Located 4-1/2 miles west of Elliott. Nice two story brick home, 22,000 bushel grain bin. Terraced cropland. \$1688 per acre, cash. **SOLD**
- 37 ACRES, ML: Located 6 miles north of Adair. Mostly cropland. Marshall & Judson soils. \$1215 per acre, cash. **SOLD**
- 27 ACRES, ML: Located 1-1/2 miles west of Adair. Top-quality Turkey Creek bottom cropland. Price for sale @ \$1322 per acre, cash. **SOLD**
- 75 ACRES, ML: Located 8 miles S.E. of Atlantic. Unimproved, mostly cropland. \$1125 per acre, cash.
- 70 ACRES, ML: Located 8-1/2 miles S.E. of Atlantic. Approximately 92% tillable. No buildings. \$1250 per acre.
- 77 ACRES, ML: Located 12 miles west of Atlantic. Cropland, CRP & timber combination. \$850 per acre, cash. **SOLD**
- 175 ACRES, ML: Located 2 miles west of Highway 83. Rolling cropland & large two-story home. \$1322 per acre. **SOLD**
- Rural Acreage: Located 2 miles N. of Adair. Two story home and out-buildings. **SOLD**

Have you ever thought about how many bushels of corn it takes to buy one acre of average Iowa farmland? In 1950, it took about 150 bushels. By 1966, it took double that at 300 bushels based upon the prevailing price of corn that year. Booming exports in the 70's helped fuel land prices which peaked in 1981, requiring about 920 bushels to buy an acre of land. In the recent past, 1988 represented the bargain year where it took about 430 bushels of corn to buy an acre. By 1997, this requirement has risen to about 700 bushels. The graph trend line of this little trivia lesson parallels very closely the Iowa land value trend line. What this tells us is that regardless of other exterior factors (inflation, land supply and demand, interest rates, etc.) land values are influenced the most by land production income.

Land movement has been good the last couple of weeks and we still have several farms available for full possession in 1998. Please call or stop in for information.

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Profiles: Lamb, Govig 4-H junior leaders of the month

Name: Ryan Govig
Age: 18
Address: RR Box 124, Lewis
Parents: Rich and Kathy Govig
Sisters: Rachel 23, Melanie 19
Years in 4-H: 10
Age: 18
4-H Club: Cass Coed Clan



Ryan Govig

Q. What projects have you carried in 4-H?

A. "Sheep, woodworking and foods," Govig said.

Q. What have you done on the local club level?

A. "Adopt-A-Highway, cookies to bloodmobile in Griswold, helped with archery and woodworking workshops, vice president," Govig said.

Q. What have you done on the county level?

A. "Mardi Gras, County Fair, volleyball tournament, Anything Goes Contest, herdsmanhood judge, sheep junior superintendent, Youth Council," Govig said.

Q. What highlight of your 4-H career stands out most in your mind?

A. "Winning rate-of-gain with my sheep for six years now and being on the Youth Council," Govig said.

Q. Why do you like being a Junior Leader?

A. "I believe I'm a good role model and I enjoy working with the younger 4-Hers," Govig said.

Q. How do you feel about 4-H?

A. "It has been a good experience for me because it has taught me leadership, responsibility and record keeping skills," Govig said.

Q. What are your future plans?

A. "I plan to attend Northwestern College in Orange City and major in computer science," Govig said.

Name Erika Lamb

Age 17

Address: 106 Cass Ave. Atlantic
Parent Name Steve and Deb Lamb
Sisters: Kaarin
Years in 4-H: 6
4-H Club Brighton Bluebells



Erika Lamb

Q. What projects have you carried in 4-H?

A. "I have brought projects to the 4-H building in many different areas including visual arts, photography, food and nutrition, clothing, and home improvement," Lamb said.

Q. What have you done on the local club level?

A. "I have been lucky to be a part of a very active club. We do a lot of service projects in Marne. We have adopted grandmas in Marne and then built a float for them to ride on in Marne's 120th birthday parade. We've also held a heritage dinner for our own grandmas. We also do a lot of fun things. Recently we had a lock-in and participating in Share-the-Fun is a highlight each year. I have served as treasurer, vice president, and president in my club," Lamb said.

Q. What have you done on the county level?

A. "I have participated in Share-the-Fun every year and our act represented Cass County at the state fair two years ago. Last year I represented Cass County with a working exhibit at state fair, County fair is one of my favorite times so I get involved by helping set-up and tear-down, and by being a junior superintendent and judges helper. This year as a member of Youth Council I am looking forward to being very involved in the activities at the fair," Lamb said.

Q. What highlight of your 4-H career stands out most in your mind?

A. "The highlight of my 4-H career has been taking my visual arts project to the state fair last year. While I was there I was able to attend a workshop that critiqued my project and I was able to experiment in other areas of visual arts," Lamb said.

Q. Why do you like being a Junior Leader?

A. "I like helping the younger kids participate in the 4-H activities I enjoy. I know that when I was younger, I really looked up to the older kids. I tried very hard to be like them, so now that I'm older I try to be a good role model. I hope that by seeing how active I am in 4-H will encourage them to stay involved," Lamb said.

Q. How do you feel about 4-H?

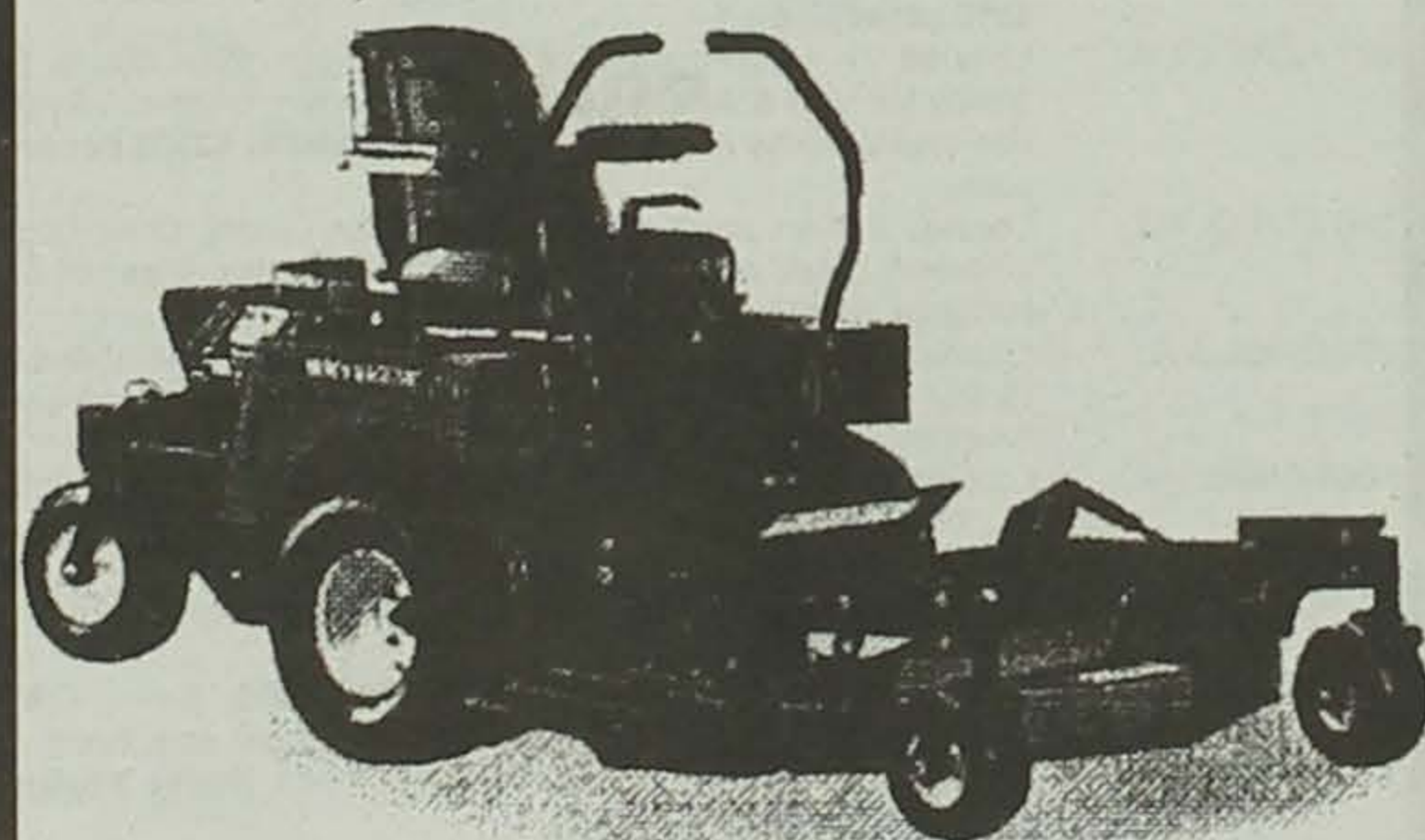
A. "I feel 4-H is a very valuable program. There are so many opportunities at every level. I have learned a lot about responsibility by holding offices and observing deadlines. I've also improved as a leader and gotten to know a lot of nice people while having fun," Lamb said.

Q. What are your future plans?

A. "I hope to attend a 4 year college after I complete my senior year of high school next year. I would like to major in Piano or Clarinet Performance and pursue a career as a professional musician," Lamb concluded.

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IHC 800, 8-38 V fold pull type
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JD 7000, 8-30 wing fold
JD 7000, 8-38 wing fold
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Henn named Member of the Month

Mike Henn, the son of John and Liz Henn of Atlantic, was recently named Member of the Month of March by the Atlantic FFA chapter.

According to FFA Reporter Jodi Kunze, Henn joined the organization four years ago. He since has been highly successful in horse and rabbit projects and has served as chapter president and vice president.

Henn is also an active member of the Iowa High School Rodeo Association, having won numerous rodeo awards. He is also a member of SS Peter & Paul Catholic Church and has been an honor roll student throughout his four years of high school.

Additionally, Henn is a member of Who's Who Among American High School Students and has actively participated in county and state 4-H competitions.

"It has been a great experience to be a member of this chapter. It has grown n members as well as credibility," Henn said.



Mike Henn

Environmental education activities in Cass County

By Melanie Perry, conservationist, Cass County Conservation Board

What is environmental education and just what does it have to do with the soil commissioners annual report? First of all, environmental education is simply the teaching of the natural world around us. The Cass County Soil Conservation District is the first entity in Cass County to introduce this concept to the citizens of Cass County.

The Cass County Soil Commissioners created the Cass County Environmental Education Committee more than 20 years ago. It was their intent to bring soil conservation and other environmental problems into the public eye by bringing together a diverse group of people. Members included teachers, interested citizens, Stabilization Conservation Service office per-

sonnel and soil commissioners. The members have changed over time, but the intent of the group remains the same.

The Cass County Environmental Education Committee sponsors the 5th grade Conservation Poster Contest and the 6th grade Conservation Projects. Hundreds of students have participated in these contests throughout the years and in doing so have learned about the world around them. Winners from these contests are then invited to attend a banquet sponsored by the Education Committee and the Soil Conservation District. The Education Committee also sponsors a tree for the Festival of Trees and co-sponsors the popular Halloween Hike.

The Cass County Soil Conserva-

tion District didn't stop there. They created a field day for 6th grade students to learn about soil conservation first hand. The field day began as a bus tour of the county, but evolved last year into a hands on tour of a local farm.

The Soil Conservation District also encourages area farmers to practice sound soil conservation

techniques. Yes, it is their job to do this, but it is not necessary for them to give awards for doing so. They present two awards each year to Cass County Farmers. The first is the Conservation Farmer of the Year Award. This award is given in memory of long time member

Continued on p. 10

Carlsons receive Muller Award



Each year the Cass County Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners choose someone from the county, whom they feel is practicing good conservation on their farm. Last year's recipient was Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Carlson of rural Atlantic. District Chairman Jim Smith, is shown presenting them with the Kenneth Muller Memorial plaque. (Photo furnished)

Steffen

continued from p. 3

sion, I found that no-till worked good for me. Grassed waterways and headlands are also a must, in my opinion.

"When I am asked about no-till, I am glad to share what I have learned. I am usually asked, about using dry or starter fertilizer on corn. All I do is broadcast dry NPK in the fall when the ground is a little frozen, and fertilize according to the soil tests. I don't use starter with the planter, therefore. This works well for me, as I have said.

"Some feel that they need to go in every five years or so with a chisel plow and tear up the soil. I don't agree with that, unless something has caused extreme compaction. No-till will eventually alleviate compaction. It can be helped along at first, but after that, leave it alone and it will take care of itself. And remember what I said about earthworms."

Periodically, Doug loads his semi with corn, and heads for

southern Missouri, usually the Joplin or Neosho areas. He sells to small elevators and feed mills, who he says "love to get this Iowa grain."

"I enjoy the scenery and the people," he said, and it brings in a little added income." While Doug appeared off-hand about this sideline occupation, he was obviously proud of his powerful and gleaming "big rig", and he spoke with affection of some of the acquaintances made throughout the years.

Doug has three sons: Matthew 22, Steven 13 and Dustin 10. With the sons involved in sports "the year around" as Doug expressed it, the main avocation now is attending athletic events. But Doug also is an avid golfer, is on the board of the Nishna Valley Recreation Area, and chairman of the Swimming Pool committee in Griswold.

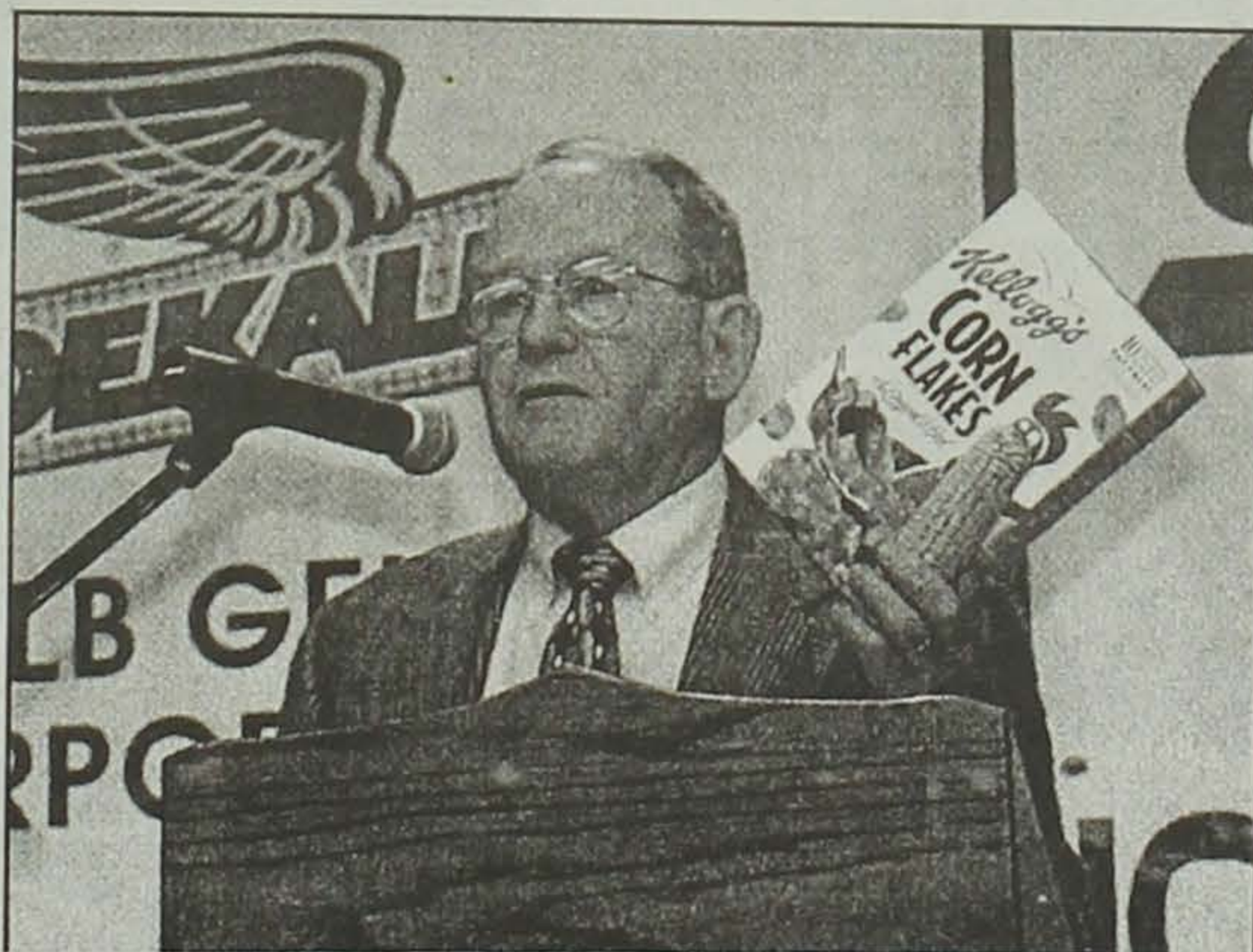
They are also active in many other community activities.

Value-added agriculture on the move

Ray Underwood, chairman of Cass - Atlantic Development Corp.'s Rural Development Action Committee, shown at right during the Southwest Iowa Focus on Agriculture, Thursday, Feb. 26, (right) showed how not to make money on. RDAC is backing "value-added" agriculture Value-added agriculture in Cass County.

Precision Beef, Milk Unlimited, Southwest Iowa Egg Cooperative, and Southwest Iowa Specialty Crops are exploding in very positive ways.

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Soil Conservation District Personnel

Carolyn Wilson State Secretary
Gary Wolfe State Conservation Technician III

USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service

Connie Richenauer District Conservationist
Charles Peacock Soil Conservationist
Duane Orgies Soil Conservation Technician
Alyce Lane Office Assistant (WAE)

Extension Service

Mark Rosno County Extension Education Director
Jill Euken Field Specialist/Families
Julie Hering Youth Program Coordinator
Bev Gunderson Office Assistant
Kay Winston Office Assistant (P/T)

Farm Service Agency

Elaine Martens County Executive Director (Retired)

OFFICE

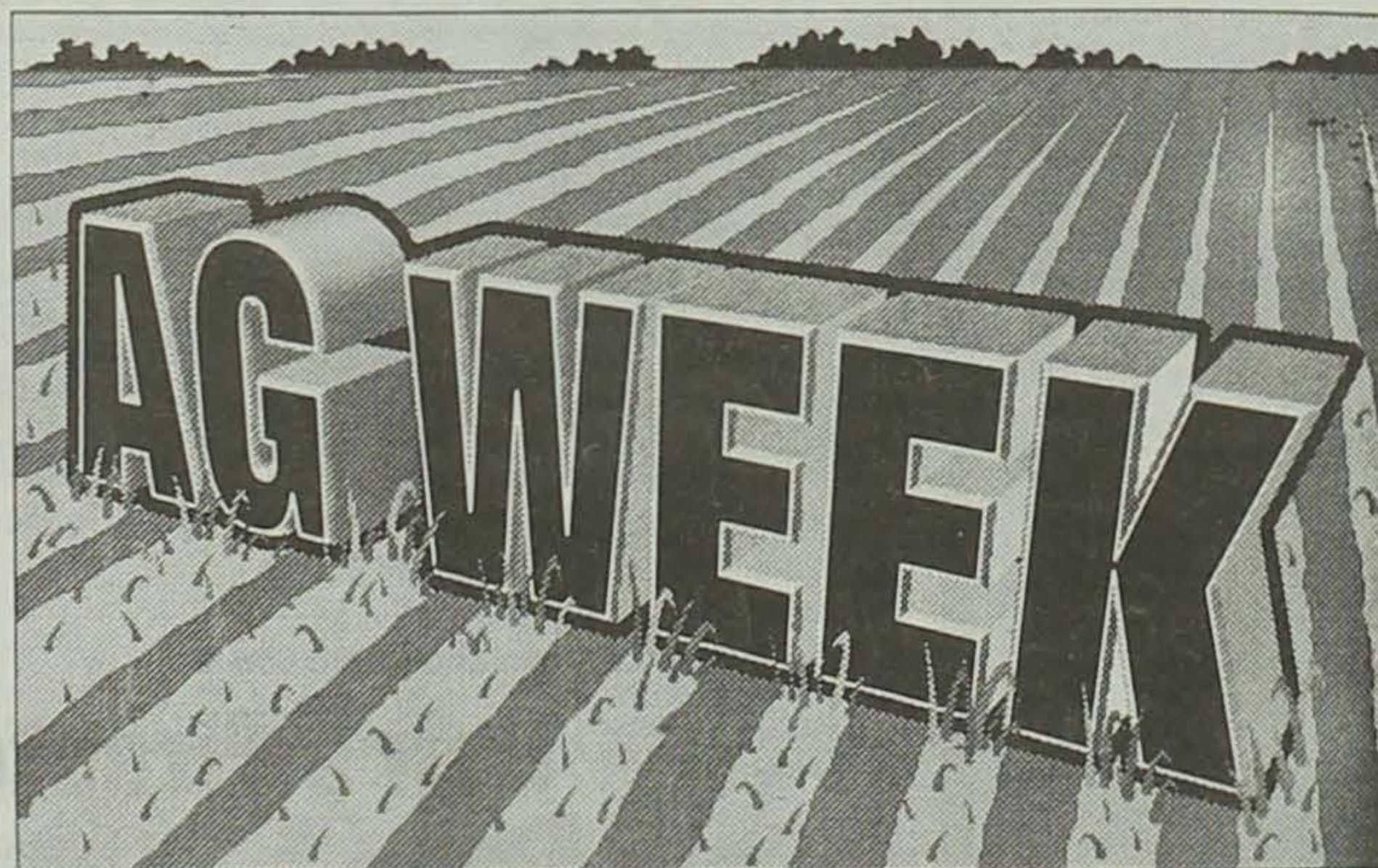
STAFF Sharon Boken, Jamie Newbury, Jeannine Christensen, Sharon Crane, and Mona Ballinger

FSA COUNTY

COMMITTEE Lawrence Wohlenhaus, Donna Lowers and Bill Behnken

AG Credit

Ken Blair AG Credit Manager
Don Obrecht AG Credit Officer
Madonna Nisson AG Credit Assistant



1998 Ann of the Cass County S

District Commissioners and A



James K. Jordan

Commissioner for nine years. Farmed since 1976; Graduated Rolfe Community High School; Attended the University of Iowa and Iowa State Universities; Member of the Cass County and Iowa pork producers; Has three children. His wife, Gini is an Atlantic elementary school teacher.



Greg Zellmer

Elected to the board of commissioners in 1992; serves on the Cass Agriculture and Education Association, Danish Mutual board, Cass County Extension Council, Cass County and Iowa beef producers. Greg has three children: Jeremy, Carri, Tara and wife, Donna.



Julie Schmidt

Assistant commissioner since 1995; Chairperson, Cass County Board of Supervisors; secretary for "Iowa Watershed," the state watershed coalition. She and her husband, Chris, live in Atlantic and have four children.



Rose Holste

Assistant commissioner since 1994; farms south of Massena on Century Farm. She and her husband, Louis, have four children.

Members of the NRCS of
Orgies, Charles Peacock, Cor
Wilson, Gary Wol, an

This Land Is Our Land — Protec

Annual Report

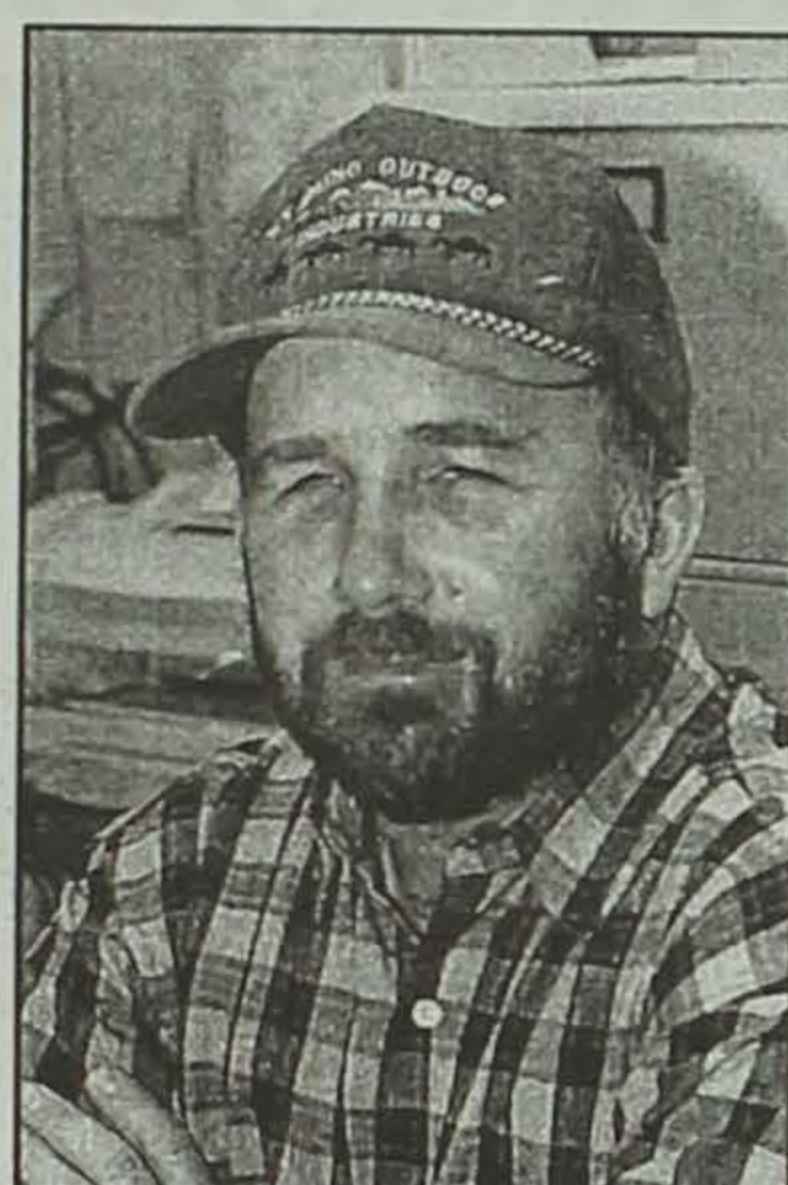
Soil Conservation District

Assistant Commissioners include:



Jim Smith

Commissioner since 1994. Has farmed south of Griswold since 1969; has three children: Brian, Diane and Carol. He and his wife, Joy, have been married for 36 years.



Mike Hall

Commissioner since 1994; began farming north of Massena since 1975. He and his wife, Jeanette, have three children: Jeremy, Leah and Cale.



Fred Kay

Elected to the board of commissioners in 1992. Serves on the Rural Development Action Committee, Iowa Poultry Association, Cass County Pork and Beef producers, and Cass County and Iowa corn growers associations. He and his wife, Jane, have two children, Scott and Amy, and three grandchildren.



Russell Joyce

Has served one year as assistant commissioner. Currently serves as vice chairman of the Cass County Board of Supervisors. Also serves on board of directors for CADCO, RDAC, Hungry Canyon, and on the county environmental board. He farms northeast of Atlantic.

Office include Alyce Lane, Duane
Connie Reichenauer, Carolyn
and Sindra Jensen.

Conservation Accomplishments

New Cooperators	11 No.
Farmstead Windbreaks	3 No.
Organic Nutrient Management System	1 No.
Ponds	4 No.
Critical Area Planting	45 Ac.
Wildlife Upland Habitat Management	40 Ac.
Terraces	163,950 Ft.
Underground Outlet	96,800 Ft.
Contour Stripcropping	1,024 Ac.
Contouring	2,043 Ac.
Field Border	17,378 Ft.

EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS

I-M Budget

96-97 Allocation	\$2,840.00
Commissioner mileage and expenses	1,489.56
Office Supplies and Expenses	824.67
State and national dues	500.00
Returned to Division of Soil Conservation	22.77

Total \$2,840.00

III-M Budget

96-97 Allocation	\$109,095.98
Cost-share warrants paid	87,465.98
Obligated funds	49,814.50

Total \$109,095.98

97-98 Allocation	\$83,694.00
Cost-share warrants paid	33,879.50
Obligated funds	49,814.50

Total \$83,694.00

1997 REAP Forestry/Native Grass

Allocation	\$ 2,162.00
Windbreak cost-share Paid	1,368.78
Returned to Division of Soil Conservation	793.22

Total \$ 2,162.00

1997 REAP Practices

Allocation	\$ 9,345.00
Returned to Division of Soil Conservation	9,345.00



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1998 Annual Report

of the Cass County Soil Conservation District

District Commissioners and Assistant Commissioners include:



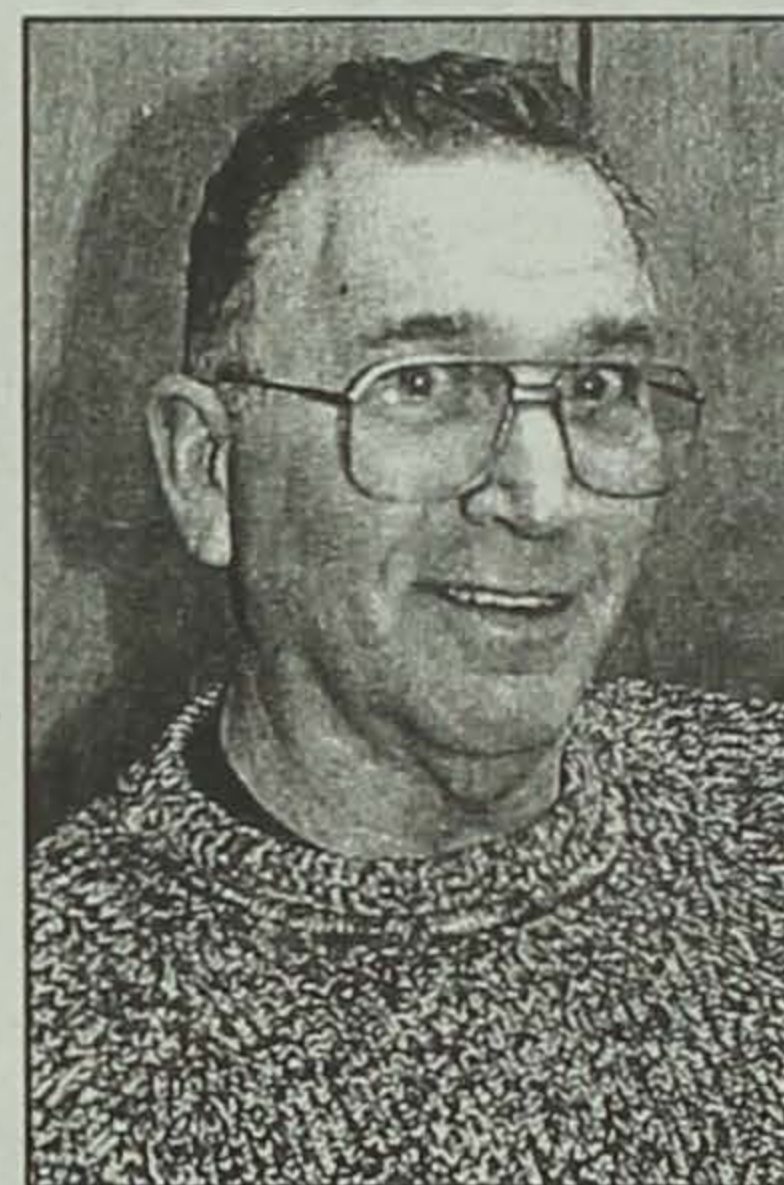
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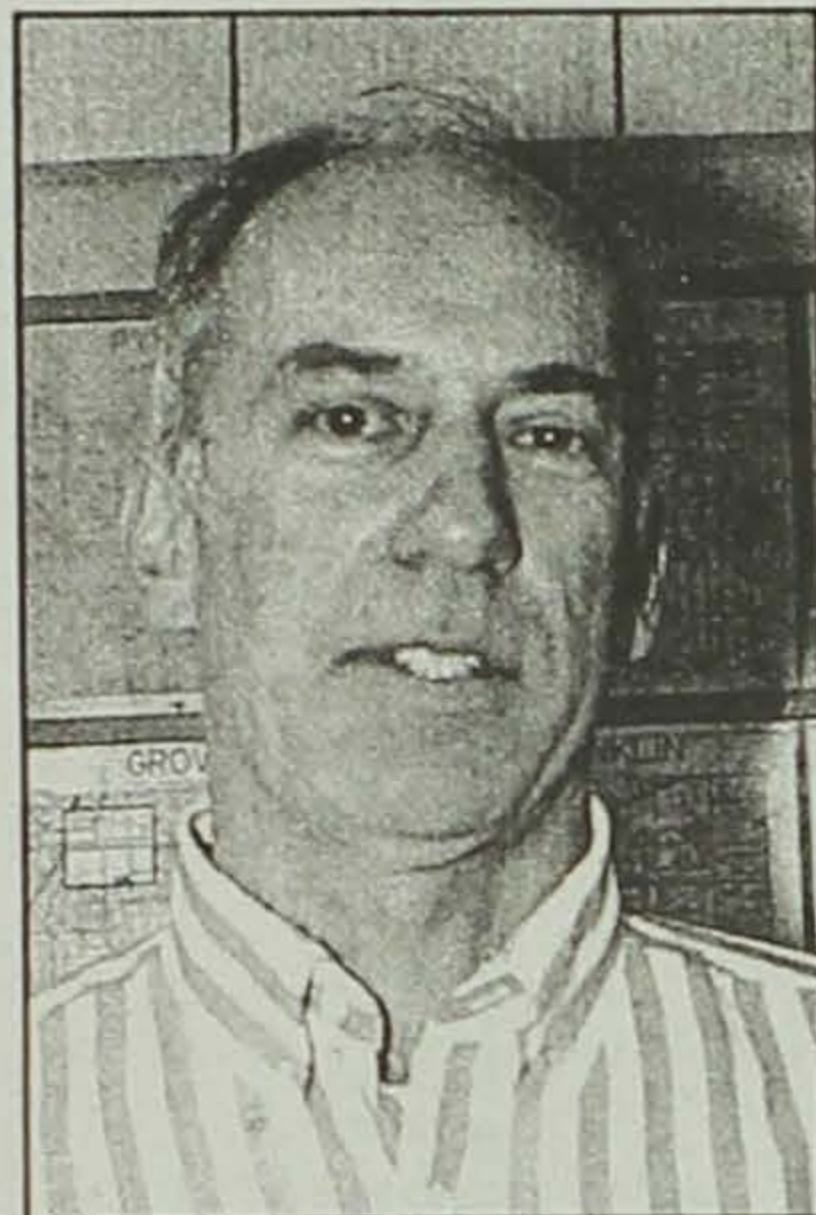
Members of the NRCS office include Alyce Lane, Duane Ortgies, Charles Peacock, Connie Reichenauer, Carolyn Wilson, Gary Wolfe, and Sindra Jensen.

Save Our Land — Protect It Through CONSERVATION

SOIL CONSERVATION

Atlantic Farm Monthly

Seidel joins Cass County NRCS office as district conservationist



Ed Seidel
NRCS District Conservationist

Martin Edward "Ed" Seidel will Assume duties as district conservationist on March 30 at the Cass County Natural Resources Conservation field office in Atlantic.

Until this promotion, Seidel was a soil conservationist at the Shelby County NRCS office in Harlan.

A native of Troy, Mo, Seidel received his degree in agronomy from the University of Missouri, Columbia.

In 1975, he served as a student trainee in Dubuque County, Iowa with what was then the Soil and Water Conservation Service. In 1976, he continued his internship in Jackson County.

In 1977, Seidel began work as soil conservationist in Fairfield (Jefferson County), Iowa. He later served in the same capacity in

Washington and Osceola counties, being transferred to Harrison County in 1982. He most recently served in Shelby County.

"I have enjoyed the time in Shelby County working with the office staff, farmers and land owners. I have also enjoyed Long Branch Watershed activities and other projects in which I have been involved," Seidel said.

"I have been especially pleased to assist with the sixth grade Conservation Days. I feel it is important to educate our youth about the need to conserve and preserve natural resources," Seidel said.

Meanwhile, Seidel said he is looking forward to "new horizons and perhaps new challenges" in Cass County.

Seidel and his wife, Sharon, an adult basic education specialist,

plan to move soon from their Logan home to Atlantic. The couple has two daughters, Mary and Cynthia.

Mary is college junior majoring in elementary education at Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Mo. Cynthia is a freshman at David Lipscomb University in

Nashville, Tenn. studying to become a dietitian.

Seidel himself is an accomplished pianist, bee keeper, and cross-country bicyclist. Sharon is a music lover and enjoys sewing and crafts. She also takes a sincere interest in the person with whom she works a educator.

Natural Beauty

By Sindra Jensen, NRCS soil conservationist

Prairie grasses stimulate the senses through color, height, and texture. In addition, they stimulate deeper inner senses through their natural purpose of providing habitat and nourishment to area wildlife and butterflies.

By landscaping with resourceful prairie plants, a homeowner also feels a sense of satisfaction for maintaining a responsible balance with nature.

Landscaping for the senses with prairie grasses takes little training, as each variety carries its own distinctive characteristics.

Seed companies offer varieties of prairie grasses that provide the

height needed to create a bordering backdrop, the mid-height of transitional area, and the low growth of the foreground. In turn, each variety has unique color and texture characteristics.

For example, let's determine how to create a backdrop or foundational border around a yard's perimeter.

Based solely on height, prairie grass option would most likely include plants such as Indiangrass, Big Bluestem, Canada wildrye, Switchgrass, Virginia Wildrye and Eastern Gamagrass.

In determining which of these grasses to include, however, the

continued from p. 3

New NRCS conservationist arrives in Atlantic

"Hello, Cass County!" I'm Sindra Jensen and I am the new soil conservationist at the Atlantic Natural Resources Conservation Service office.



Sindra Jensen
NRCS Soil Conservationist

I started here in Atlantic the last week of November. Before coming to Atlantic, I was the soil conservationist in Waterloo, Iowa for a year and a half. I also worked for two and a half years in the Greenfield NRCS office as a temporary employee before accepting the permanent job in Waterloo.

I was raised on a family farm in Bridgewater, Iowa. We raised hogs, cattle, corn, and beans. We also had a few Jersey cows that my sisters and I showed in 4-H.

I graduated from Iowa State University with a Fisheries and Wildlife Biology degree specializing in Soil and Water Conservation in December 1993.

While in college my goal was to stay in Iowa and work with farmers and landowners to enhance their property for wildlife. NRCS is the prominent agency assisting farmers to do just that. Outside work.

I volunteer with the Adair County 4-H program as the superintendent for the cats and pet projects. I also keep busy gardening, renovating my home in Bridgewater and spending time with my family and friends especially my nieces and nephew.

NRCS office district and office staff



Current members of the Cass County Natural Resource Conservation are (left to right seated): Alyce Lane, office assistant (WAE) and Carolyn Wilson, state secretary; (standing) Gary Wolfe, state conservation technician; Sindra Jensen, state soil conservationist, and Duane Orgies, federal soil conservation technician. (Doug Rossell photo)

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Farm Service Agency staff



The FSA staff stand ready to serve farmers. Featured above are (front row, left to right): Donna Lowers, county FS committee member; office assistants Sharon Crane and Jamie Newbury, and Madonna Nisson, AG Credit assistant; (back row) Don Obrecht, AG Credit officer; Bill Bartenhagen, county FSA executive director; Ken Blair, AG Credit manager; Bill Behnken, county FS committee member, and office assistants Janine Christensen and Diane Carspecken. (Doug Rossell photo)

Water quality research underway at ISU

By Susan Thompson, communications specialist, Iowa State University

Recent debate about Iowa's hog industry has sharpened the public's focus on water quality. Current Iowa State University water research dates back to the early 1970s, when water in three tile lines on a research farm was monitored for nitrates. But the work has expanded significantly since then.

Ramesh Kanwar has played a leading role in this research since he arrived at ISU 21 years ago to work on his doctorate. His thesis

of a computer simulation model to predict groundwater nitrate levels.

He's now a professor in the agricultural and biosystems engineering department, and an assistant director for the Iowa Agriculture and Home Economics Experiment Station.

Much of his research has been done at the Northeast Research and Demonstration Farm near Nashua.

A 10-year project studying the effects of tillage practices on weed

and insect populations and yields was ending in 1988, and Kanwar recognized the farm as a good place to study water quality.

The Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture funded the installation of equipment to collect and test groundwater samples for nitrate and herbicide concentrations.

Researchers from the National Soil Tilth Laboratory joined the project in 1990. In 1993, a new

Continued on p. 10

Natural Beauty

Continued on p. 3

artistic landscaper will want to balance the plant selection with the overall purpose of that area. What other plantings will be near the area? Do you want a harsh edge or subtle? What colors will be next to each other during the growing season? During the dormant season?

Indian grass stands as high as seven feet tall and has a commanding brush-like head.

In addition to its dominant presence amid a landscaped area, the grass is also an especially nutritious food source for livestock, and its dense growth pattern makes it a valuable habitat for wildlife. It adds a welcome, reddish-yellow color during otherwise drab winter months. These powerfully headed grasses literally stir the soul when the wind orchestrates them into powerful "waves of grain".

Switchgrass on the other hand, has a delicate, large, open head that makes a landscape appear to have been softened, as with a sponge. It virtually makes an area appear fluffy and cloud-like, which stimulates the senses far differently than the coarse heads of eastern gamagrass or wildrye.

Besides adding beauty and texture to your landscape, prairie grasses also have a deep root structure that improves soil conditions and water infiltration. They are low maintenance in comparison to conventional turf grasses.

Prairie grasses can be as tall as seven to eight feet (Big Bluestem) or as low growing as 4-6 inches (Buffalograss).

Buffalograss is a turf-type grass that grows well in full sun, good drainage, and in all soils except sand. Of course, there are also

many native wildflowers that you can incorporate into your prairie grass seeding or natural area.

Prairie grasses are a study in art -- art of the most natural kind. They generate a subtle stirring of the senses. They cause viewers to notice something.

Once the eyes have been stopped by the prairie grasses' humble, unassuming elegance then does the creation truly unfold before the senses of the spectator.

If you would like more information on planting prairie grasses or maybe you just want to know what the different species of native grasses look like, stop by our office here in Atlantic and let us assist you.

(Information taken from a press release from Stock Seed Farms, Murdock, Nebraska.)

Bartenhagen joins local Farm Service Agency as Cass, Adams county executive

The Cass County Farm Service Agency is happy to announce that starting in February, Bill Bartenhagen has been hired as county executive director.

Originally from Southeast Iowa (Louisa Co.), Bartenhagen has been the CED in Adams County (Corning) for the past 11 years.

Bartenhagen will serve as the CED in both the Adams and Cass County Offices. Following the retirement of Elaine Martens from the Cass County FSA, Bartenhagen was hired as CED and a shared management arrangement between Adams and Cass was implemented as a cost cutting measure.

Over the past few years the USDA, as well as other Government Agencies, have had to operate under tighter budget constraints. Shared Management is an option which has been used in several states to control budget expenditures. The Iowa FSA, to date,

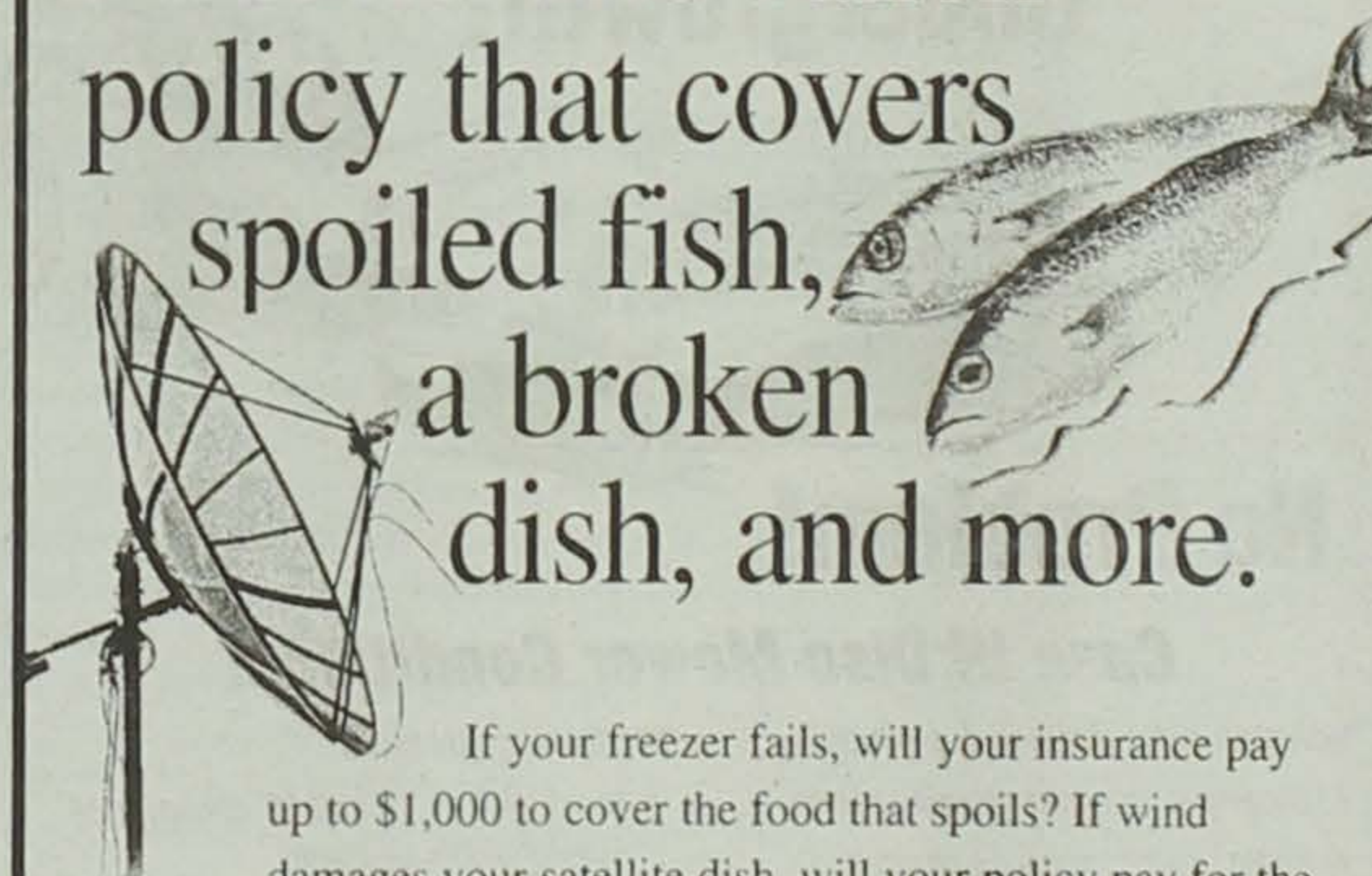
has designated three shared management areas they include: Henry/Lee, Mills/West Pottawatomie, and Adams/Cass counties.

There will be no changes locally, the office in Atlantic will be maintained with the current staffing and Bartenhagen will divide his time between the two offices.



Bill Bartenhagen

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Water quality research underway at ISU

continued from p. 9

project began to study the impact of nine nitrogen management systems on water quality.

Three chisel-plowed treatments are in a corn-soybean rotation and receive three different levels of nitrogen application, with one being swine manure.

Two additional chiseled treatments are in continuous corn, with one receiving 120 pounds of nitrogen per acre. The other receives swine manure.

Another two treatments involve no-till with a corn-soybean rotation, with two types of nitrogen

applications. Strip-cropping corn, soybeans and oats is another treatment.

The final treatment is a six-year rotation involving three years of forage, followed by one year each of corn, beans and oats. Not surprisingly, water collected from plots in the last two treatments shows the lowest nitrogen concentrations.

At the ISU Agronomy and Agricultural Research Center west of Ames, a project began three years ago to look more carefully at manure management. Twenty-seven

plots are set up to compare manure to nitrogen fertilizer application, with the manure applied using different combinations of rate, timing and application method. Researchers monitor the impact of the manure application on each plot.

"We believe there is the potential to manage swine manure effectively if producers can test the quality of the manure on-site and then apply the correct amount of manure based on that test," Kanwar says. It's too early to draw many conclusions from this project but he is confident researchers are

on the right track. "We have the potential to design best management practices for manure applications that will result in better crop yields and better water quality," he says.

Looking back over his years of research, Kanwar is pleased with the progress. "We're moving in the right direction. Nitrogen and pesticide application rates are lower," he says. "And we're finding farmers should be able to protect water quality and still get the production levels they want."



National Agriculture Day
March 20, 1998

Ag education

continued from p. 5

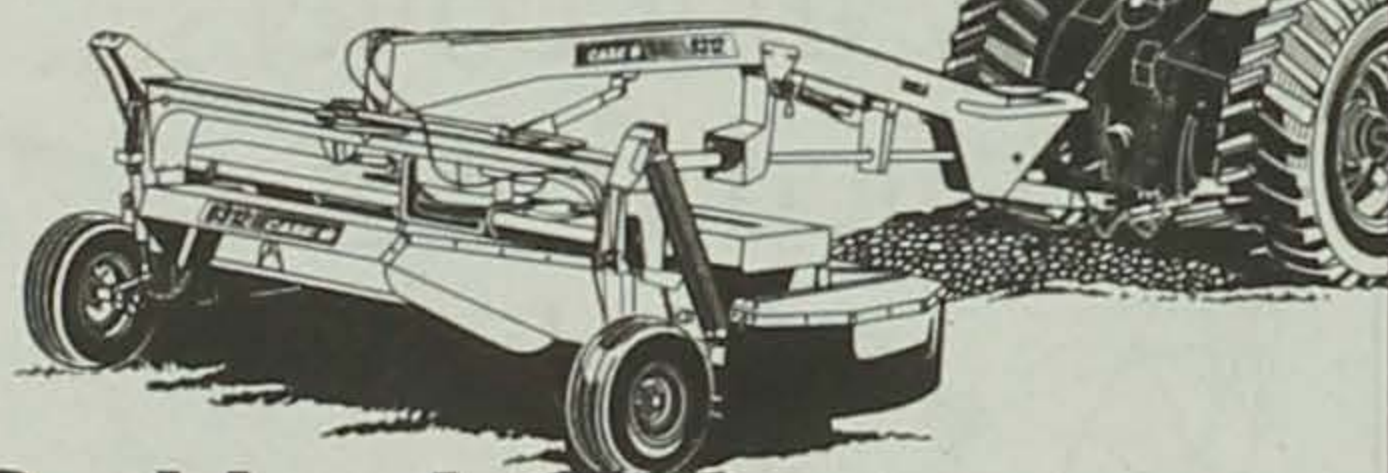
member of the Environmental Education Committee, Kenneth Muller. The second award is the No-till Award, which is given in memory of Bill Fudge.

The Soil Conservation District goes one step farther to encourage education in Cass County. For the last two years they have given a \$300.00 scholarship to a de-

serving student who chooses to further their education in college.

Environmental education is alive and well in Cass County due in a large part to the Cass County Soil Conservation District. Next time you see a commissioner or an employee give them a big pat on the back and a big thank you!

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Image 5a. Before conservation: Image 5a. Farm operations cropping adjacent to stream edge resulted in nutrients, pesticides, and sediment from the field and stream bank erosion directly entering the stream. Lack of riparian zone significantly affects habitat diversity.



Image 5a

Image 5c. Environmental and economic benefits: Water quality is improved by filtering and uptake of nutrients, sediment, and pesticides by the riparian zone. Erosion is reduced by stream bank stabilization. Habitat diversity improvements include wildlife,



Image 5b

nesting opportunities, fishing, bird-watching, hunting, and other recreational opportunities. Esthetic and stewardship values are realized by the land owner and the community.

Source: NRCS photo, Midwest; image processing.



Image 5c

Five guidelines for creating efficient grazing systems

By Brian Peterson, NCRC grassland conservationist

Many of you have thought, "I sure would like to improve my grazing system but I don't know where to start".

The design and layout of a grazing system isn't "rocket science" and each system needs to be adapted to type of land, type of livestock and the needs of the producer. But there are five guidelines that should be considered when designing a grazing system.

Perhaps the most important item to consider is water.

Water of course must be available to livestock throughout the system. It is best to bring the water to the pasture instead of taking the livestock to the water. Try to keep the water no more than 600 to 800 feet from the livestock. This will result in better forage utilization and better manure distribution within the pasture.

Many times the water lines can be laid on the surface. Water lines will need to be buried in pastures used for winter grazing. Rural Water is a potential water source in some parts of pastures or for a winter water source.

When looking for water sources and distribution systems use your imagination and don't limit yourself to one system.

Square pastures require less fence and normally are better utilized than rectangular or irregularly shaped pastures. It isn't normally feasible, or practical to make square pastures in southern Iowa hills. But, try to make them more square than any other shape.

Use the landscape to determine pasture boundaries. Look at a soil survey map of your pasture. Many times, in southern Iowa, soils can be grouped together by ridge, side slope and small creek bottoms. This can help you select forage suitable for the soil types.

For example, alfalfa grows well on well drained uplands but can not survive on soils that may be wet during the year. By dividing pastures based upon landscape and soils you can target the forages to the site where they would be the most productive.

When dividing the pasture into paddocks each pasture should offer the same total production.

This might mean a paddock on the sidehill would need to be 50 percent larger than a paddock located on the ridge to give the same production. If you have divide the pasture by landscape this can be done more easily. The final consideration is the use of lanes.

If there is only one water point, lanes will be necessary for the livestock to have access to water. In this case try to keep lanes on the contour as much as possible to reduce chances of gully erosion from cow paths.

If water is brought to each paddock the need for lanes is minimal. It is important to try to limit the lanes for movement of livestock only. Continual use by farm equipment can speed up gully erosion problems.

Iowa farmland values continue to climb

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Farmland prices in Iowa are inching closer to levels seen before the farm crisis of the 1980s, according to a survey of farm real estate agents.

Roger Poppen, chairman of the Realtors Land Institute's Iowa farmland price survey, said Tuesday, March 10, that prices in the state have more than doubled from their low in 1987.

"Everywhere, people are saying there is a lack of listings of prime land. There are buyers available," Poppen said.

Poppen's group released its latest survey Tuesday, showing the land prices have increased more than 4 percent in the past six months and more than 9 percent statewide from a year ago.

The gain brings Iowa prices within 5 percent of pre-farm crisis levels, according to the land salesmen.

Oskaloosa Realtor Lyle Siefering said he sees two other driving forces behind the continued climb in farmland prices: more people looking for acreages to get away from the city and more looking for land to buy as an investment.

Perhaps the most important consideration as you begin to layout a grazing system is "be flexible". As mentioned earlier this isn't "rocket science" and changes may need to be made in the future.

Try to keep in mind, as you are designing the system, how changes and improvements can be made without having to change the entire system.

Put ideas on aerial photos and put flags in the pasture to see how it will look. Have other people

look at your ideas and see what they might offer.

There is not any right answer. A system that meets your needs and fits within your management level is what is right for you. If you have kept the five guidelines in mind and you are comfortable with the design you will make it work!

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National Agriculture Day
March 20, 1998

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