

ag report

Farmer to retire from soil conservation district

By Jay Mohr
Managing Editor

After 19 years, Betty Farmer won't have to drive to the office anymore.

Farmer, the clerk/typist for the Dickinson County Soil Conservation District Office, Spirit Lake, will retire Tuesday, Oct. 31.

Farmer has been working in that office for 19 of the more than 25 years of service she has given to Iowa. During that time, she has seen a number of changes in the way Iowans, and farmers in general, have done things.

"The biggest change for me was beginning to use the computer," Farmer said. "It has been difficult to pick up. There are so many farm programs which are stored on that computer and it was easy to get mixed up."

But she also added she has witnessed an increase in the use of conservation methods over the years.

"We have a number of additional projects just this fall," Farmer said. "I believe it shows a growing conservation concern coming from the farmers. They are seeing what the wind is doing to the land and the younger farmers appear to be more open to change farming practices for conservation methods."

Farmer said she has been very happy in the position she has held for nearly two decades.

"In the 19 years I've worked here, I don't believe I've heard



one cross word from my boss, (Clarence Call)" Farmer said. "That's really saying something. Everyone I worked with has been great. This is just a nice place to work with good working relationships. That will be the hardest part of leaving the job. But they promised to let me come back to visit, as long as I bring brown-

ies."

Farmer also added that she has a tremendous respect for the Dickinson County Soil Conservation District Board of Commissioners for their efforts in the county.

"The county commissioners have developed a major annual tree-planting campaign and have made enough money from that to carry out other projects throughout the year, including the outdoor classroom for elementary students," she said. "They are also sending teachers to

conservation classes and are working now on water quality projects. They are doing all they can to promote conservation and have been really great to work with."

Farmer has also seen the number of conservation program practices increase over the years. When she began working in the district 19 years ago, programs such as low-till and ridge-tilling were not available. Farmers were using the plow much more often than they are now, and farm equipment was much simpler

then.

She said the conservation district has been diverse in its programs, working to protect the soil and improve the water quality of the area. She added that the work load greatly increased for the district with the 1985 Farm Bill, which created the Conservation Reserve Program and required farmers to adopt conservation plans which must be implemented by 1990.

"I didn't necessarily have more farmers to work for, just more work to do for each farmer,"

Farmer said.

Farmer said she will miss the people she worked with the most, but her retirement plans include more than a little traveling time.

"I also plan to spend a little more time going to the golf course with my husband," Farmer said.

The district plans to honor Farmer for her years of service with an open house 1-4 p.m., Friday, Nov. 3, at the Soil Conservation District Office, Spirit Lake.