

Clarke County Soil Conservation District

SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE



Clarke SCD personnel: L-R, Elmer Nash Mary Mongar T.J. Laing Lois Manchester, Keith Edwards

PERSONNEL ASSIGNED

W. Keith Edwards	District Conservationist
T. J. Laing	Conservation Technician
Lois Manchester	State Clerk, Secretary, Treasurer
Elmer Nash	Conservation Aide
Mary Mongar	CETA Employee

AREA PERSONNEL

Erwin O. Aust	Area Conservationist
Richard Birchmier	Area Engineer
Marjorie Meyer	Area Clerk
Lawrence Dorgan	Civil Engineer
Jack Langford	Civil Engineer
Robert Loudon	RC&D Coordinator

DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS

Philip Henrichs	Chairman
Glen Kimes	Member
Fred Redman	Member
Merrill Thornton	Member

ASSISTING the COMMISSIONERS

Adrian Fuller	Assistant Commissioner
Doyce Miller	Assistant Commissioner
Mrs. Betty Webb	Assistant Commissioner

DISTRICT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Activity	Fiscal 1979
New Cooperators	23 No.
Landowners Assisted	172 No.
Landowners Applying Practices	73 No.
Conservation Plans Prepared	2 No.
Conservation Plans Revised	1 No.
Resource Studies	4 No.
Critical Area Planting	23 Ac.
Ponds and Erosion Control Dams	13 No.
Grassed Waterway	15 Ac.
Pasture and Hayland Planting	155 Ac.
Terraces	15,514 ft.
Subsurface Drains	39,080 ft.
Wildlife Upland Habitat Management	1 Ac.
Cropland Adequately Treated	11 Ac.
Pasture and Hayland Adequately Treated	65 Ac.

Conservation Booster Club Needs Your Help

We need your help! Your Clarke County Soil Conservation District Commissioners are again asking for your financial support in 1980. Without your very generous financial support of this program, it could not be done. Although some of the District's expenses are eligible to be taken care of by state and Federal funds, it is still necessary for the district to finance most of its own programs. The money we receive is used to pay the following:

- 1) Dues to NACD (National Association of Conservation Districts) and IASCD (Iowa Association of Soil Conservation Districts) and membership in the Soil Conservation Society of America. These organizations work with the U.S. Congress and the Iowa legislature to urge passage of much needed conservation legislation and funding.
- 2) Educational materials for schools and exhibits.
- 3) Prize money for local contests.
- 4) Other expenses not eligible from state tax revenues.

We are reaching more and more landowners and operators in getting soil and water conservation practices on the land. We hope you will continue to help

us in our endeavor. Please make check payable to the Clarke County Soil Conservation District and mail or bring to the District office at 820A North Main Street. Our sincere thanks.

Funds Are Made Available

Our District has approximately \$11,000.00 available for cost-sharing on conservation practices with cooperators. It will be shared with landowners at a 50 percent rate.

To be approved, requests must be made at our District Office. Approvals will be made only for projects to be completed in June. All agreements will be automatically cancelled June 30 if the project is not started. We expect a new allocation for late summer and fall work. If you have a spring project in mind, we encourage you to contact our office!

Clarke SCD Updates Five-Year Plan

In response to the Resource Conservation Act of 1977 the Clarke County Soil Conservation District has been doing an inventory and evaluation of the district program and its effectiveness. Along with Federal and State efforts to develop a better conservation program for the 80's the Clarke SCD has been updating its five year plan.

Key items listed in the five year plan include:

Initiate a Clarke County Cooperative Soil Survey to provide complete and useful soil information.

Intensify conservation education programs to help people manage natural resource problems and potentials.

Administer public cost-share funds effectively to meet district soil loss limit regulation.

To implement this plan, priorities have been set for providing technical and cost-share assistance:

- 1) Soil Erosion
- 2) Water Quality
- 3) Ag. Waste Management
- 4) Pasture Management
- 5) Woodland Management
- 6) Wildlife Management
- 7) Drainage

miscellaneous expense.

Any Clarke County farmer may sign up to use the planter to try no-till. Application forms are available at the Clarke County Soil Conservation District office, 820 N. Main Street.

Switchgrass Benefits Cattle and Wildlife

Much of Iowa's upland wildlife is produced on privately-owned agricultural lands. Recent declines in pheasants and other wildlife have been associated with agricultural land-use changes that have reduced

nesting and winter cover. In order to remedy this situation, an agricultural crop that is both economically desirable to the private landowners and beneficial to nesting wildlife is needed. Studies by Commission

biologists in Southern Iowa have shown that switchgrass pastures are readily accepted as nesting cover by pheasants and songbirds. In addition, correctly managed switchgrass should be free from disturbance by cattle and hay harvest until after most nesting has been completed. The Iowa Conservation Commission and Iowa sportsmen are interested in developing a program that will be beneficial to both cattlemen and wildlife.

Switchgrass is a tall (3-5 foot) warm-season native prairie grass once common in Iowa. Switchgrass can supply excellent forage for cattle during the hot summer months, when cool-season grasses such as bluegrass, orchard grass, and fescue are dormant. A good stand of switchgrass may require a year or more to become well established, but once established, it will last indefinitely if it is properly managed. While other native grasses also provide good forage, switchgrass is currently the most popular with Iowa cattlemen.

Switchgrass can be extremely valuable to cattlemen as warm-season livestock forage. A pasture rotation system that incorporates both cool-season forage and switchgrass is more efficient since cattle can be removed from exhausted cool-season pastures in late June, placed on switchgrass during July and August, then return to cool-season pastures during the fall. This allows continuous grazing through the growing season.

180 acres of switchgrass are scheduled for establishment in Clarke County during April and May of 1980.



Edwards Looks At Soil Conservation Methods

Osceola, Iowa — Federal soil conservation officials are urging farmers to take a close look at the kind of soil conservation practices they need to protect the land.

"The most expensive practice isn't always the best for everyone concerned," says Keith Edwards, district conservationist of the U.S. Soil Conservation Service in Clarke County.

"For example, let's look at sloping land in south central Iowa. Terraces would be the most expensive practice and would do a good job of controlling water erosion. But the operator could farm on the contour without terraces and use conservation tillage or no-till. He could do this much more cheaply, control water erosion, and also control wind erosion."

Each farmer makes his own decision on which conservation method to use. The Soil Conservation Service traditionally has worked with farmers to point out the various kinds of practices available.

"We're urging people to consider their options closely for several reasons," Edwards says. "First, it doesn't make sense to spend more money than is needed to control erosion. Second, there isn't enough cost share money for all the expensive practices needed. And finally, it would take too long to get all the structural practices (terraces and sediment and water control structures) built."

Edwards explains that contouring and conservation tillage could be in use across the county "almost overnight," at very little cost.

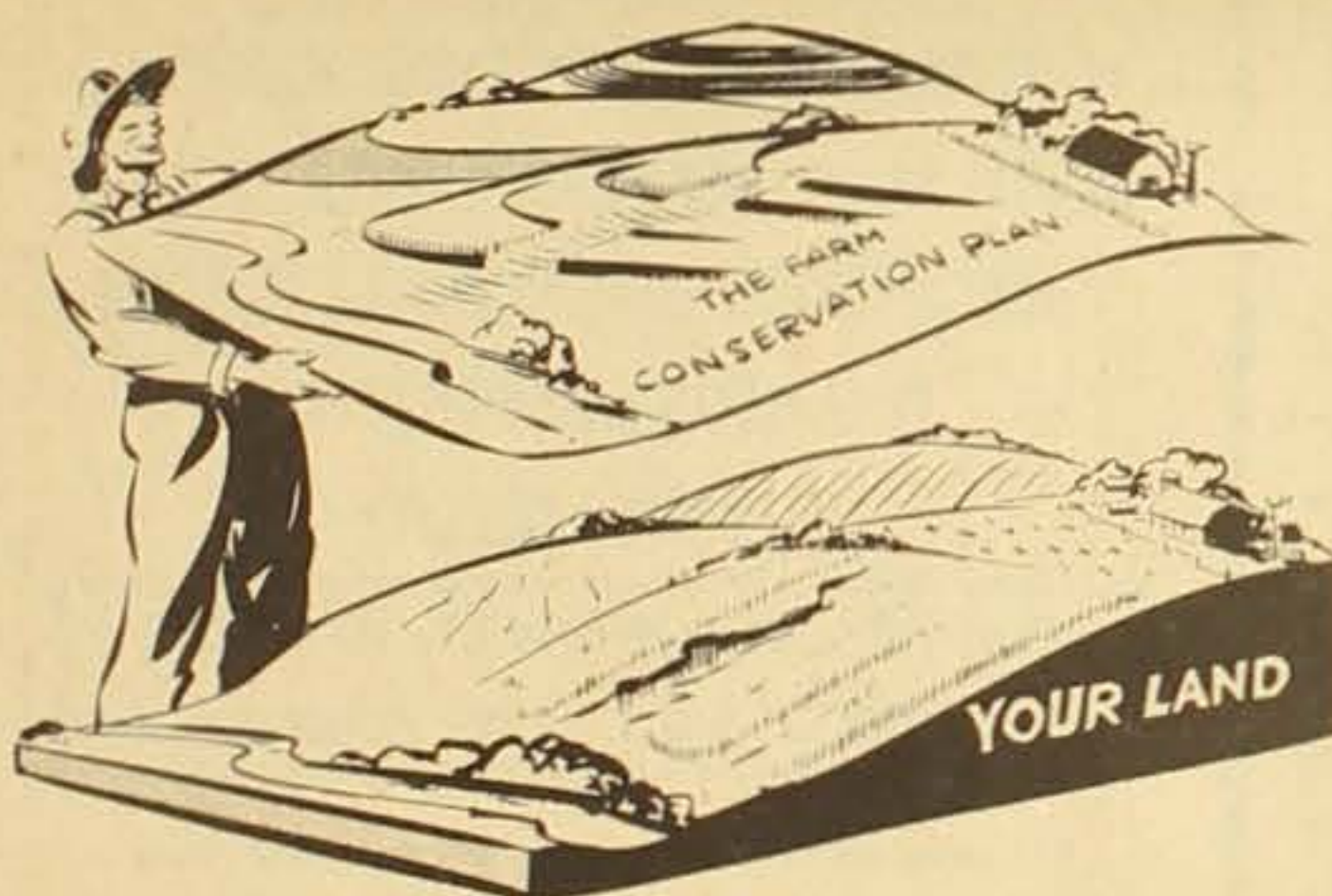
Any significant step-up in the amount of terraces would take increased technical help and more conservation contractors, plus a good deal more money.

District Operates With 3 Budgets

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Expenditures of funds provided by the State of Iowa for District Commissioners' expenses, office supplies, clerk's salary, and cost-share conservation practices.

1-M Budget (July 1, 1978 - June 30, 1979)	
Total Allocation	\$1,437.75
Commissioners' Mileage, Meals	\$636.91
District Expenses	\$800.73
Balance Released	\$0.11
2-M Budget (July 1, 1978 - June 30, 1979)	
Total Allocation	\$9,750.00
Clerk's Salary and Expenses	9,681.96
Balance Released	\$68.04
3-M Budget (State Cost-Share Fund) 1976-77	
Total Allocation	\$34,490.00
Balance Released	\$142.50
3-M Budget (State Cost-Share Fund) 1977-78	
Total Allocation	\$50,000.09
Balance	0.00
3-M Budget (State Cost-Share Fund) 1978-79	
Total Allocation	\$31,000.00
Balance	0.00
3-M Budget (State Cost-Share Fund) 1979-80	
Total Allocation	\$33,000.00
Unobligated Balance	\$10,950.30



No Till Planter Available For Clarke County Farmers



The Clarke County Soil Conservation District has made arrangements with the Ortho-Chemical Company for use of a no-till planter for the 1980 crop growing season.

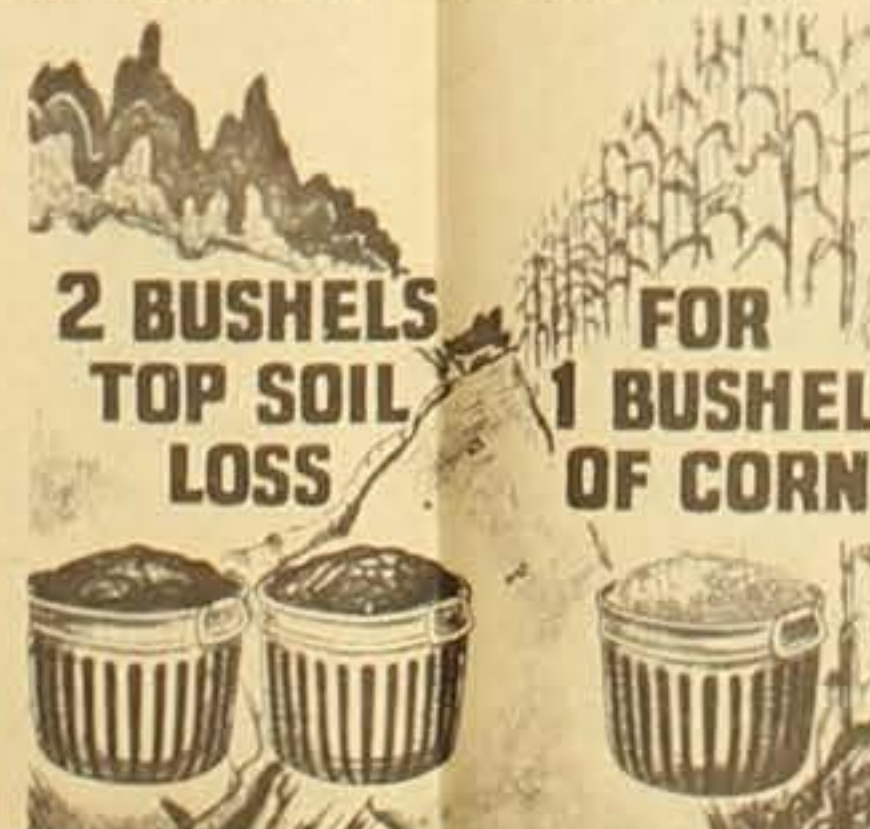
The planter is a four row 38 inch model 600 Allis-Chalmers

pull type plate planter with insecticide. Paraquat, a "burndown" herbicide of Ortho Chemical Company, must be used in demonstration with this planter. \$3.00 per acre is charged to cover costs of maintenance and

miscellaneous expense. Any Clarke County farmer may sign up to use the planter to try no-till. Application forms are available at the Clarke County Soil Conservation District office, 820 N. Main Street.

Mining the soil

A 13 ton per acre soil loss figures out to be 230 bushels of soil loss per acre. With average corn yields of 115 bushels per acre, then, there is a 2 bushel soil loss for every bushel of corn produced. That amounts to mining the soil. Soil resources are exhaustible, just as coal, oil or any other natural resource. So far, crop yields have been kept high with commercial fertilizers. But nitrogen fertilizer use in Iowa has increased by 700% since 1960, extra fertilizer is being used to make up for loss of fertile topsoil.



EROSION — It's that time of year. Soil erosion is greatest in April and May when rainfall intensities are at seasonal peaks. Crop residue mulch, contour tillage, terraces, or grassed waterways are needed for control.



TERRACE — Contour grassed backslope terraces control erosion by reducing slope length and steepness. Compared to up and down hill farming they are 90 percent more effective in erosion control.