

Kossuth County Soil Conservation District

1981 ANNUAL REPORT



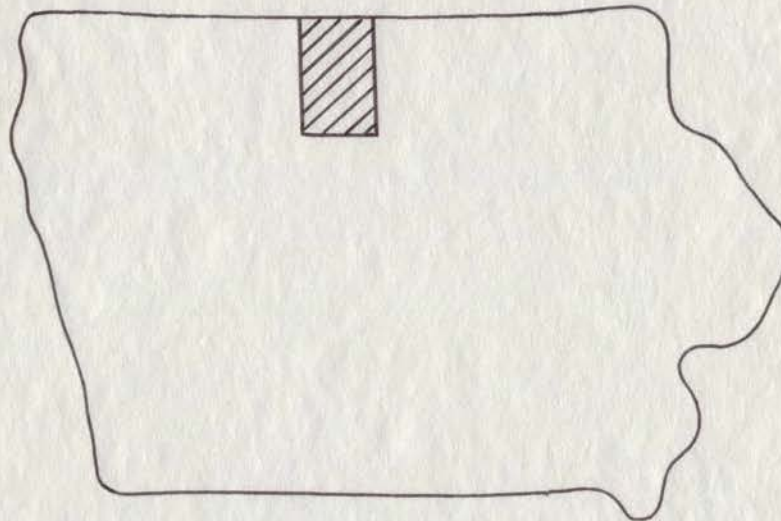
SAVE OUR SOIL --

join the less till-age

1981

ANNUAL REPORT

KOSSUTH COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT



1306 North Main Street

Phone: (515) 295-5156

Algona, Iowa 50511

FOREWARD

The narrative portion of this report covers the 1981 calendar year (January - December). Because the Department of Soil Conservation operates on a different fiscal year, the financial statement covers the period of July 1, 1980, through June 30, 1981.

The 1981 Annual Report was released to all local news media. Copies available to the public are on file at the District Office.

1981 ANNUAL REPORT

A review of the Kossuth Soil Conservation District's program in 1981 reflects that conservation tillage continues to be a highly promoted practice in the county as an effective and economical method of reducing wind and water erosion. Surveys indicate a sizeable increase in the amount of reduced tillage methods used throughout the county. No-till increased from one farmer experimenting on a 40-acre plot in 1980 to twelve farmers planting more than 600 acres of crops no-till in 1981.

INFORMATION PROGRAMS

In an effort to increase the public awareness of the soil erosion problem in Kossuth County and the methods of controlling it, several informational programs were conducted throughout the year.

The SCS slide set "Growing Corn and Beans No-Till in Crop Residues" was shown to the Swea City Young Farmers' group, Algona Lions and Rotary Clubs. This no-till program was also presented to 100 customers of the Iowa State Bank at their Agriculture Appreciation Day in March. A time of discussion followed the presentation to answer questions.

The "Universal Soil Loss Equation" and wind erosion equation and how conservation tillage affects these rates was the topic of programs presented to Algona and Garrigan Voc. Ag. Classes and the Algona Adult

Farmers' evening school. This presentation was the theme of the district's booth at the county fair.

In February, Ohland presented a program to the Master Soybean Growers at their awards ceremony sponsored by Kossuth Farm Bureau. Local slides and the rule of thumb on conservation tillage were used.

Commissioner Antoine and District Conservationist Ohland participated in a panel discussion at the Bancroft Farmers' nite school in February. Topics discussed were problems in no-till on soybean residue, no-till equipment, and how soil loss can be reduced by conservation tillage methods.

A Conservation Tillage Forum was held in March attended by approximately 60 area farmers. The program was co-sponsored by Kossuth S.C.D., Palo Alto S.C.D, and the Kossuth Extension Service.

A conservation tillage meeting with special emphasis on no-till was held in April for Kossuth farmers who were contemplating trying no-till in their farming operation. Extension Service and SCS personnel conducted the program.

Ohland presented the "Soil Erosion in Iowa" slide set at a meeting of the Whittemore Garden Club in October.

In November Commissioner Antoine gave a program on no-till farming to the Bancroft Voc. Ag. Department.

CONSERVATION TILLAGE TOURS

Two conservation tillage tours were held in June at the John Simpson farm near Whittemore and the James Antoine farm at Bancroft. Various tillage methods were viewed. SCS and Extension personnel were

available to discuss the systems and answer questions. Both tours were well attended by area farmers.

NO-TILL PLANTER

In cooperation with John Deere Company and Anderson Implement, the District rented out a no-till planter to farmers who wanted to try the new system. Joe Loebach, Burt; Robert Deal, Algona; John Simpson, Whittemore; Harold Bjustrom, Whittemore; James F. Antoine, Bancroft; and, the Algona Voc-Ag. Department used the planter. A total of 165 acres of corn and soybeans was planted on corn stubble, soybean stubble, or hayland to which no tillage operation was performed prior to planting.

Pioneer Seed Company provided a weigh wagon to measure corn and soybean yields on the various no-till plots. Overall, yields appeared to be very good with corn yields averaging 137 bushels (ranging from 91 to 164 bu.) and soybean yields averaging 40 bushels/acre. Wet weather and scheduling difficulties restricted the number of plots checked.

The District will have two no-till planters available for rent to Kossuth County farmers this coming spring (a 6 row 30" and an 8 row 30"). Inquiries should be made at the local district office in Algona.

CONSERVATION PRACTICES

In spite of wet soil conditions which shortened the construction season considerably, several conservation practices were installed in the county.

Terrace construction totaled 26,500 feet in 1981. Cooperators building terraces were: Lowell Eichenberger (Ledyard Twp.), Rufus Olthoff (Lincoln Twp.), Scuffham Brothers (Union Twp.), Keith Klinksiek, (Ledyard Twp.), Kenneth Garman (Plum Creek Twp.), Susan Behr (Lotts Creek Twp.), Don Wertjes (Lincoln Twp.), Richard Goche (Ramsey Twp.), Gregory Belknap (Eagle Twp.), Robert Plathe (Sherman Twp.), Michael Schmit (Plum Creek Twp.), Eugene Lovstad (Plum Creek Twp.), and Vincent Becker (Ramsey Twp.). An additional 15,000 feet of terraces were staked and construction started; but, due to fall weather conditions, these projects are slated to be completed in the spring and summer of '82.

Jack McClellan (Luverne Twp.), Rodney Schmidt (Portland Twp.), and Ben Hefty (Sherman Twp.) built ponds on their farms this past year.

Grassed waterways were installed by Gregory and Cyril Thilges (Riverdale Twp.), Jerome Weydert (Riverdale Twp.), and Robert Altman (Sherman Twp.).

OUTSTANDING DISTRICT COMMISSIONER

Wendell Christensen was named Iowa's outstanding soil conservation district commissioner at the I.A.S.C.D.C.'s annual conference in November. Christensen, the first Kossuth SCD commissioner to receive this honor, advanced to state competition after having been recognized as outstanding commissioner at the county-level and regional-level of competition.

Christensen has served Kossuth County as a district commissioner since 1970 and as an assistant commissioner for two years prior to that time.

Also serving on the five-member board are Kenneth Brones, Swea City; James F. Antoine, Bancroft; Robert Deal, Algona; and Kent Seely, Algona. District Commissioners serve without salary and guide the overall soil and water conservation program in the county.

SIMPSON WINS WINDBREAK AWARD

John Simpson, rural Whittemore, was named county winner of the 1981 Izaak Walton Windbreak Contest. The award-winning windbreak covers 7 acres and consists of approximately 250 conifers, 375 deciduous trees, and 800 shrubs planted to renovate an existing older grove of maple trees.

A small marsh area is included in the farmstead windbreak area and in most years produces a family of ducks.

ESSAY CONTEST WINNERS

Annie Waller, 6th grader at Seton Grade School and the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Waller of Algona, took first place honors and \$25 cash prize in the junior division of the district's essay contest held in October. Teresa Thorson, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Everett Thorson of Armstrong received first place recognition and prize money in the senior division. She is a sophomore at North Kossuth High School.

Other junior division winners were: 2nd place - Mary Altman (Tom) Irvington; 3rd place - Carolyn Rahm (William) Algona; 4th place - Ann Studer (William) Algona; 5th place - Jackie Koppen (William) Wesley. All are 8th graders at Seton Grade School, Algona.

Wade Wubben (Neil) Swea City won second place in the senior division; Bradley Engelby (Carlyle) Ledyard, placed third. Both are

sophmores at North Kossuth High School.

1981 was the first year for the soil conservation essay contest; forty students participated. The topic was "Soil Conservation - A Sound Investment".

THIRD GRADERS PLANT TREES

In observance of Arbor Day, the District offered a free Colorado Blue Spruce seedling to each third grader wanting to plant one. All schools in the county responded; and, 360 seedlings with step-by-step planting instructions were given out. The seedlings were distributed at Smith Lake as a part of the follow-up program of "Plant Iowa Day" in April.

District commissioners and office staff participated in the Plant Iowa Program by providing demonstrations on tree planting.

CONSERVATION WORKBOOKS

Sixth grade students at Lu Verne Community School and Seton Grade School at Algona completed the conservation workbook "Our Resources and Their Care" during the course of their science studies this past year.

The District provided the workbooks to the schools in a continuing effort to expand its conservation education program to youth.

SOIL STEWARDSHIP WEEK

Soil Stewardship Week was observed in May. The District provided bulletin covers and inserts to all churches in the county requesting the material. Twenty churches participated.

TREES AND SHRUBS SOLD

More than 8200 trees and shrubs were sold for windbreak and wildlife area planting during the spring of '81. These were distributed from Commissioner Seely's farm in April. The income from this project supports various local activities, pays state and national association dues, and is used to purchase office equipment.

The district will be selling trees and shrubs again this spring. Order forms can be obtained at the office.

In 1981, the field office received more than 80 requests for assistance in windbreak planning.

WECIP

Seven Kossuth Co. farmers were approved as participants in the Wind Erosion Control Incentives Program (WECIP) in 1981. Cooperating farmers are Eugene Brass, Lincoln Twp.; James F. Antoine, Ramsey Twp.; John Simpson, Whittemore Twp.; Wendell Christensen, Wesley Twp.; Robert Deal, Cresco Twp.; Kenneth Brones, Eagle Twp.; and Michael Frankl, Irvington Twp. The agreements cover 1,465 acres of farmland.

These farmers will receive a one-time \$30-per-acre payment for a five-year contract to use conservation tillage in their farming operation. To be eligible for payment, 50% of the ground surface must be covered with crop residue after planting during each of the five years of the contract.

This is the second allocation of WECIP funds received in Kossuth County. A total of 13 area farmers have entered the program since its origin in 1979.

STATE COST SHARE PROGRAMS

A total of 22 state cost share applications to install erosion-control practices were approved during the 1981 calendar year -- 19, terrace projects; 1, waterway construction; and, 2, grade stabilization structures. Of these, six were completed; eight, construction underway; and, eight, cancelled.

There is an unobligated balance of \$9,479.17 in the state cost-share account. Applications are being accepted for those projects with spring construction planned.

ECP FUNDS AVAILABLE IN COUNTY

Kossuth County received \$50,000 in E.C.P. (Emergency Conservation Program) funds through the ASCS for terrace repair from damages which occurred during heavy rainstorms in June. Twelve terrace projects qualified for assistance.

COMMISSIONERS' MEETINGS

The Kossuth District Commissioners conducted twelve regular and two special meetings during 1981. These are open meetings, and the public is notified through radio and news releases.

At their organizational meeting in January, Wendell Christensen was re-elected chairman and Kenneth Brones, vice-chairman. Carolyn Marshall was appointed secretary-treasurer. John Reding and John Ley were appointed to one-year terms as assistant commissioners.

In January Commissioner Brones and District Conservationist Ohland attended the annual Commissioners' Short Course, a two-day session at Ames.

Brones and Antoine attended the Spring Regional Commissioners' meeting at Fort Dodge in March.

The commissioners met with the Kossuth Board of Supervisors in April to discuss the conservation needs in the county and to request county funds to supplement the information programs in the district.

District Conservationist Ohland met with the Extension Council at their program planning meeting in April.

A joint session on conservation tillage was held with the Hancock commissioners in May. Prior to the meeting, the group toured several no-till plots in Kossuth County.

In July the commissioners toured various newly-constructed conservation practices in the district in conjunction with their regular meeting. Wives and office staff also attended.

Commissioner Antoine represented the district at the Fall Regional Commissioners' meeting in September at Fort Dodge.

Ohland and Brones met with the ASCS county committeemen in September at their development meeting for the 1982 ACP year.

In November Christensen and Antoine attended the IASDCD's annual conference in Des Moines.

Commissioner Christensen served as county delegate to the Ward I Convention of the Des Moines River Conservancy District held in Algona on November 13. Kossuth and eight other SCD's met and elected a member to serve on the six-man board of directors for the Des Moines River Conservancy District.

The Kossuth Commissioners conducted two public hearings regarding the Rules for Considering Erosion Control Plans for Land Disturbing

Activities in the Development Areas of the County.

Commissioner Antoine represented the district at several of the Des Moines River Conservancy District Advisory Committee meetings held in Des Moines during 1981.

CONSERVATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS

January 1, 1981 - December 31, 1981

<u>Code</u>		
100	District Cooperators	28
102	Individuals and groups assisted.....	414
104	Total services rendered to individuals and groups.....	983
106	Those applying conservation practices.....	254
107	Conservation alternatives provided.....	3,669 acres
108	Conservation plans prepared.....	5,826 acres
110	Conservation plans revised.....	689 acres
312	Waste management systems.....	2
329	Conservation tillage.....	12,221 acres
330	Contour farming.....	733 acres
378	Ponds.....	3
380	Farmstead windbreaks (new).....	2 acres
650	Farmstead windbreak renovation.....	36 acres
412	Grassed waterway.....	3 acres
600	Terraces.....	25,225 feet
638	Water and sediment control basins.....	1,250 feet
645	Wildlife upland habitat management.....	356 acres
750	Cropland benefited by application of conservation practices.....	19,870 acres
760	Cropland adequately protected.....	3,955 acres
770	Cropland adequately treated.....	3,687 acres

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

July 1, 1980 - June 30, 1981

1-M ACCOUNT:

Allocation received.....		\$ 2,104.74
Disbursements		
Office Supplies & Expense	\$ 1,329.67	
Commissioners' Expense	762.35	
Printing Expense	12.72	
Total disbursements.....		\$ 2,104.74

2-M ACCOUNT:

Allocation received.....		\$ 21,999.19
Disbursements		
Salaries	\$18,693.28	
Travel	28.25	
State Retirement	1,074.91	
Social Security	1,186.54	
Health Insurance	799.90	
Life Insurance	110.00	
Long-term Disability	106.31	
Total disbursements.....		\$ 21,999.19

3-M ACCOUNT:

1980-81 allocation received		\$ 65,500.00
Funds paid out - terrace construction	-	35,965.68
Funds obligated, practice not completed	-	<u>29,534.32</u>
Balance of unobligated funds.....		\$ 0.00
1981-82 allocation received		\$ 19,992.00
Funds paid out - terrace construction	-	6,891.33
Funds obligated, practice not completed	-	<u>3,621.50</u>
Balance of unobligated funds.....		\$ 9,479.17

1981 PERSONNEL DIRECTORY

DISTRICT GOVERNING BODY

Wendell Christensen, Wesley Chairman
Kenneth Brones, Swea City Vice-chairman
James F. Antoine, Bancroft..... Commissioner
Robert Deal, Algona..... Commissioner
Kent Seely, Algona..... Commissioner
John Reding, Bode Assistant Commissioner
John Ley, Co. Extension Director..... Assistant Commissioner

OFFICE STAFF

Paul J. Ohland District Conservationist
Meleia Shelman..... Conservation Technician
Loren Bishop..... State Technician
Carolyn Marshall..... District Clerk