

DAVIS COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

1946 REPORT

The 1946 season was a banner year for Davis County in the production of corn and hay. The season was ideal for crops other than the torrential rains that did untold damage in eroding our fields. In spite of heavy erosion loss, moisture made it possible to produce one of the largest corn crops ever recorded on our hill land. The oat crop, however was not so good being damaged seriously by the blight.

The heavy rains with their serious damage did, however, serve one purpose in awakening many operators in this area to the importance of terracing and contouring. The bottom land farmers, whose crops were also badly damaged, are thinking in terms of controlling hill water through diversion ditches and straightening channels. It is hoped that we have learned a lesson that will not be forgotten from these down-pours and that we will go ahead to develop a soils program that will be able to meet such seasons with less damaging results.

The year just closed has been a busy one and we, as commissioners, have found it necessary to put in considerable time and effort in furthering the aims of our program which we consider essential to the well-being of our county. The farm planner and his assistant have found their time well occupied in taking care of the farm operator's demands in our newly created district. Some 140 farmers have made application through 15 groups for complete farm plans. To date, 60 farm plans have been completed by our office personnel in addition to hours of technical assistance that has been given to operators with uncompleted plans.

During the season some 2000 acres were contoured in the rolling acres of the county. Twenty three miles of terracing has been planned in our 60 completed farm plans with 6 miles of this number constructed. On the completed plans, some 18,400 feet of diversion ditches were contemplated with 3000 feet already developed.

Pasture improvement has been recognized as one of our leading problems in this area. Last year 600 acres were improved as a start in the direction of better pastures in this livestock county. Although brome is relatively new in this area, it is believed to have a great future and 160 acres were seeded with alfalfa and clover in the 1946 year. In the developing of sound Soil Conservation practices, ^{it is believed} ~~we believe it~~ essential to take advantages of the new legumes and grasses that prove practicable. This year we assisted in establishing a Birdsfoot-Treefoil Pasture Demonstration on one of our cooperator's farms. The demonstration is located along the highway and we expect to make full use of it the next few years. Certified brome seed was put out with another cooperator on a seed contract basis. Brome seed is now so expensive and scarce that it would appear it is going to limit the seeding for the current year. It is ^{the} ~~our~~ aim to improve this situation by producing our own brome seed within the county boundaries. A new variety of timothy was seeded last fall that we hope will prove beneficial to the county. It is believed that winter cover crops is one of the projects that will fit into our Soil Conservation program. Acres and acres of our rolling farm land have been left open through the winter with devastating results. Last fall we were able to put out some vetch and rye seed which we believe will prove valuable as cover crops.

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Our lime quarry project started production in August, of this year, and to date, we have been very well pleased with the results. The quarry is developing into one of the better sources of rock in this part of Iowa. Not only is there an abundance of limestone but the quality is of exceptionally high grade. For the first time in years limestone is available to this area in the amounts to take care of the demand. Not only is it available to *the* our district but to adjoining counties in need of agricultural lime and road rock. Last year there was approximately 40,000 tons of limestone used in Davis County. ~~We believe~~ *It is* this amount will be increased materially when limestone becomes available throughout the year. Our tie-up with the dirt moving contractors has proved successful. We feel we are fortunate in getting the operators that we now have as their work and prices have proved to be satisfactory. ~~We anticipate~~ *It is* ample work to keep them busy in making ponds, drainage and other Soil Conservation work for the coming year. In '46 there were around 90 ponds built in the district with hours of ditching and other conservation work completed.

Considerable work has been done in the development of a demonstration plot on the edina type of soil. After conceiving the idea in our district, adjoining counties have entered into the project and we are now an organized group. P. W. Spilman of *the* our district has been named chairman of the 4-county affair which includes Davis, Van Buren, Appanoose and Wayne counties. After organizing, ~~we solicited~~ *was solicited* the cooperation of the State Experimental Station, and they have been working diligently with us in the development of

the program. *the group* We ^{is} now have a plot of land under option and it is hoped that we will soon be in a position to raise funds to complete the contract.

A preliminary survey has been completed on the Soap Creek Drainage project and we are now awaiting a report from the Regional Office. Land owners in this drainage district have shown interest in working out a solution to their problem of controlling flood waters. The operators on Chequest have met with the Commissioners with the possibility of their organizing and making a formal application for assistance in surveying their Creek problem. Fox River bottom land was flooded this year for the first time since it was dredged some 30 years ago. Land owners along the river have come to the realization that some clearing and possibly some additional dredging will have to be done to prevent further damage. They petitioned the county board for assistance who in turn have made inquiry to the Soil Conservation Office relative to a survey. Soil Conservation engineers have made a cross-section survey and a report has been made to the County Board.

The Soils District has enjoyed excellent cooperation from the Agricultural Agencies and other organizations in the county. The AAA, Extension Service, the FHA, and the Farm Bureau have been faithful in their support of our district. They have taken active part in the commissioner meetings and in general, have supported the development of our program. Civic groups have also been cooperative and helpful in every way it has been possible for them to do so. The Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, Churches and schools as well as

other local organizations seem to have a clear conception of the importance of Soil Conservation to their well-being. The county Board of Supervisors were instrumental in the successful establishment of our quarry. They agreed to purchase an amount of roadrock required by our contractors prior to starting production. They have exceeded their original contract and the county is benefiting from improved roads. The board has also been cooperative in the drainage district problems which have arisen in the past year. The County Superintendent of Schools has cooperated in distributing literature among the rural schools of the county. Teaching Soil Conservation in the rural schools will be a very important factor in the program of years to come. The office personnel along with Farm Security has taken an active part in teaching Soil Conservation to the G.I.'s of the county with encouraging results.

this believed
As a whole ~~we believe~~ this Soil Conservation Service has established itself as an important part of the community life. Farm operators have taken advantage of the assistance our organization offers them and it is apparent that new groups can and will be organized as we are ready to assist them. During the year just closed, seven demonstrations were held with 125 in attendance. Fifteen planning group meetings were held with 75 taking part.

have been all
For the coming year ~~we have some definite goals that we~~ hope to accomplish. No doubt, other tasks will develop during the year

in addition to the following:

1. Completion of the organization of the experimental plot.
2. To coordinate all the agricultural agencies in an all-out drive on contouring.
3. To have lime and roadrock available in ample amounts to meet the demand for the next 12 months.
4. To carry out a complete county-wide program with our dirt contractors.
5. To complete;
 - a. 54 farm plans
 - b. 11 demonstrations
 - c. 1 tour
 - d. 11 news stories

The first election of ^{the} our district was held early in November. The polls were open to the county land owners during the day with P. W. Spilman of Lick Creek Township being re-elected for a 6-year term. During the evening, Dr. Browning, Project Supervisor of the Research Division of the Iowa State College and the Soil Conservation Service gave an interesting talk and accompanying slides on the Clarinda Experimental farm. The meeting was open to farmers of the county with refreshments being served by the district.

^{committee} In order to keep farm leaders posted on the progress of the district along with expressing our appreciation ~~for~~ their assistance in the organization, some 50 Davis County men were treated to a steak dinner on Oct. 24th by the district. A complete review was made by the commissioners on the work accomplished up to date. Morris Heath of the State College gave an enlightening talk along with colored slides on the grasses and pasture improvement program being carried on throughout the state.

Not only have our contracts on lime and dirt moving been valuable to the county, but they have also been a source of revenue for our district. The financial report for the 1946 year is as follows:

INCOME:

Agricultural limestone	16,718 @ .06	\$1003. ⁰⁰
Road Rock	4,917 @ .06	295. ⁰²
Road Rock	10,449 @ .65	522. ⁴⁵
Earth Moving contract		233. ⁸⁸
		<u>\$2054.⁴³</u>

EXPENSES

Royalty on Agricultural lime and	\$1604. ²¹
Postage and telephone calls ^{fire road rock} extinguisher	1.00
Advertising in district work (dirt)	28.86
Secretary Bond	14.80
Lime tests	2.50
Dinner for county workers	3.75
Recording contract fees	62.83
	<u>2.25</u>
	\$1718. ⁹⁵

Balance on hand, January 1, 1947 \$338.⁵⁸

We want to take this opportunity to commend the farm planner, Leland A. McCord and his associate, Dwight Gates. We are also grateful for the assistance of Gerald Schroeder and Parks Forrester, District Conservationists.

P. W. Spilman
P. W. Spilman, Chairman

Dale Blackwell
Dale Blackwell, Secretary

Fred Melvin
Fred Melvin, Commissioner