

Public conservation meet is for opinions, ideas

The Soil Conservation Service in Davis County held a public meeting Tuesday night at the ASCS office to get ideas and opinions for developing a resource conservation program for the future.

Eighteen people were present at the required meeting where they filled out questionnaires and talked about conservation and pollution.

Because of the Resources Conservation Act of 1977, the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) must analyze soil and water resources every five years. There must also be developed a comprehensive conservation program every five years by conservation groups to determine if current programs are effective in protecting natural resources.

At the local meeting, Verle Arnold, District Conservationist, said that at least 150 local people had already filled out questionnaires. The SCS had a booth at the Davis County Fair where many gave their

opinions on paper.

The same questionnaire is available at the SCS office now and can be filled out there until the end of this month, according to Arnold.

He will then summarize them and the Soil Conservation Commissioners will meet to come up with recommendations. All that data will eventually be considered for making a guide for future conservation and natural resources.

Arnold said that one of the questionnaires he'd gone over had the major concerns of local people as being use of land, soil erosion by water and water quality.

Other subjects of the questionnaire are the disposal of sewage, effects of mining, wind soil erosion, irrigation, flooding, loss of prime farmland, wetlands, forestlands, fish and wildlife habitat, recreation and air quality.

Arnold said some people's major concern was society's and the government's

effectiveness to deal with such problems.

Another questionnaire concerned conservation tillage, contour farming and strip-cropping, vegetative cover, erosion control structures of all kinds and who pays for conservation work and maintenance.

Arnold showed colored slides of many places in Davis County where all kinds of conservation practices had worked well with heavy spring rains. He also showed slides of local flooding and erosion.

"People in Davis County who used to use contour farming methods don't do it now and I don't know why, because it doesn't cost anymore," said Arnold. He added that it might be that farmers just got on their big tractors and wanted to take off across a field.

He said there are some little things farmers can do to help the situation, like shutting of the herbicide sprays when they cross waterways. "But many farmers don't even do that; it's like people just leave their television sets running," he commented.

Phillip Miller asked if there was anything being done or in the planning for flood control of Soap Creek.

Arnold said that the local farmers would have to advise the conservation office of what was needed, then he could notify the state office and maybe get some money for some work.

He added that it was probably time to reactivate the farmer committee that met back in 1971 to get some work done here.

Miller said he would favor lots of small structures as opposed to a big one.

Arnold answered that that depended on what degree of flood control was needed, for a large area or smaller ones. He said he didn't know what type of program would benefit most now but he assumed it would be flood control of bottom land on Soap.

Dean Pettit, coordinator for the 208

water quality from Fairfield, explained the questionnaire he presented to local people and why their ideas and opinions were needed.

Iles Heady, Soil Conservation Commissioner, said, "It's not that we're against conservation practices; it's just that we can't afford them."

He also said he thought that money allotted for the program would go to recreational purposes rather than to the benefit of agricultural land.

Dale Hendricks, who is co-chairman of a committee for Iowa Quality Water Control, said, "I was put on the commission because I am a farmer but others on the committee like to fish. I don't think you can separate the two, though. You can't have fish and clean streams without having soil conservation. One takes care of the other."