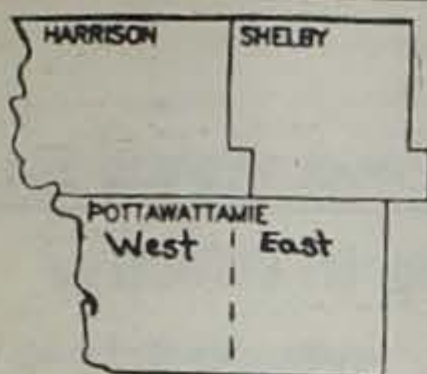




Volume 2
Issue 3

Quad-District Conservation Newsletter



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1997

CRP ground serves a dual purpose in the Orr farm operation

"There will always be a future for farming, because people need to eat!"
Bill Orr

by Lou Waite

William Orr, who prefers to be addressed as "Bill", lives in Keg Creek Township, West Pottawattamie County. He is a fourth generation farmer, living on the farm which has been in his family for over one hundred years.

He received a degree in economics and mechanical agriculture from South Dakota State University, and later taught those subjects at the University of Minnesota in Crookston.

But in 1977 when offered the opportunity to operate the family farm, he accepted with apparently little hesitation or lingering regrets.

Currently, Bill farms 600 acres of which he is owner, and 250 leased acres. Of the total, 640 acres is cropland. He uses no-till and minimum-till residue management systems, with a corn/soybean rotation.

Approximately half of the land he farms is highly erodible, with some steep slopes which called for terracing in the FSA plan. But when considering terracing, Bill said he soon realized that the expense would be great.

"The way these hills are contoured (by nature) it would take thousands of feet of terraces," Bill pointed out. "And farming in and around terraces is difficult -- you have a lot of short rows and places where it is hard to maneuver machinery. That means you have to spend 30 to 40% more time doing field work. Therefore, it was more practical for me to look at alternative methods."

What Bill decided, with planning

assistance from NRCS, was to combine vegetative buffer strips with alternating strips of cropland. Then he bid the buffer strips into the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

"Contoured grassed buffer strips don't have to be the exact same elevation across the hills," he noted. "They cover the soil which otherwise would erode. And when water flows through them, much of the silt from the cropped strips is captured and retained."

"If I had taken that much land (where the buffer strips exist) out of production," he continued, "without putting it into CRP, there is no way it could have been economically feasible. This way, I am not only preventing more severe erosion, but gaining some financial return from land which would not be practical to farm. Some of these hills should never have been farmed."

He stated that he had found brome grass to be the better choice for the buffer strips, because with its deep roots, it forms a more dense sod which holds the soil in place.

Wildlife, including many pheasants, is attracted to the area, especially the switchgrass strips. Bill obviously considers this a mixed blessing. "There are more and more deer, each year," he noted. "The pheasants do little harm, but the deer are becoming a nuisance. A herd of deer can do a lot of damage! And I notice more and more Canada Geese staying around, some even through the winter. Geese can also strip the crops."

This year, Bill re-enrolled in



Tom Bottoms of West Pottawattamie NRCS and William Orr share a bit of humor at the way the Orr family dog is posing for the camera.

CRP, "adding a few acres here, and dropping a few there", so the total remains about the same. "CRP bids are more attractive on the marginal ground where you can't get a good yield," he said.

There are terraces on the farm, and they and the alternative practices gained him a "complete compliance" rating by NRCS. Bill said he has always appreciated the assistance of the NRCS staff, the financial aid from cost-share funds and participating in the farm program.

Tom Bottoms of West Pottawattamie Natural Resources Conservation Service said:

"Bill is a landowner who looks at the alternatives to conserve soil, and then makes up his mind which system he wishes NRCS to assist him in installing."

"In the past, he has hosted NRCS tour groups from Lincoln, Nebraska and Perth, Australia who wanted to observe his soil-conserving techniques."

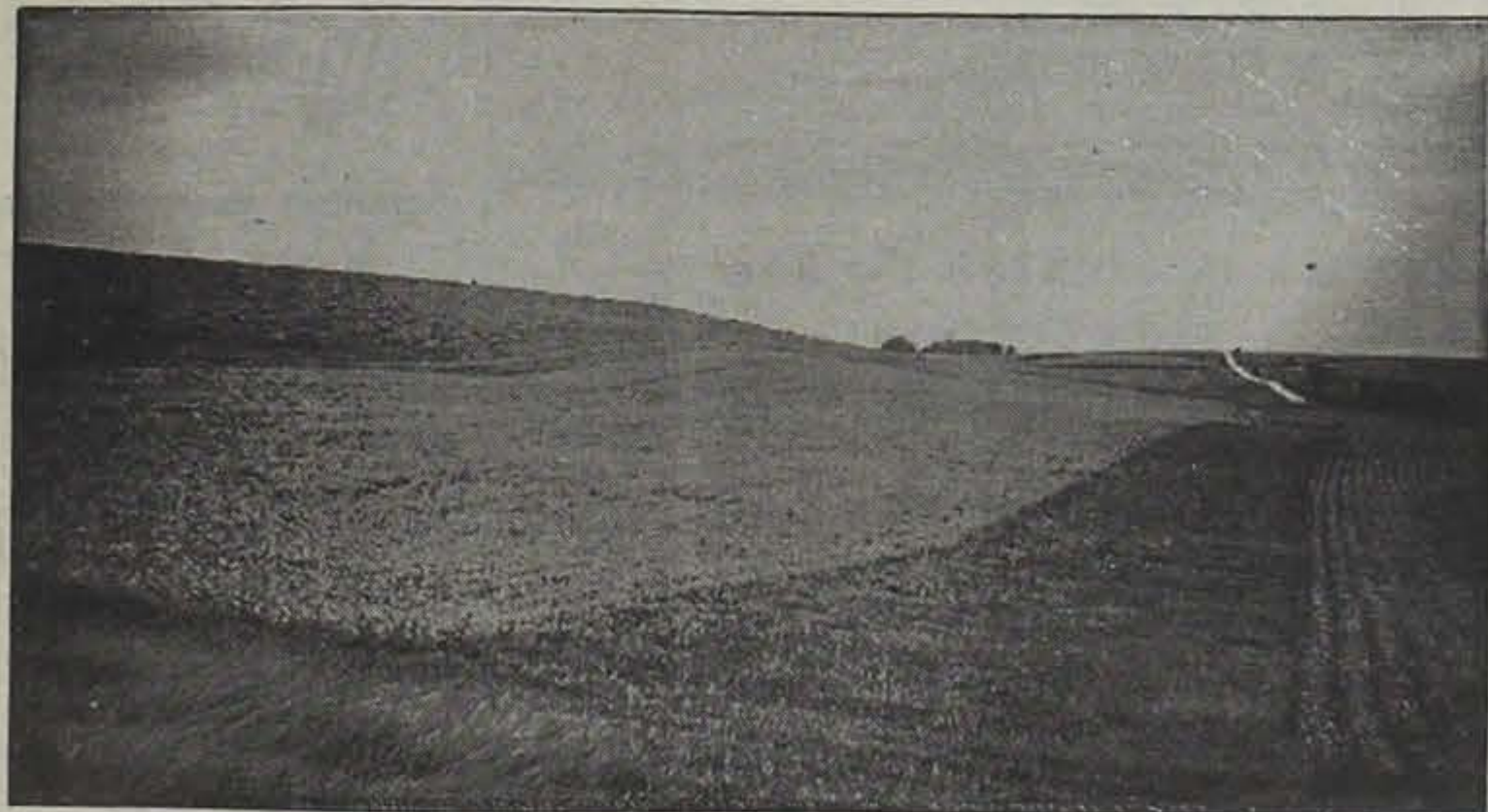
When asked his predictions for the future, Bill reflected for a moment, then said "There will always be a future for farming, because people need to eat. For me, it is a business and a means to feed my family. But I also enjoy it. I find it challenging and interesting."

"Conservation is obviously keeping our land productive for the future. We need help with that. If it were only dealt with as a short-term, short-sighted business,

people would rape the land, as in the past. But admittedly, without financial incentives and support from the NRCS, conservation would probably be more neglected. People are becoming more conservation-conscious, but there are still those who don't seem to see the need. Any undertaking, to be successful, must be a concerted effort. If we hope to preserve anything for future generations, we must work toward that goal."

Bill's wife Jill is a mechanical engineer with Idea Engineering at Plattsmouth, Nebraska. She formerly commuted to her job, but now has a computer networking system at home. Their son, Douglas, is 4 1/2.

Bill enjoys fishing and hunting, and both he and Jill play tennis and golf.



Alternating grassed strips of CRP with row crops such as corn and soybeans is an effective, dual-purpose land treatment on the Orr farm.

Oops!

Our apologies to Adam Stamp, right, scholarship winner from the East Pottawattamie District, who in the last issue was erroneously identified as Kevin Dea, scholarship winner of West Pottawattamie SWCD. Congratulations to both Adam and Kevin.



History of CRP (Conservation Reserve Program)

CRP has its roots in the Soil Bank Act of 1956. At that time, with memories of the Dust Bowl of the 1930's still fresh, the nation sought to prevent repeating the mistakes which had helped cause that great disaster.

Recognizing that eroding cropland had to be protected, and seeking to head off the effects of overproduction of major crops, Congress authorized the USDA to enter into long-term conservation contracts with producers and landowners. The USDA shared the cost of converting cropland from production to protective vegetative cover.

The Soil Bank Program lasted 10 years, and was followed by two similar long-term contract programs. In the early and mid-1970's, the process of farm commodities rose significantly, due to the diminished stocks and increased export demand. Producers responded by planting on marginal cropland by breaking out and planting on range and pasture lands. This continued until the early 1980's, when overproduction and lower prices caused farm income to fall to its lowest level since the 1930's.

By this time, public concern rose over the damage caused by agricultural erosion and water runoff carrying sediment, nutrients and chemicals into streams, rivers and lakes. Wildlife was also affected. Intensive farming and the widespread conversion of fallow land to production had destroyed habitat for many species, leading to declining populations.

In 1985, Congress passed the Food Security Act to address these issues. Title XII of the Act established the CRP. The CRP

provided participants with an annual per-acre rent, plus half the cost of establishing a permanent land cover. In exchange, the participant retired highly erodible or environmentally sensitive cropland from production for 10 to 15 years. The primary goal of the CRP during 1986-89 was to reduce soil erosion on highly erodible cropland. Secondary objectives included protecting the long-run capability to produce food and fiber, reducing sedimentation, improving water quality, increasing wildlife habitat and providing income support for farmers.

The Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act of 1990 extended the CRP enrollment period through 1995, and broadened the program's focus to include improving water quality and environmental goals. Legislation and budget prohibited further enrollment or reduced the enrollment level, effectively capping CRP enrollment at 38 million acres through 1995.

In December, 1994, USDA announced a new emphasis on environmental improvement. CRP participants were allowed to release all or part of the eligible contract acreage before the expiration date without incurring a penalty, providing certain provisions were met. This allowed the replacement of early released contract acreage with land yielding greater environmental benefits. The released acreage had to meet more rigorous standards for soil control, water quality or wildlife habitat benefits. To ensure that environmentally sensitive acreage remained under contract, both 1995 and 1996 early release opportunities were subject to certain restraints.

There were also early releases in 1995 and 1996.

In 1995, the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act was signed into law, further amending the 1985 Act and confirming the CRP's new focus. The new law continued the CRP at a maximum enrollment of 36.4 million acres through 2002, and authorized producers to withdraw certain lands from the CRP at any time, subject to a 60-day notice to USDA.

With the new CRP, launched with the final rule published in February, 1997, a renewed effort begins to achieve the full potential of government-farmer conservation partnerships.

Keeping well water safe

by Julia Gubbels

For most rural residents, wells are the most important source of water for their families, animals and crops. Because it is so valuable, it is critical that everyone make every effort to keep well water safe. To protect water from contamination, it is important to know as much as possible about the chemicals used and the land which is farmed.

A combination of four major factors determines whether an ag chemical is likely to reach ground water. These include:

(1) properties of the chemical (2) properties of the soil (3) conditions of the site and (4) chemical use-management practices.

Through runoff, nearby surface water is also affected by these factors. Ag chemical containers labels often list warnings about the potential of the chemical to leach

A proven, not-so-new pest control system which is gaining popularity is Integrated Pest Management, or IPM. Chances are likely that most landusers already incorporate some IPM practices. IPM blends chemical, biological and cultural pest control practices to produce a sound economic and environmental strategy.

Those wishing to evaluate their IPM program should consider the following:

SUPPRESS, DON'T EXTERMINATE. This permits a combination of techniques which might be used to limit weed, insect and disease pests to levels low enough to where damage is not serious.

KNOW THE SITE ECOLOGY. Most probably know the agronomic aspects of their property like the back of their hand, but they should also appreciate its ecological and environmental components. For example, how close are the wells, wetlands, surface water

into ground water.

To protect well water, a careful consideration must be made of chemicals, cultivation practices and other management decisions for the crop, soil type, land conditions, weather patterns and farming situation. Such decisions are especially important for those farming in an environmentally sensitive area (one with highly vulnerable water supplies.)

Doing a better job of managing ag chemicals doesn't necessarily mean a greater burden for the landuser. It just means that everyone must keep "farming smarter", to protect the very resources which make the countryside such a great place in which to live.

IPM - making it effective

supplies or wildlife habitats? Have pest problems grown as practices have been changed, or natural areas removed which might have been home to birds or natural insect predators?

GET ADVICE FROM A TRUSTED SOURCE. Developing a successful IPM program takes time and extra care to monitor, plan and implement. The county extension agent, district conservation office or pesticide dealer can be consulted for help. Pesticide dealers frequently provide farm services such as scouting, pest monitoring, field mapping, soil and plant analysis, determination of economic thresholds, and suggestions of the most appropriate pest control methods.

It is recommended that those who have not already done so consider incorporating an IPM approach into their pest control efforts. According to informed sources, "It is an environmentally sound approach to pest control which deserves attention."

Soil & Water Conservation Week observed

In observation of Soil & Water Conservation Week, which was celebrated August 31 through September 6, Michelle Zimmerman, CRP, and Justin Elkin, SCT, made a presentation on conservation techniques and their impacts. They visited Riverside, AvoHa and Walnut school districts.

Aimee Holtz donated her 4-H project, a model farm, for the presentation. Her display demonstrated the positives and negatives of several different conservation practices.

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Urban students learn about rural concerns



by Julia Gubbels
County Resource Planner

Lloyd Munson, science teacher at Lewis Central Middle School in Council Bluffs, has taken the initiative in educating a predominantly urban group of students about agriculture and natural resources. Lloyd has been involved with various educational projects and programs while at LCMS.

He is a member of the West Pottawattamie SWCD Environmental Education Council. The council consists of teachers, County Conservation Board members and a SWCD employee. It coordinates and conducts conservation education programs

and events throughout the county. Annual events in which Lloyd's seventh grade students participate are the poster contest, sponsored by SWCD, and a conservation education field day at Arrowhead Park. Students from his classes have been regional winners in the poster contest. Lloyd was part of a committee which evaluated the book *Earthworm Empire* developed at Iowa State University.

In addition to the above activities, Lloyd was instrumental in developing and implementing *Project Green* at Lewis Central Middle School. Munson and Vern Hundtofte, retired LCMS science teacher, originated the idea for the farm appreciation day, after attending an Instructor's conference in Des Moines. The intent of *Project Green* is to increase the knowledge of the students in the agricultural aspect. "My hope," stressed Munson, "is to make more LC students aware of the importance of agriculture and how it affects their everyday lives."

The project involves planting corn and soybean plots in the spring and having an Agricultural Awareness/Harvest Day in the fall. Layout of the plots is done by the staff and the seventh grade. The first planting was in 1994, with the first Ag Awareness Harvest Day held that fall. The corn and soybean plots are planted by the seventh grade students in the spring, and in the fall, as eighth graders, they harvest the crops they planted.

The concept of growing crops

evolved into one big project which incorporates mathematics, art, science and home economics. In addition to bringing in their harvest, students are assigned to measure an acre, draw pictures of a farm still-life scene and cook corn meal.

"Students should have a wider farm knowledge," commented a Farm Service Co-op representative. "How can we help promote agricultural awareness?" Since the beginning of this project, the Co-op has been an active participant. The Co-op gives a technology presentation and also brings machinery for display. The students are also given the opportunity to tour a grain elevator.

"It is a great learning experience and a lot more fun than just reading from a book," commented one student.

Plans are to expand the planting area and create a landscaping project. Munson continues to improve the annual event to maintain an educational and quality learning experience for the students. This project has proven to be an exciting event which reinforces the agricultural theme of the day.

Lloyd began his teaching career at Lewis Central Middle School in

by Julia Gubbels
County Resource Planner

The farm is a great place to grow up, live and visit. But it can also be a very dangerous place. Each year, many adults and children are killed on farms. These deaths and thousands of injuries should not be accepted as a fact of farm life. The week of September 22 through 26 marked Farm Safety Week.

Prepare for emergencies. Thinking ahead can help anyone stay calm in emergencies, instead of being overcome by panic and confusion. Post emergency telephone numbers by all the phones. Place first aid kits in farm vehicles, the house and other buildings.

Unique features and hazards are found in barns, machine sheds and garages. Gasoline should be stored

in appropriate containers, as well as agri-chemicals. Dual tires from equipment should be lying down, not propped up against the side of a building.

Machinery and equipment can be dangerous. These might include lawn mowers, tractors, all-terrain vehicles, wagons, power take-offs and augers. Use caution when around these.

Keep all these things in mind to have a safe farm. With harvest underway, farm families need to be careful when working long hours. While working at dark, make vehicles visible to others. Travelers also need to be aware of added farm-vehicle traffic on roads.

Teamwork is essential to farm safety! Safe farms: a place for future generations to live, work and play.

1972. He and his wife, Winnie, live in rural Silver City. Winnie is employed by a local insurance company. They have two sons, Kyle 25, and Mitch 19. Kyle is married, living in Des Moines, and is a music critic for the *Des Moines Register* newspaper. Kyle lives at home and is a student at Iowa Western Community College. "This project is unique, and

really needed to let predominantly urban youth know where their food comes from," commented Lyle Peterson, District Conservationist at the Council Bluffs NRCS office. "I met Lloyd at the initiation of this project and commend him on the fine job he has done maintaining it and getting cooperation from various agencies and businesses."

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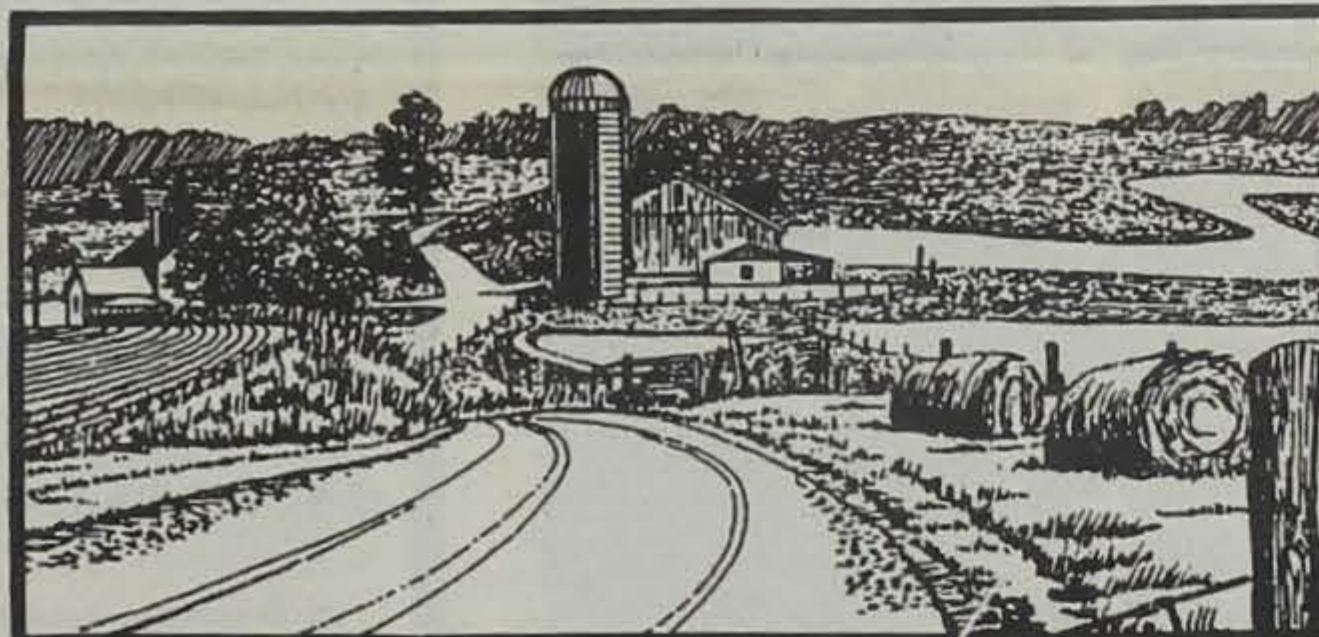
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Understanding and improving EBI

The key to making a good offer for the 16th CRP sign-up

by Russ Kurth
Harrison District
Conservationist

The dates for the 16th CRP sign-up, general and continuous, have been announced as follows:

General Signup - This will include most of the land which was eligible in the past. Land eligibility includes slopes of 5% or more and areas subject to scour erosion along major streams or rivers. Applicants are competing on a nationwide basis, so it is important for producers to work with their district NRCS offices so as to improve their score. The maximum bid caps are based on the soil types offered.

Continuous Signup - This is for filter strips along streams, new grassed waterways, field windbreaks, contour buffer strips, riparian buffer areas, living snow fences and shallow water area for wildlife. Producers are informed of the bid cap based on soil type and are automatically approved. A 20% bonus is added because of special

water quality significance.

CRP offers for the 16th sign-up will be assigned points for the following 7 factors:

- N1) Wildlife - 0 to 100 points possible
- N2) Water Quality - 0 to 100 points possible
- N3) Soil Erosion - 0 to 100 points possible
- N4) Retention - (Will the conservation practice persist after the CRP contract expires?) - 0 to 50 points possible
- N5) Air Quality - 0 to 25 points possible
- N6) Priority Area - 0 to 25 points possible
- N7) Cost - (Rental rate offered on CRP contract) - 0 to 200 points possible.

Landowners have control over factors 1, 3, 4 and 7. Points assigned to factors 2, 5 and 6 are physical characteristics of land that the landowner cannot influence.

Explanations:

- N1) Wildlife points (maximum 100): Half the points (50) under this factor are awarded

based on vegetation planted on CRP contracts. The more diverse the stand, the higher the points. A stand of Bromegrass would receive 10 points, a mixture of 2 grasses and one legume would receive 30 points. A warm season grass stand with 3 native grasses and 2 legumes would receive 50 points.

**** Conservation practices** - CPA, warm season grasses, CP3a, hardwood tree plantings; CP4D, permanent wildlife habitat; CP23, wetland restoration.

Landowners are awarded 50 points for vegetation if landowners choose to plant the best plants for wildlife.

**** Vegetation points** are divided by 50 to create a multiplier (50/50 = 1; 40/50 = 0.8; 10/50 = 0.2).

***** Vegetation points** are added to remaining 50 points a landowner may collect for wildlife.

0 to 15 - Threatened and endangered species

0.5 or 10 - Proximity to water

0.5 or 10 - Adjacent protected areas

0.2 or 5 - Contract size

0.1, 5 or 10 - Restored

cropped wetland to upland. Example: A landowner who chooses to leave Bromegrass receives 10 vegetation points, has 10 points for proximity to water, and 5 points for contract size would have $(10 + 10 + 5) 10/50$ N1 points. If this same landowner opted to improve cover by establishing another grass and 2 legumes, he/she would receive 40 vegetation points and would have $(40 + 10 + 5) 40/50$ 44 N1 points.

N2) The second factor of the EBI, involves water quality benefits from reduced erosion, runoff and leaching. This factor is composed of 4 subfactors

which address:

a) Location and importance of water bodies within the state.

b) Reduction of potential leaching of pesticides and nutrients

c) Impact of sediment on surface water quality

e) Water quality benefits of wetland restoration.

(All these factors are based on the physical characteristics of the land which the landowner/user cannot change).

N3) On-farm benefits of reduced erosion, 0 to 100 points. The factor measures the on-farm impacts associated with erosion. It is based on the Erosion Index (EI) which is the inherent potential of the land to erode without the influence of management measures. In western Iowa on highly erodible land, if landowners do not receive all 100 points for the factor, they need to look at redefining their field and taking out some ridge or bottom ground to get the EI factor to 21 points or greater.

N4) Enduring benefits - 0 to 50 points. This factor credits practices established and the likelihood of those practices persisting beyond the life span of the CRP contract period.

a) New hardwood tree plantings - 50 points

b) Shrub plantings on at least 5% of the acres - 25 points

c) Restoration of threatened and endangered species wildlife habitat - 25 points (A producer who restores a native prairie with 20 or more species of native grasses, legumes and forbs on a small part of the acres would receive all 25 points).

d) New or existing native grass seedings or shrubs - 10 points (Plantings with 5 or more species).

N5) Air quality benefits from reduced wind erosion - 0 to 35

points. This factor is based upon the soils and location of the land. A producer does not have any influence upon these points.

N6) Conservation priority area - 0 to 25 points. This factor takes into account the benefits of multiple CRP contracts to address specific concerns of designated CPA's.

N7) Cost factor. The cost factor provides greater weight to offers with lower costs and assists in maximizing environmental benefits relative to dollars. There are 3 subfactors:

a) Cost factor based only on the applicants per acre offer. Points for this subfactor are determined after sign-up.

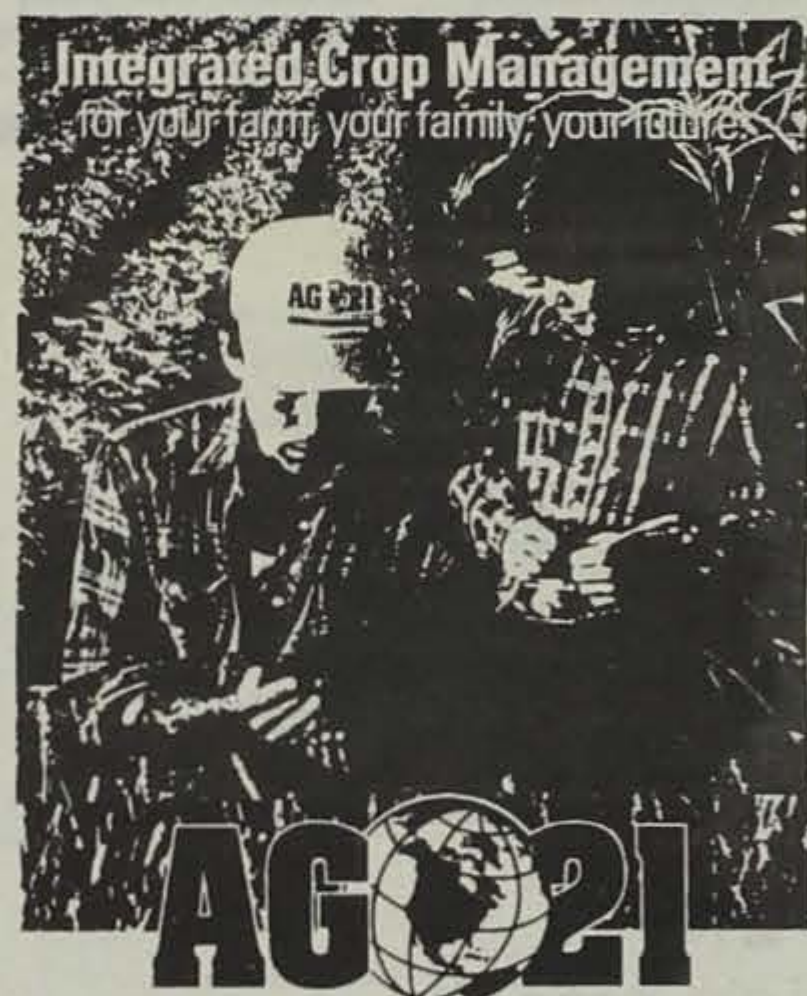
b) Cost-share factor - 10 points if no cost-share needed; 0 points if cost-share is provided. A producer electing not to receive cost share will be credited an additional 10 points, but in general a greater number of points may be received by enhancing the cover.

c) A cost-share factor based on an offer less than the maximum payment rate. One point will be earned for every whole dollar below the maximum payment rate. A maximum of 15 points can be awarded for this subfactor.

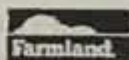
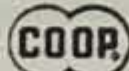
****If over 51% of the land offered is in a CPA and the landowner earns 40% of the points for that resource concern, they can earn CPA points.**

Producers planning to make offers for the 16th sign-up need to look at all the factors they can influence, the cost of earning more points and make the best offer possible.

Producers with expiring CRP should inventory the existing cover on the land. The existing Bromegrass cover may have some alfalfa, sweet clover, goldenrod and scattered shrubs.



A new environmentally driven technology is evolving. It involves a new way of thinking about and managing your crops. It provides you the opportunity for long term profitability and environmental stewardship for the land. It is AG-21.



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County CRP Statistics

- a County CRP acreage totals as of Jan 1 1997
 b CRP acreage expiring Sept. 30 1997
 c Acreage offered into CRP during the March 1997 CRP sign-up (15th)
 d Number of offered acres accepted during the 15th CRP sign-up
 e Net CRP acreage remaining (new acres accepted in the 15th sign-up plus unexpired acres) as of Oct. 1 1997.
 Note continuous CRP and the fall sign-up will likely change these net numbers.
 f Average rental payment of accepted acres in the 15th sign-up.

COUNTY	CURRENT CRP (Jan 1 1997) (ACRES) ^a	EXPIRING CRP (Oct 1 1997) (ACRES) ^b	EXPIRING CRP (%)	SIGNUP 15 OFFERED (Mar 1997) (ACRES) ^c	SIGNUP 15 ACCEPTED (May 1997) (ACRES) ^d	CRP ACREAGE (Oct 1 1997) (ACRES) ^e	NET CHANGE (ACRES)	NET CHANGE (%)	IOWA AVE. RENTAL PAYMENT (\$/ACRE) ^f
HARRISON	11553	6830	59%	7944	3410	8133	-3420	-30%	\$88.46
E POTTAWAT.	4205	1819	43%	2335	541	2927	-1278	-30%	\$96.15
W POTTAWAT.	4188	2707	65%	2972	1083	2564	-1624	-39%	\$84.17
SHELBY	7418	4398	59%	4100	1174	4194	-3224	-43%	\$92.76

The ABC's of CRP

by Kevin Gee
Conservation Tech Aide

The CRP program has been a very popular and effective method for erosion reduction across the Midwest. However, the program has had many changes during the current farm bill. Thus I will summarize some of the details you may not realize for our current and upcoming CRP signups.

There are two main signups for the CRP: The general signup (usually in one month blocks) or the continuous signup. Continuous signup was not offered 10 years ago when many producers contemplated the program.

The general signup is a much more involved process than under previous programs. Where previous signups emphasized just erosion loss, the new CRP emphasizes wildlife habitat and water quality as well.

Accordingly, there are more points assigned if a field is near a larger body of water (Walnut Creek, Silver Creek, the Nishnabotna River, ponds, etc.) parks, public

areas, etc.

Erosion reduction benefits are still a significant emphasis with CRP. There is a maximum of 100 points available in the erosion index (EI) category. Each soil type is assigned a numerical value indicating its level of erosion sensitivity. Steeper slopes have a much higher EI numerical value. The 100 points is given to any tract averaging an EI of 21 or above. Our computer program computes the acres of each soil type within the designated area. Thus, a tract needs to have mainly a D sidehill slope soils with just a few C and B slope soils to get the maximum points and average 21. Many producers bid whole fields in 10 years ago, but may need to farm the ridge and creek bottom areas today to improve the chances of CRP acceptance. During the signup last spring, the bids which were accepted all had an EI of 21 or greater.

The other very BIG change from earlier CRP programs is that the maximum bid cap is based on the prominent 3 soil types within

the field. Each county has assigned a "rental rate" for each soil type in that county, based on its productivity level. For example, common Western Iowa soils and East Pottawattamie rates are 93D2 - 192D2 - \$75.00/Ac.; 99D - 10D2 - \$105/Ac.; 9C, 99C and 11B - \$115/Ac. Thus the rates will be noticeably higher than the older contract figures.

As I indicated earlier, the continuous signup is a new alternative with a great deal of flexibility. Continuous signups can be taken any day of the year and basically focus on grass filter strips along creeks, grass bufferstrips and waterways. The continuous signup has several distinct characteristics which can work to this program's advantage.

The grass filter strips along creeks, streams and rivers are primarily of four soil types in East Pott. These soil types and their rental rates are as follows: 11B - \$138/Ac.; 8B, 212, 133 - \$162/Ac. Please note these rates are higher as there is a 20% additional incentive for filter

strips. The width for these strips which can be enrolled need to average 66 - 99 feet. If a field has a very jagged creekline, varying the strip width is permissible. As with any continuous signup, you know immediately if accepted, you need not lower your bid to get in and the contract can start right away.

Contour grass buffer strips can also be a very attractive continuous signup element. There is a great deal of flexibility in crop and grass widths to fit planter and mower sizes. The point rows

can be put in either the crop or grass portion for greatest ease. Typically, the crop width ranges from 80 to 105 feet and the grass width from 20 to 60 feet. Normally, producers wish to have the least amount in grass as possible, but if the opposite were true, up to 1/3 of the sidehill areas could be in the grass portion. Thus, if you were unable to get a field re-enrolled into the general signup, bufferstrips would be an option to get up to 1/3 of the

Continued on Page 18



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Famous Quotes in Agriculture:

"Farming looks mighty easy when your plow is a pencil and you're a thousand miles from the corn field"
... Dwight D. Eisenhower

"Treat the land well. It was not given to you by your parents. It was loaned to you by your children."
... African Proverb

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October 4, 1979

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Committeemen represent 87 years of service

Two longtime County Committee members of the Farm Services Agency (FSA - formerly ASCS) were recently recognized for their dedication and contributions "to the cause". They were Bernard McLaughlin, who served 46 years, and Verne Redinbaugh, serving 41 years.

In her remarks at the informal reception honoring the two men, Pat Warmbier, FSA Executive Director, said:

"I would just like to say 'thank you' to both Verne and Bernard for their hard work and continued service to the FSA Agency. Their dedication has been a real asset to the agency and also the producers in Harrison County. I also want to congratulate them on their combined service of 87 years!"

John Awtry, FSA District Director, presented the honorees with plaques commemorating their accomplishments, and also expressed appreciation for and congratulations to them.

Bernard McLaughlin

Bernard was born near Moorhead, the son of Dean and Rose McLaughlin.

He graduated from Woodbine High School and the University of Iowa, receiving a degree in chemistry. After serving with the Coast Guard from 1941 through 1945, he returned to Iowa and began farming four miles west of Logan. He represented the fourth generation of his family to become stewards of the soil.

In 1945, he was married to Joan Harmon, and they recently celebrated their 52nd wedding

anniversary.

Bernard and Joan still live on the family farm, but are now technically "retired." They spend the winters in Tucson, AZ, and enjoy traveling around the rest of the country. They have three children, Phillip, Linda (Levis) and Susan (Lee), none of whom are farmers.

"My father was always conservation conscious," Bernard said, "I grew up with that, so it was natural for me to follow his example. That interest is probably one reason I served with ASCS. I always found it worthwhile and very interesting. On my farm, I always tried to continue what my father began, or improve on it as better technology came along."

Bernard said the biggest change taking place during the years was probably the modernization of farm equipment and machinery. "Back when I started, no one could have imagined what farmers of today have to work with," he remarked, with a shake of his head. "And it's an even further cry from what it was when I was growing up!"

During his tenure with ACSC/FSA Bernard served as reporter (9 years), vice-chairman, chairman (8 years), commodity inspector (3 years), field assistant (4 years), alternate (2 years) and as a member of the bin crew (not in succession or particularly that order). He even helped dismantle bins in the long ago, receiving \$2.68 per hour for his labor. His pay on the bin crew was \$16.80 per day, and for commodity

inspector, he received \$24.00 per diem.

He continues as a member of the Harrison County FSA Committee and serves as a COC second alternate, while still maintaining a keen interest in "what's going on."

Verne Redinbaugh

Born in Pottawattamie County, Verne came to Harrison County with his family when a youngster. His grandfather was a riverboat captain, but his father, Verne Sr., chose to become a farmer.

He attended Sorrel Top school, then graduated from the Neola High School. He related that he got as far as Ft. Leavenworth in Kansas before learning that his military deferment had been

extended so he could return home and help with the harvest. "I practically had one foot on the train!" Verne said with a chuckle.

He met June Ann Christopherson, who was employed at the International Harvester Company in Omaha. They were married on his birthday, September 17, 1943. They became parents of seven children.

In 1944, Verne began farming his father's land near Neola, and in the early fifties moved to the farm where he still resides. "I own both those farms, now," Verne commented, "but it wasn't easy."

Verne recalled the year that June had lockjaw, and miraculously survived. And that the house burned in 1967,

necessitating the building of a new one. He also recalled that he was one of the first in the area to try contour farming.

"George Holmberg was the Soil Conservationist then", he said, "and terracing was also something new. I remember I was one of the first to put down dry fertilizer starter with a planter to give corn a better start. We cultivated corn then, and I had to drop down a gear on my brother's place because the corn was so high. Guess that proved my point!"

Verne also had good memories of the year he, Louis Culver, Wilbur Peters, Phil Forde, Kenneth Austin (and another whose name he couldn't recall) went by train to Chicago, then on to Phoenix, Arizona where they visited the Goodyear Research Farm.

"I really enjoyed it," Verne said. "We got to see irrigation being demonstrated, using a full-flood method. We saw caterpillar machinery being operated at a testing grounds in the mountains, and a lot more. We learned a lot."

Through the 41 years with ASCS/FSA county committee, Verne also served as reporter (2 years), vice chairman (16 years), alternate (3 years), and chairman (5 years). (These terms are not listed in succession or any certain order). He is still a member of the county committee, currently serving once more as chairman.

"It's been interesting," Verne mused. "I like people, and I hope I was helpful to them. I'll continue as long as I am able, and people still want me." Then with a grin, he added, "They haven't thrown me out yet, anyway!"

Verne's wife died almost two years ago. "I miss her," Verne said sadly, "but I keep busy. That helps a little."

A wise man asks questions . . . a fool never does. Don't hesitate to question something you do not understand.



FSA District Director John Awtry, center, congratulates Bernard McLaughlin, left and Verne Redinbaugh, right, on their 87 years of combined service to the agency.

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Overlook completed in Loess Hills State Forest

"The beauty of these ancient hills is beyond description." - Mutel

by Brent Olson, Area Forester

The Loess Hills State Forest this past May completed the "Loess Hills Forest Overlook", located near Preparation Canyon State Park in Monona County.

The overlook includes a 40 x 40 observation platform, with a ramp leading up to the elevated deck. This makes the unique scenic area accessible for everyone to view.

So now, if hiking through the forest is not your forte' and scenic driving leaves you feeling like you are missing something, there is another option. The Loess Hills Forest Overlook is a fully accessible structure which provides a spectacular view of the Loess Hills, which were formed 14,000 years ago by melting glaciers. Also impressive are the forest, prairie and Missouri River bottom panoramas.

The DNR built the \$66,000 structure with Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) funds. The parking lot across from the Overlook was built in cooperation with the Monona County Roads Department, and completed in June. The Overlook provides viewers the opportunity to see native forest trees, many native prairie plants, grasses and wildflower species. Some are unique to this area of the state, such as the Yucca plant. It is also very common to see many varieties of wildlife species, from birds and butterflies, to many game animals. The ridges leading away from the Overlook are trailways for deer and other forest "critters".

The Loess Hills State Forest, headquartered in Pisgah, has grown in size to about 9100 acres. The Forest has been purchasing

properties from willing sellers since 1986, using REAP funds. The property taxes on these acquired lands continue to be paid.

The forest is open to public hunting and has twenty-two parking areas available for access into the four units surrounding Pisgah. The units are the Pisgah Unit, Mondamin Unit, Little Sioux Unit, and Preparation Canyon Unit.

In October of this year, bids will be opened for a visitor center, which will be built in Pisgah, adjacent to the present Forest Headquarters, 219 Front Street, one block west of Highway 183. The Visitor Center will have Loess

For more information, contact the Loess Hills State Forest, P O Box 158, Pisgah, Iowa 51564-0158, or call 712-456-2924.



The overlook completed this summer provides easier access to a popular viewing site in the Loess Hills near Preparation Canyon State Park.



One of the panoramic vistas which may be enjoyed by viewers making use of the overlook.

Hills displays, a conference room and more.

In order to find the Overlook, visitors may take Highway 183 north of Pisgah for 5 miles, or south of Moorhead for 2 miles, then take the Preparation Canyon Park paved road (314th Street) west for about 2 miles. At a "Y"

intersection (Oak Street) where the pavement ends, turn right and follow the ridge for about another mile and a half, which leads to the parking lot of the Overlook.

On October 24 at 1:00 p.m., an "Overlook Dedication" will be held,

to which the public is invited. The DNR Director and Commissioner will both be present, as well as the State Forester, members of the Iowa Legislature and Harrison and Monona County officials.

Whether your interest is bird-

watching, picture-taking, geology or nature study, the Loess Hills Park Overlook offers many opportunities to explore outdoor interests. We invite you to use this impressive new structure.

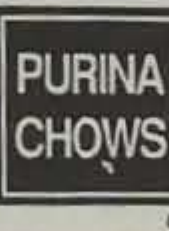
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District award winners, 1986 - 1997

1986 -

Owner/Operator - Terry and Gary Collins, Woodbine
Landlord/Tenant - Patricia Fell, Council Bluffs, owner
Ken Leonard, Logan, tenant
Windbreak - Doug Kunze, Persia

1987 -

Owner/Operator - Jackie Dollen and Sons, Shelby
New Cooperator - Edwin and Pauline Seabury, Pisgah
Landlord/Tenant - Leo Driver, Mo. Valley, landlord
Kenneth McIntosh, Mo. Valley, tenant
Bernard McIntosh, Neola, tenant
Wildlife Farmer - W. T. Roden, Mondamin
Windbreak - Rick Shearer, Little Sioux

1988 -

Owner/Operator - Paul and Phyllis Hansen, Logan
Landlord/Tenant - Donald and Mildred Willard, Persia, owners
James and Robert Willard, Logan, tenants
New Cooperator - William Paul and Virginia Hand, owners
Roger and Karen McIntosh, Mo. Valley, tenants
Wildlife Farmer - Earl and Agnes Weber, Dunlap
Windbreak - Larry and Barbara Warner, Logan

1989 -

Owner/Operator - Dale Messenger, Ames, owner
Donald Messenger, Moorhead, operator
Landlord/Tenant - Larry Wilwerding, Omaha, owner
Edward Blum, Panama, tenant
New Cooperator - Ivan Redinbaugh, Neola, owner
Roger Redinbaugh, operator, Neola.
Pasture Management - James Davis, Woodbine
Windbreak - Lenus Liljedahl, Mo. Valley
Conservation Teacher - Donald Groff, Woodbine

1990 -

Owner/Operator - Marvin Johnson, Persia, owner
Duane Johnson, Persia, operator
Landlord/Tenant - W. J. Eickenberry Trust, Co. Bluffs, owners
Merle Christiansen, Logan, tenant
New Cooperator - Scott and Beverly Ganzhorn, Woodbine
Pasture Management and Forage - Keith Culver, Dunlap
Windbreak - Robert Cogdill, Dunlap
Conservation Teacher - Phyllis Rich, Dunlap

1991 -

Owner/Operator - Velva Barry, Woodbine, owner
Randy Barry, Woodbine, operator
Landlord/Tenant - Mildred Kuster, owner
Bill Iwen, Persia, tenant
New Cooperator - Danny Cohrs, Logan
Pasture & Hayland Management - Lynn Wohlers, Mo. Valley
Windbreak - Calvin Bertelsen, Persia
Farm Manager - Dick Hagemeyer, Ida Grove (G & N Farms)
Conservation Teacher - Donald Hoffman, Mo. Valley

1992 -

Owner/Operator - W. W. Darrington, Persia
Landlord/Tenant - Lyle Rodenburg, Co. Bluffs, owner
Dennis Kenealy, Neola, operator
New Cooperator - David and Perry Christensen, Pisgah

Windbreak - Dennis Lovell, Logan

1993 -

Owner/Operator - Penny Street Farms, Mo. Valley
Landlord/Tenant - Lois Tennigkeit, Persia, owner
Carl Wilson, Persia, operator
New Cooperator - Bill Iwen, Persia
Pasture Management - James Sr., Joe and
Jon Schaben, Dunlap
Windbreak - Gordon Cross, Mondamin
Farm Manager - Darrell Hansen, Woodbine

1994 -

Owner/Operator - Warren Oliver, Mo. Valley
Landlord/Tenant - Consuelo Roundy, Co. Bluffs, owner
Randy Miller, Panama, operator
New Cooperator - Roger Jensen, Pisgah
Windbreak - Richard Landon, Logan
Farm Manager - Kelly Summy, Co. Bluffs
Conservation Teacher K8 - Kim Nunez, Pisgah

1995 -

Owner/Operator - Lynn and Eva Manhart, Persia
Landlord/Tenant - Johnny and Rita Kelley, owners
Peter and Diane Coret, tenants
New Cooperator - Gary and Donna Collins, Co. Bluffs, and
Mary Jo Collins, Woodbine
Windbreak - Grover and Betty Gee, Mondamin

1996 -

Owner/Operator - High Hope Farm,
Ilo Sharon, Co. Bluffs, owner
Doug Kunze, Persia, operator
Landlord/Tenant - Joe Sandbothe, Co. Bluffs, owner
Warren and Mike Oliver, Logan, tenants
New Cooperator - J. L. Bracker Farms,
Leon and Joanne Bracker, Fremont
Windbreak, over 5 years - Kenneth and Darlene Kern, Persia
Under 5 years -
Kathryn Johnson, Louisville Kentucky, owner
Larry Bean, Pisgah, operator
Conservation Teacher K8 - Donald Groff, Woodbine
Also State Conservation Teacher of the Year.

1997 -

Owner/Operator -
Betty Plath, Pisgah, owner
Rodney Plath, Pisgah, operator
Landlord/Tenant -
David Lundholm, owner
Kenneth McIntosh, Mo. Valley,
tenant
New Cooperator -
Scott Pape, Pisgah
Windbreak - Under 5 years
Peggy and Eugene McCool,
Shelby
Over 5 years -
Dwight Willard, Logan

Reap funds available

by Konda Slagle, Secretary

All the districts in the state of Iowa received their Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) funds in August.

REAP funds provide 75% cost-share for the establishment of farmstead windbreaks, field windbreaks, timber stand improvement and tree plantings. Planned grazing systems, native grass plantings and fence to protect planted areas from grazing are also eligible.

Terraces, animal waste management systems, grade stabilization structures, water and sediment control basins and grassed waterways are also eligible, but only at 50% cost-share.

This is just a partial list of the practices which are eligible. For a more complete list, contact the district office in your area.

To be eligible, a landowner must be producing an agricultural commodity on his/her ground. There is no acreage limit. The applicant will be required to sign a 20-year maintenance agreement for the practice completed.

Each county has different criteria for allocating their funds and the state has put dollar limits on some of the practices. To apply, or for more information, contact the district office in the county in which the land is physically located.

Congratulations to all the district winners throughout the years! Your dedication to and efforts toward conservation are greatly appreciated by all.



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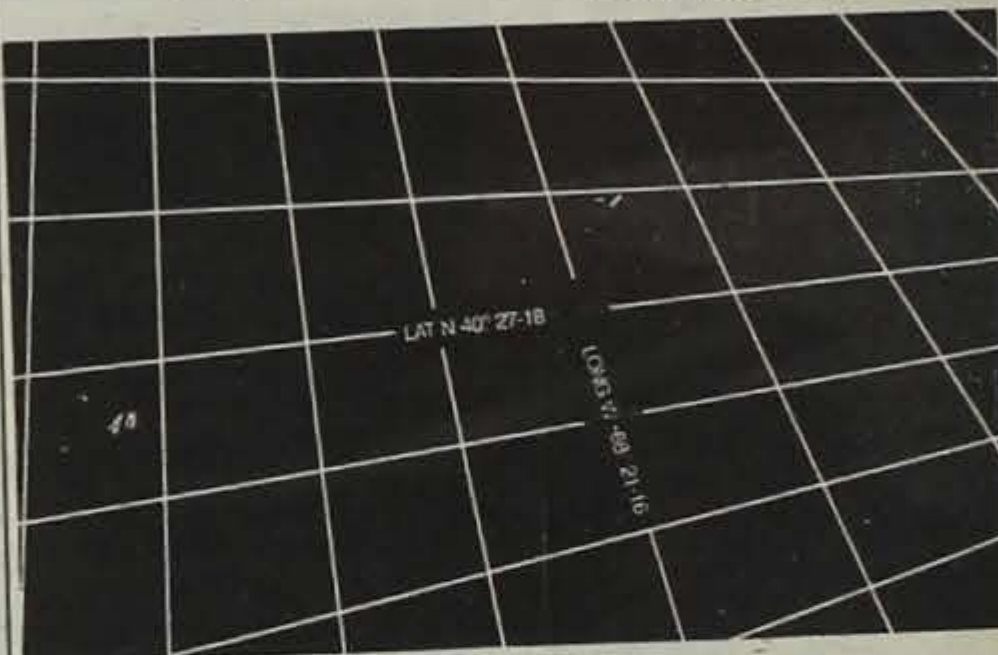
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Canada Geese restored to what was once their natural habitat

"Whether it is their beauty and grace against the backdrop of sunset or morning sunrise, or their unique sound echoing across the open country . . . they have a lasting effect on all of us."

..... Ed Weiner

By Lou Waite

According to Ed Weiner, Wildlife Biologist for the Missouri River Wildlife Unit of DNR, Canada Geese were once native to this area. But throughout the years, loss of habitat and losses due to hunters caused the Canada Goose population to be almost nil.

Early in the 1960's, Weiner related, some of the geese found in Minnesota were obtained by DNR and brought to northern Iowa. There the first effort was made to restore them to what was once their natural habitat. This was done by enclosing breeding pairs, then releasing the young when they were old enough to fend for themselves.

In this area, the Missouri River Unit at Whiting became the center of a like project. In 1986, a few breeding pairs were kept at Badger Lake, and the young birds protected until their release. Production, however, was slow and limited, Ed said, so young birds captured in northern Iowa were brought down, and penned until they were old enough to fly, then released.

"Geese will always come back to their area where they learned to fly," Ed said, "so this was one way of guaranteeing their return. But it was a slow start. In the small, controlled area, hunting of Canada Geese was restricted, but by 1989 it was evident that too many young birds were being harvested. So in 1990, the control area was expanded from Sioux City to Blencoe, just east of I-29. But there is no western boundary except the Missouri River, and geese do fly into Nebraska. Nebraska has an open hunting season on them, so geese are lost."

Ed noted that 1993 through

1996, however, excellent breeding conditions existed up and down the river, so the numbers of Canada Geese have increased. One way to keep an accurate account of the goose population is to band the young birds with identification labels.

Young birds hatched in the spring are banded, and any previous year hatch not yet identified. The "roundup" usually includes a few adults, which perhaps might be males which accompanied females back to the area. Since geese mate for life, sibling groups hatched somewhere else might also accompany a parent to this area, so they must be banded.

Prior to banding, DeSoto staff members make a count of how many young birds are at the area who "don't yet know they can fly". They also calculate the number of young birds by noting the cheek patches, which are buff-colored and not yet white.

Then plans are made to do the banding and catch pens put in place at the location decided for the activity. It is usually done early in the day when the birds are more calm. The young geese are "herded" by workers in boats, and gently persuaded to "head in the right direction". They cannot escape by air, not yet being able to fly, and care is taken not to pressure them so greatly that they dive underwater and evade capture.

They enter a triangular area set up in shallower water, which



DNR personnel carry out the banding procedure, with Ed Weiner, Wildlife Biologist (right) recording pertinent data.

gradually narrows and leads to the "catch pens", where they can be held.

"It's supposed to work like that," Ed said with a chuckle, "but of course, it isn't always that simple."

Once in the catch pens, the birds already banded are released, then a number of people assist in catching the remainder for banding. The legs and wings of the birds are controlled, to prevent injury. Usually tucking the head of the bird under its wing and "rocking" it briefly will make it compliant.

The age and sex of each bird is determined and recorded, coinciding with a numbered sequence. They are listed variously as L (local), M or F (male or female); HY (hatching year bird, M or F); AHY (after hatching year, M or F) or adult. Each bird's weight is also recorded, then it is released.

The information is kept on computer and entered into a

national data base maintained by the Fish & Wildlife Service. Birds from any location can be identified in any other location, assisting in determining the movement of the geese, geographically. Comparing the age of the birds or how long they live can be used to estimate populations.

Hunters or anyone who finds a band on a goose is asked to turn it in so the information from it can be obtained. Many hunters do this, Ed said, and that is appreciated. Birds found with brightly-colored neck collars, applied by some other agency, should also be reported, Ed said, so that information may be passed along.

The banding is carried out in each area involved in the project: Badger Lake at Whiting; Blue Lake at Onawa; Brown's Lake near Salix; and DeSoto Bend.

Ed reported that this year at DeSoto, over 200 geese were banded. "We will be watching

band-return information," he said, "for clues to movement and activity of our local flock. We expect that most of the birds will migrate, but experience has shown that a few will probably remain to winter in areas there there is adequate food and open water."

In reflection, Ed made a statement with which any nature lover will agree:

"There is something about the sight and sound of Canada Geese which excites a primitive appreciation in all of us. Whether it is their beauty and grace against the backdrop of sunset or morning sunrise, or their unique sound echoing across the open country . . . they have a lasting effect on all of us."



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Frenchman develops new concepts of America through Iowa experience

by Lou Waite

Michael Perdue, on the paternal side of the family, is of Welsh descent, and the fourth generation to choose farming as an occupation. By coincidence, his great grandfather settled north of Wales, Iowa, and later came to the farm near Griswold which Mike now operates.

Mike and his wife Jane are dairy farmers, milking 74 Holstein cows night and morning. This, as Mike said, "pretty well ties them down", but the assistance of "outside help" usually allows them a vacation each year.

Most farmers make use of the local labor pool when in need of an extra pair of hands. The Perdue's "farm hands", however, sometimes speak three or four languages, and count their travel distances in thousands of kilometers. And therein lies the tale.

Mike's parents, Marlin and Marilyn Perdue began hosting foreign college students almost 20 years ago. Mike and Jane became involved more recently, and are continuing the custom. They explained that in accordance with requirements of their curriculum, students in many other countries who are pursuing a degree in agriculture may spend 5 months or

more working elsewhere in the world. In many instances, an agriculture degree is required before a farm may be purchased, or a government loan obtained.

This sends the students around the globe, and many of them choose to come to America and thus to the midwest. Those who have spent time with the Perdue's have sometimes returned to Iowa for a second or third time.

This year, Xavier Delsert came from near Lille in the north of France to spend his required time with the Mike Perdue family. Apparently, it has been a satisfactory arrangement for all involved. The young Frenchman explained in excellent English that he originally considered going to Great Britain. But he chose this location because a student of his acquaintance had spent last year with the Perdue family and gave them a "very good recommendation". He arrived in June, and will depart in October.

Xavier's father, a mathematics professor, died in 1995. His mother operates a children's day-care center. He said that while Lille is a huge city of half a million people, his family lives in the village of St. Venant, 49 miles from the sea. He has three more years to complete requirements for an agricultural engineering degree at the Institute



Left to right, standing, Xavier Delsert of France, Justin Elkin of NRCS, Mike Perdue, and Jane Perdue holding Ian. Kneeling, Andrew and Hannah Perdue.

of Superior Agriculture (ISA) in Lille. Eventually, he wants to become an orchardist.

He is no stranger to the dairy industry, however, since one uncle has a herd of 45 cows. Neither is he unfamiliar with working with the soil, for another uncle raises sugar beets, potatoes and small grain, and his brother raises strawberries in four large greenhouses. "In some ways, it is different," Xavier said, "but in other ways the same. I have learned some things I did not know, and some things I have learned to do differently."

"I have found Americans to be very friendly", he said with his shy smile. "Everyone I meet has been so very welcoming, warm and gracious. It has made me feel very good."

Xavier has found the food to be "very different". He grimaced when Jane laughingly mentioned peanut butter, which is not found in France. Xavier pronounced it "pretty bad", but Jane commented that last year's student had loved it, and even took some home with him.

Xavier admitted he was surprised to find he liked sweet corn. "At home, we feed it to the pigs," he said, with a wry grin. He has also developed a fondness for Mexican food, but Jane said he absolutely will not "even taste" cottage cheese. "But in his country, they eat horsemeat," she teased. "Yes, it is good," Xavier said, with a lift of the eyebrow. He also said he is fond of beef, rabbit, pork, ducks, chickens and mutton.

Xavier corresponds regularly with friends at home, male and female. He had recently received a FAX from a friend who was spending time at a Kibbutz in Israel.

The Perdues provide an Airstream mobile home so Xavier has private sleeping quarters. He is paid a wage decided by prior agreement, and other financial needs are met from private funds. Xavier purchased a 1980 Cadillac for his use while there, and Mike laughingly said, "I

think he wants to try to take it home with him."

The Perdues have hosted students for the past three years, two from France and one from Germany. But some have arrived unscheduled. "We had someone call from Griswold and say there was a Frenchman there trying to get to our farm," Mike said. "We didn't even know he was coming. We got him a job elsewhere, but the next year he showed up again without notice! He worked for a worm farmer in Georgia, and now has bought a dairy farm and headed back to France."

Mike noted that he "practically grew up" with foreign students, but the experience was always positive. He said his parents hosted a number of female students who were "very hard workers", but he and Jane had always had males.

"The students who came have not always liked dairy farms, Mike said, "but while here, they learned to like cows and we could see a big change take place in their attitude. I like to think we may have helped that happen. And we have learned more about other cultures, which we have enjoyed."

Jane agreed that the experience has always been positive, and she has not minded the extra cooking and laundry involved.

Xavier hopes to join his uncles and brother in partnership with GAEC (Groupement Agriculteurs pour une Exploitation en Commun). GAEC is a group of French farmers who have joined their farms - incorporated - so as to improve their operation and marketing impact.

The Perdue's dairy herd, as noted earlier, is the major focus of their farm operation. Mike pointed out that each cow averages 19,100 lbs. of milk per year. He can find this and other statistics easily, since all records are kept on computer. They are members of the Dairy Herd Improvement Association, and the milk is tested monthly for milkfat and protein content.

A nutritionist has devised the most efficient blend of feed rations for the herd, including apple pomace, cottonseed from the south, corn ensilage (home processed), hay and grass (the cattle are pastured from April through October).

The milk is collected each day by a cooperative, which then sells it to Roberts Dairy. It is then homogenized, pasteurized, placed into containers and distributed.

Mike also farms 240 acres, which includes 90 acres of corn, 14 acres of sorghum and the rest is in grass. He double crops, planting winter rye which is chopped in the spring, then corn is no-till or minimum till planted. The required terraces are all in place and the farm is in complete FSA compliance.

Mike hopes to plant an apple orchard in the future, so he can produce his own apple pomace. He and Justin Elkin of East Pottawattamie NRCS are working together on this project.

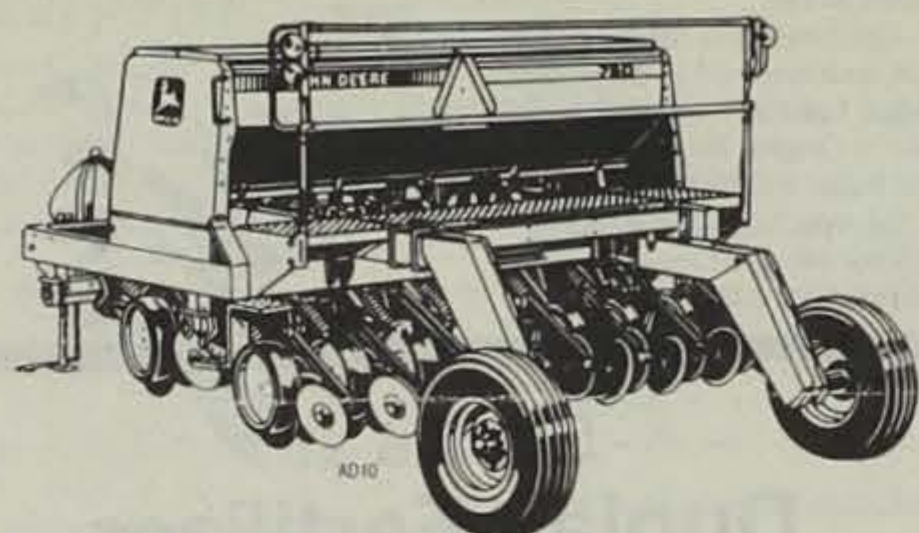
Mike and Jane's children are Andrew, 11, Hannah, 6 1/2 and Ian, 4. They are home schooled. "Of course our family also includes Xavier this year," Jane said. "It has been a real pleasure to have him, and he has fit right in!"

The family attends Central Church of Christ in Griswold, both have taught Sunday School, and are very active in church affairs.

They are members of Farm Bureau, the state chapter of the Holstein Association of America, the Iowa Forage and Grassland Council and Middle America Dairymen, Inc. of which he is vice-chairman.

Since the interview took place, Mike and Jane have traveled to France, where they enjoyed the scenery and culture, and saw former students who had stayed at their farm. They also visited Xavier's relatives. "We had a wonderful time," they said enthusiastically.

And Xavier declared he definitely wanted make a return visit to America, including Iowa. "But I will inform of it first," he said with a smile.



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GOOD DEALS...AND A GOOD DEAL MORE

CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

OF
IOWA


Frank Holdmeyer, right, Editor of the *Wallaces Farmer* magazine, presented the Region Five Outstanding Commissioner Award to Darrell Stamp of Walnut on September 4. Stamp was so recognized during the 51st Annual Conference of Conservation Districts of Iowa (CDI) in Des Moines.

CDI and *Wallaces Farmer* recognize commissioners for their outstanding community service to soil and water conservation. This annual award commends commissioners who take the time and make an extra effort to encourage others to conserve soil and protect Iowa's water quality for

future generations.

Darrell Stamp is an active commissioner with new and innovative ideas for the promotion of soil and water conservation. He serves on the Wallace Foundation Crops Advisory Committee.

(See story elsewhere on this page)

by Michelle Zimmerman
County Resource Planner

It is 2:38 a.m. and the radio squeals with the 9-1-1 operator notifying all volunteer fire and rescue personnel of an emergency. With flashing lights and roaring sirens Darrell Stamp of rural Walnut is on the scene. Darrell feels the biggest reward of being a volunteer fire-fighter is seeing the community of Walnut (any community) working together in any tragedy.

Darrell is involved with many activities such as Precision Beef member, DeKalb Seed Dealer and Chairman of the East Pottawattamie Soil and Water Conservation District. Darrell has been a commissioner for five years.

He no-tills 600 acres of corn and 400 acres of soybeans, and has since 1980. The advantages Darrell sees in no-tilling are saving the valuable, rich topsoil found in Iowa and time savings. Some disadvantages Darrell sees in no-tilling are the enormous weed pressures and slower ground warm-up. Darrell plants his corn in 30-inch rows and drills his soybeans.

Three examples of modern technology Darrell has been

effective conservation system. We continually hear about no-till in conjunction with just corn and beans. However, forage crops and pastures are a very beneficial and notable element in western Iowa that should not be forgotten.

We congratulate all owners and operators for the significant conservation accomplishments in the last decade.

Darrell Stamp, East Pott SWCD Commissioner

utilizing includes BT corn, Poast corn and Roundup Ready soybeans. Darrell is also experimenting with Eastern Gamagrass in his diverse farming operation. Eastern Gamagrass is a perennial, warm season grass, two to three meters tall, used for livestock forage, erosion control, wetland and upland planting and native plant community restoration. Eastern Gamagrass is adapted to a wide variety of growing conditions.

Darrell has utilized this grass in his livestock operation. Darrell raises 210 Angus cow/calf pairs (this includes the first-calf heifers). Darrell also has 400 acres of pasture, 150 acres of hay, and 25 acres enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

The Stamp family includes Jill, Adam and Erica. Darrell has been married for 23 years to Jill Lohafer. She is the office assistant at the Farm Bureau office for East Pottawattamie County. They have two energetic teenagers. Adam is a freshman at Iowa State University, majoring in agriculture. (Adam is following in the footsteps of his dad). Darrell has attended classes at Iowa State University and the University of Nebraska. Erica is a freshman at Walnut Community School and a very active high school student. When Darrell has time, his favorite pastimes are golfing and water sports.

Darrell is on the following committees for the district: Annual Banquet, Trees, Soil and Water Stewardship Week, Scholarship, Computer Information/Technology, No-till, EQIP core group, Environmental Education (Envirothon, etc.), Awards, and Crop Advisory for the Armstrong Research Farm. Darrell helped with the first demonstration site at the Armstrong Research Farm, featuring Doug Karlin, Soil Scientist at the ISU Soil Tilth Lab. The six foot deep soil pit showed the farmers basic soil structure and tilth.

As a leader of the East Pottawattamie Soil and Water Conservation District, Darrell believes that "cost-effective structures and solutions for streambank and streambed degradation is necessary . . . to meet the conservation needs of farmers. Our district is focusing on alternative farmer-friendly types of projects to provide solutions for streambank and streambed degradation."

Darrell and the other commissioners aggressively seek new methods and ways to solve old problems.

I have enjoyed working with Darrell and admire his dedication to promote soil and water stewardship.

To till or not to till - Part II

by Kevin Gee
Technician Aide

Each year, this is a common cropping question or possibly even a dilemma. Each year, NRCS takes a 100-mile tour route in each county across the midwest to gather tillage information after planting.

This yearly county information is forwarded to each state office and eventually to the Conservation Technology Center in Indiana. This agency uses these road surveys to trace trends and direct research efforts in cooperation with state agricultural colleges, government agencies, etc.

As noted in the past, a trend that has been very noticeable in the last five years is the increase in conservation tillage and no-till acres. In East Pottawattamie, no-till corn was planted on 29% of the county in 1992, and 52% in 1997. Corn planted into 30% residue or greater has evolved from nearly 10% in 1992 to 20% last year and 13% for 1997.

I attribute some of this fluctuation to corn base acreages in past years and corn-corn areas that were naturally higher residue levels vs corn after soybeans. With the current farm bill, the predominant trend is a corn-soybean rotation and higher use of no-tilling into soybean stubble.

On the soybean side of the equation, no-till and conservation tillage use have also increased. No-till beans have ballooned from 13%

in 1992 to 43% in 1997. Soybeans planted into above 30% residue also accounts for nearly 47% of the county. The trend toward narrow-row soybeans has doubled from 30% last year to 61.5% this year.

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GOOD DEALS...AND A GOOD DEAL MORE



Conference good for the soul

by Greg Mathis

As a District Conservationist in a highly active district, I received the benefit of attending the 51st Annual Conference for Soil and Water Conservation Districts, held in Des Moines September third and fourth. It's a pleasant meeting for DC's, as we don't have to prepare anything or feverishly take notes for some new program. We simply observe the goings-on and run a few errands to help the meeting run smoothly.

This "observation time" does really provide some insight into the makings of this organization of conservation districts. You could see the veteran commissioners greeting each other as if at a family reunion. New commissioners were eagerly introduced by the veterans.

We were too late to hear Secretary of Agriculture Dale Cochran and Des Moines Mayor Robert D. Ray welcome those attending this 51st annual conference.

The rest of the morning was spent leaning forward in my seat listening to Astronaut Mike Mullane explain the lessons learned from the Challenger tragedy. Only a few people left their seats while Mr. Mullane spent ninety minutes comparing the failures and successes of the NASA space team to the teamwork required within the Conservation Districts of Iowa and their working partners.

In the afternoon, things got down to business. Several reports were given on topics pertinent to the times. You could tell by the questions that these people were serious about the reason they were there. Commissioners were gathering in hallways in twos and threes to discuss topics of concern to them and their constituents back home.

Once the business meeting started, all persons took their seats. Microphones were set up in the aisles to accommodate speakers from the audience. It was just like being on the Senate floor. All attention went to the head table where President Jeanette Winegarden presided over the election of new officers.

I was most impressed with the activity surrounding the voting on by-law revisions and resolutions. By now, I was helping collect ballots and count them in an adjoining room. As we finished the count, the results were rushed back to the podium for announcement.

As is usual with groups of people trying to make decisions, there was quite a bit of confusion and concern about proper procedure. However, they even had a gentleman from a local university to serve as parliamentarian. There were people (by now I had forgotten they were "mere farmers") speaking at the microphones, giving their input to a resolution, hoping to sway votes to their way of thinking. There was also a timekeeper at the head table with a big card to hold up, telling the speaker when there was just one minute left to talk.

By five o'clock in the afternoon, new officers had been elected, about twenty-four resolutions had been

voted on and the by-laws had been amended. I had made arrangements to attend only the one day's session, so it was time to be heading home.

Yet to come that evening was the fund-raising Live Auction, the evening banquet and an interesting play "Hybrids and Ploughshares", featuring someone playing Henry A. Wallace as a young man trying to determine his future. I would also miss the awards presentations the next day, as well as the reports from the partner agencies.

If I had it to do all over again, I would have arranged to stay for both days. And I would recommend it to all district conservationists and certainly all commissioners.

It is really great seeing the Conservation District of Iowa at their best!

Meet Mark Beedle

The East Pottawattamie SWCD/NRCS would like to introduce their new part-time (WAE) employee, Mark Beedle.

Mark began working at the office in August, and his main duty this fall will be assisting with terrace layout.

Mark farms east of Oakland, raising corn, soybeans and alfalfa and maintaining a commercial cow/calf herd.

His wife Susan is a Clinic Program Nurse at Children's Hospital in Omaha. The Beedles have two children, Nicholas, 9, and Jayme, 6. Both attend Riverside Community School.

"I already have a different perspective of the technical side of conservation in just a short time,"

Questionnaire

by Justin Elkin
Conservation Technician

Q: What protects soils, conserves energy by providing shade and wind protection, and makes a natural snow-block in the winter?

A: A windbreak!!

Fall is upon us and the SWCD is excited to be promoting windbreaks as a cost-effective conservation practice. We will be having our tree sales this fall and it is important to get your orders in for tree stock. SWCD will cost-share 75% of the actual cost, not to exceed \$12 per tree and \$2.25 per shrub. Total cost-share for a windbreak is not to exceed \$700 per.

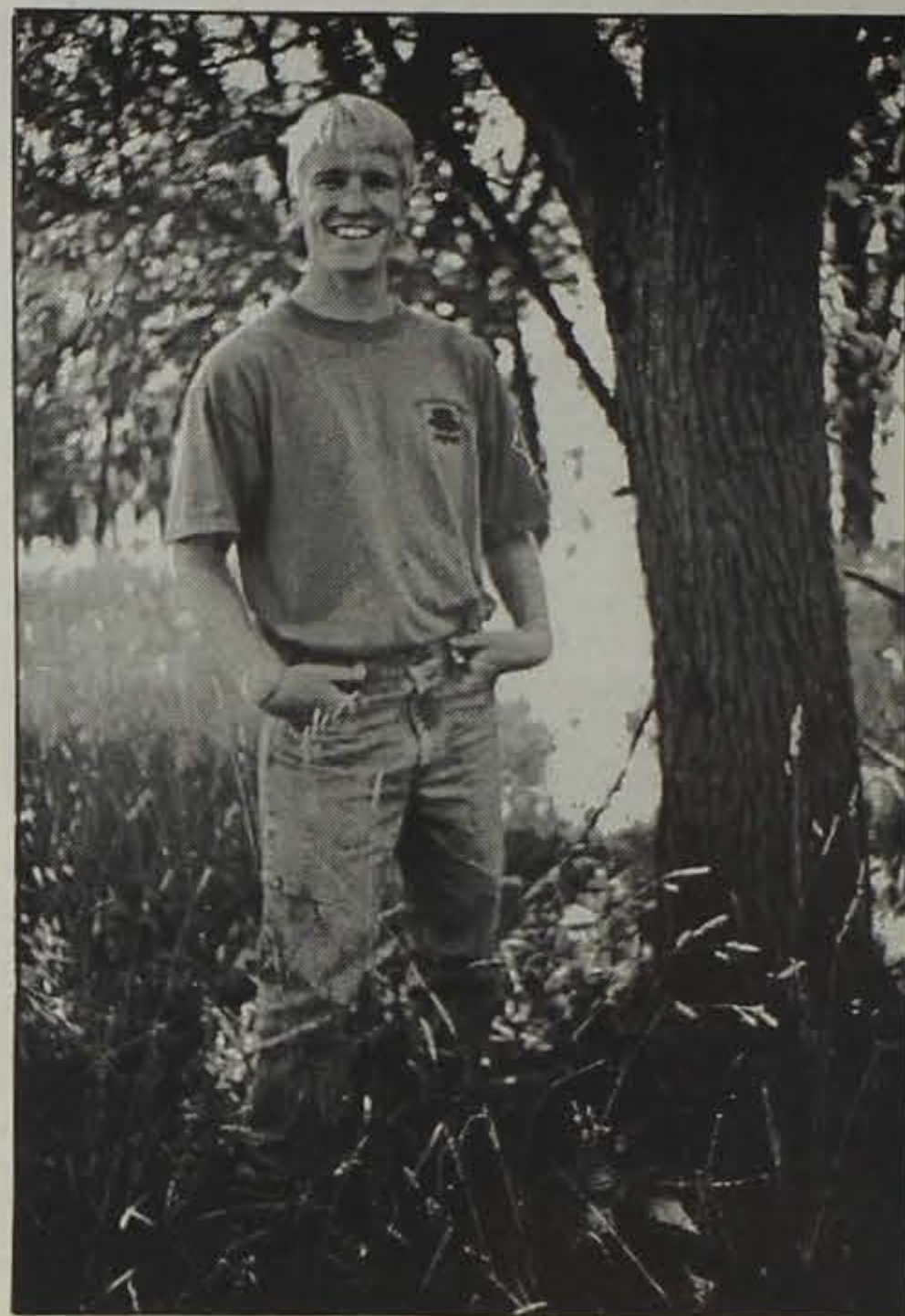
Windbreaks are not only a sound conservation practice, but they are great for wildlife habitat and they are aesthetically pleasing, as well.

Anyone interested in more information about windbreaks may ask for a packet containing information about layout, tree species and maintenance. Contact the Oakland SWCD at 482-6408 and ask for Justin.

"I hope to see you this fall so we can talk 'trees'!"

Mark commented, "I note the amazing conservation effort and dedication of the staff, and especially the commissioners in this county."

"We certainly welcome Mark, and look forward to furthering our working and personal relationship," said Greg Mathis, DC.



Greetings from Oakland!

My name is Justin Elkin and I am the new Soil Conservation Aide for the NRCS office in Oakland.

Previously, I was working at the West Pottawattamie office in Council Bluffs as a temporary Conservation Aide.

I received my Bachelor degree in Outdoor Education and Natural Resource Sciences from Black Hills State University in Spearfish, South Dakota.

Prior to working for the NRCS, I worked for the US Forest Service in Timber Stand Improvement and Fire Suppression. I have a strong interest in working with trees, so I hope to research and promote windbreaks, riparian buffer-strips and wildlife habitat as desirable conservation practices.

I will also be working with the other staff members in terrace layout, watershed projects and other types of conservation measures.

In my time off I enjoy promoting environmental education programs and taking canoe trips with my wife, Michelle.

Again, it is nice to be in East Pottawattamie and I look forward to working with you at NRCS.

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CONSERVATION DISTRICTS OF IOWA



Ruth Wagner, right, Assistant Commissioner for the Johnson Soil & Water Conservation District, presented the Ken Wagner Award to Terry Gleaves of Oakland on September 4. The presentation was made during the 51st Annual Conference of the Soil & Water Conservation Districts of Iowa.

The Ken Wagner Award recognizes outstanding young SWCD commissioners for their conservation achievements and community service. The award is given in memory of Kenneth Wagner, a former Johnson SWCD commissioner and State Soil Conservation Committee member who was instrumental in developing Iowa's conservation district program.

Gleaves no-till plants his corn and soybeans into residue from the previous year's crop. All of his crops are planted on the contour. He has installed terraces as needed to reduce soil erosion on his 680 farm. He has 100 acres in pasture and raises beef cattle.

Gleaves served one year as assistant commissioner, and is now

in his first term as a commissioner for East Pottawattamie SWCD. He was recognized as the Region 5 Outstanding Commissioner in 1996. He provides a "bird's eye view" of conservation practices and erosion problems in the district, helps advertise district activities, distributes soil stewardship materials to local churches, helps with the district's annual banquet and tree sales and the Iowa Envirothon and provides many other services to the district



Deer -- a benefit or a concern?

by Carl Priebe
Wildlife Biologist

Attitudes towards deer vary greatly among Iowa landowners. Some are very concerned about the number of deer and want numbers reduced considerably. Others are fairly satisfied or perhaps would like to see deer reduced somewhat. Still others do not wish to see any deer shot by hunters. The 1997 deer hunting regulations provide the opportunity for individual landowners to regulate hunting on their property to the extent that they can really choose how many deer they would like to have.

This year, as in the past, deer hunting seasons will be open for nearly three and one-half months. The archery season runs from October 1 through December 5. The early muzzle-loading season overlaps the archery season, running October 11 - 19. Shotgun seasons run December 6 - 10 and December 13 - 21. A late season where bows, muzzle-loaders or handguns are permitted runs from December 22 through January 10.

Every deer hunter, whether resident or nonresident, whether using a paid or free landowner/tenant license will receive an any-sex permit, allowing them to shoot a deer of either sex. Approximately 200,000 permits will be issued for the above seasons, totaling 110 days.

Deer numbers rise or fall based on the number of females which are taken by hunters. Plain and simple, if hunters shoot bucks the deer populations will increase. If hunters shoot females, the numbers will fall. That means landowners can have very good control over where deer numbers are headed on

CONSERVATION DISTRICTS OF IOWA



Jeff Zimprich, left, President of Iowa Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society, and Doug Kleine, right, Executive Vice President of the Society, presented a Merit Award to Russell Brandes of Hancock during the 51st Annual CDI Conference in Des Moines.

Each year, the Soil and Water Conservation Society bestows its Merit Award to individuals who have made significant contributions to the conservation of soil, water, and related resources. This year, two Iowans were among the seven individuals being recognized by the Society.

Brandes was selected because of his leadership by example; performing and installing

conservation measures on his family farm while taking the time to teach and encourage others to follow his example.

He was appointed to the State Soil Conservation Committee in 1996, serves as an East Pottawattamie Soil & Water Conservation District Commissioner, helped form and gain funding for the Hungry Canyons Alliance, and chairs the Tri-County Steer Carcass Futurity.

their property, or in their neighborhood. Landowners who want to see the deer population reduced should allow deer hunting and require or strongly encourage hunters to shoot only females or predominantly females. If that happens, deer numbers should be reduced.

If landowners want deer numbers to stay about the same, they should require hunters to shoot about 50 - 60% bucks. If landowners want to see more deer, they should ban hunters from shooting females.

Many deer hunters, landowners included, are at least somewhat reluctant to shoot female deer

The 1997 regulations allow landowners to manage deer populations according to their interests. Neighborhood discussions prior to the deer seasons can allow that management to control numbers on an even broader scale. If the ability and the authority for landowners to control deer numbers is not utilized, deer numbers will most certainly continue to increase.



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Prepare windbreak sites this fall

Success with any tree planting project begins with good site preparation. New farmstead windbreaks often require a lot of preliminary planning and work to get the site ready to plant, most of which should be done the fall before planting.

Old existing trees, fences and unwanted buildings should be removed. Pick up any branches, roots or boards left behind, then smooth and till the sod. A smooth, level site will be much easier to mow and maintain. New fences should be installed to protect trees from livestock.

Seed temporary cover, such as

oats, if it is an erodible site. The area will be ready to do a permanent seeding in the spring and the trees can be planted as soon as the frost is out.

Cost share funds up to 75% may be available for windbreaks planted next spring through the REAP (Resource Enhancement and Protection Program). To be eligible for the program, the applicant must be growing an agricultural commodity.

Contact the Natural Resources Conservation Service office at 1112 Morningview Drive in Harlan for more information, or call 712-755-2417.

D.C. likes "grass roots" concept

James (Jim) Sharp assumed the position of District Conservationist at the Shelby County NRCS/SWCD field office the first week in September.

Jim is a native Iowan, born near Arion in Crawford County. He attended Iowa State University, receiving a degree in Agricultural Business. He served 27 months in the military, and by coincidence was stationed at Waverly, Iowa, where he worked with the Nike Hercules missile project. The Nike was a forerunner of the present Patriot Missile used so successfully during the Gulf War.

Returning, he operated the family farm, which his great-grandfather had purchased after the Civil War. Jim is the fourth generation to have tended that tract of land.

Ten years ago, he accepted a position with what was then the Soil Conservation Service in the Crawford County field office. Serving temporary duty assignments in neighboring counties, he remained at Denison until, as he said, "the Harlan opportunity came."

"I had been looking for a position in a county which had a lot of highly erodible land," he explained, "and I guess you can say Shelby is 'blessed' with that! I am happy to have moved to an area where the service is set up more on the 'grass roots' level."

Jim said he had been "overwhelmed" by the positive response he had received from everyone. "The staff is great," he emphasized, "and the commissioners as well. I have really been enjoying working with everyone, and I know that will continue. I want to meet as many people in the district as possible, as soon as possible."

When asked what he foresaw in the future, he commented that he knew there would be a very active terrace program this fall. "And I hope to expand the rotational



Jim Sharp, new District Conservationist at the Harlan field office, admits to being an avid Cyclone fan.

grazing and manure management programs, and just encourage basic conservation of the land", he stated.

He said that in order to accomplish this, the district would need to work in partnership with the community at large, and other groups and agencies. "From what I have heard and already observed in the community, that won't be a problem," he assured.

Jim's wife, Sandra, is a Consumer Science teacher at Denison middle school. The Sharps reside on the family farm near Arion and Jim commutes to

Harlan. "It's not a hardship," he said, "for I enjoy the scenery, which changes almost every day."

Their children are Jeff, completing his PhD in rural sociology at Iowa State University, and Wendi, a consumer science teacher in Albert Lea, MN, living in Fairmont MN with her husband, a police officer.

Jim and Sandra are avid Cyclone fans, and attend sports events at ISU when possible. They also have a small flock of Suffolk sheep, and Jim enjoys providing show lambs for neighbor kids 4-H projects.



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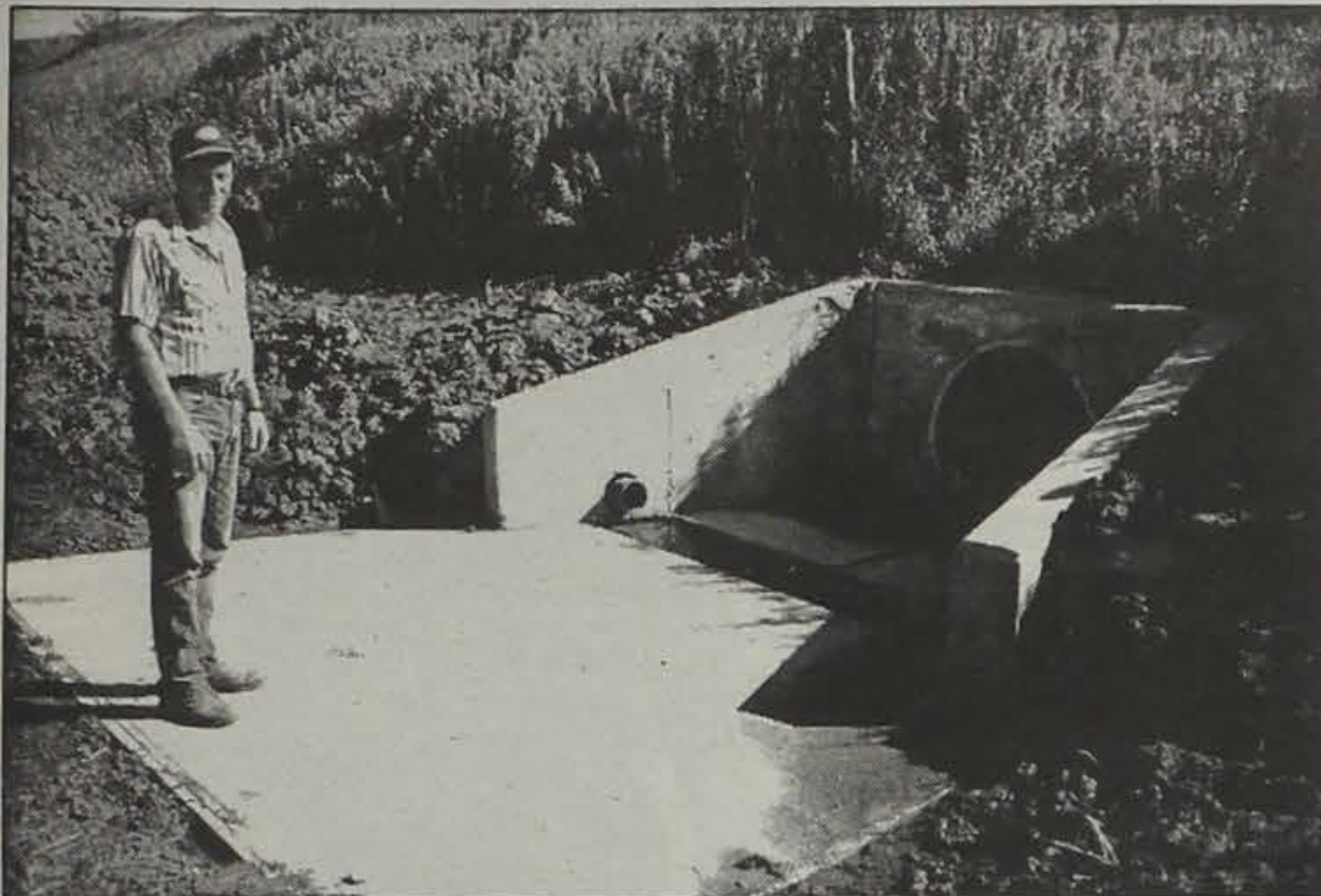
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Natural spring's flow is directed to useful and unique purpose



The presence of natural springs, assistance from NRCS through the EQIP program and cooperation with the Shelby County Department of Roads brought about this unique watering system on the Borkowski farm.

by Lou Waite

David (Dave) Borkowski is a fourth generation farmer, "born and raised" on a farm near Irwin. He and his bother Steve operate the family farm, with the aid of their father Gene, who is technically "retired".

Dave and Steve farm 1800 acres, owned and rented. Most of the land is non highly erodible (NHEL), but

Dave uses no-till residue management on that which is highly erodible land (HEL) as well as some of the NHEL.

"I plan to do more no-till as time goes on," David informed. "The technology is so much better now than it was when I first started. I have some CRP which will come out (the contract will expire) soon, and I plan to do a burn-down this

fall then drill or split-row beans into the thatch in the spring. The land is terraced, but I want to try this, and probably will rotate beans and corn thereafter."

Dave, his father and brother all have separate cow-calf herds, but work together on many phases of the cattle operation. Dave's herd of 45 Black Angus cows will be increased by 25 heifers. Some of these are purchased from what Dave described as "an excellent source for purebred replacement heifers" Some of the female calves he raises are retained. The rest of the calves are sold.

Three pastures provide the means for a rotational grazing system. Each pasture is divided into three paddocks. The cattle are moved from pasture to pasture; paddock to paddock, so as to make the most practical use of the system. David plans to add more paddocks in the future, and develop a winter shelter site.

Eight years ago, David made use of a natural spring on another farm, using tile and gravity-flow to divert the water to a tank from which the cattle can drink. "The only other source of water was the creek," Dave



Spring water trickling through this tile pipe provides a constant supply of fresh water for the Borkowski cattle herd.



David and one of the more conventional livestock waterers installed with the aid of EQIP funding.

said, "so this was a big improvement in that area". The tank is heated in winter, providing a year-around water source for the animals.

On the 160 acres Dave purchased most recently, there is also a natural spring. "The ground was always wet in the areas of the spring's flow," Dave said, "and just an all around nuisance. I heard that there might be some help from NRCS cost-share, so I went in to inquire. They told me about EQIP, I signed up for it and was approved. Believe me, I couldn't have done what I did without it, and I surely appreciate the help."

What David did was have a contractor lay tile in the spring's flow channel, leading to a large tube which carried overflow water under the road and away from the area. A pad of concrete was poured, into which was cut a channel or "trough" 8 foot long and 10" deep. A tile outlet lets water trickle into this trough, providing the cattle an always fresh drinking source. The overflow is carried away through the roadway tube, just as it was in the past..

"I want to give a lot of credit to the county road department and the county engineer for their help with this project," Dave emphasized. "I really appreciated their understanding of my problem, and the cooperation of everyone involved."

The bluegrass pasture encompassing the unique watering system was badly in need of renovation when he bought the place, David said. So he is reseeding it with orchard grass, bromegrass, bluegrass and alfalfa. Tiny sprigs of alfalfa could be seen growing in the area, as well as tender blades of

grass.

While one could trace the tile line, with the earth over it still darkened by damp, David said that formerly it would have been mud. Obviously, therefore, tiling had not only made use of a spring which once ran hither and yon, but also reclaimed an area where cattle would otherwise have been standing in a bog. Once the new seeding was established, the pasture would be tremendously improved "Thanks to EQIP", Dave said with a smile.

He noted that EQIP had also provided cost-share for another waterline and cement waterer on the same farm. "As I said before," David said seriously, "I couldn't have done this without that help." Then with a grin, he added, "Well, maybe I *could* have, but by the time I'd have got it done, I probably wouldn't need it!"

REAP cost-share funds also were used for a windbreak on one of the other farms, and cost-share helped build terraces on several tracts. One on the same farm as the spring waterer is over a half-mile in length.

David's wife Pam is employed at Tom's Agricultural Diesel near Prairie Rose Lake. "She also helps on the farm," he said, "and is very much a part of the farm operation." Their children are Brian, a fourth grader at Irwin-Kirkman-Manilla (IKM) Community School and Lauren, a pre-schooler.

The family likes to canoe, and this year took a 5-hour canoe trip on the Nishnabotna River.



The new fence and seeding in this pasture were also made possible through the EQIP program, which David Borkowski "really appreciates".

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Schmitz making good use of modern technological advances

"There was a reason we could fly those missiles right down the streets of Baghdad!"

- Tom Schmitz

by Lou Waite

Thomas Schmitz, who prefers to be called "Tom", said his ancestors have been farmers as far back as his family history is known. That occupation was followed in Luxembourg, and continued when his grandfather came to America. Tom himself has been farming since returning in 1971 from military service in Viet Nam.

He raises corn and soybeans, some hay and oats. He has a herd of crossbred cattle, in partnership with his son, Mark. While some artificial insemination (AI) is used, the herd bull is Maine-Anjou. Mark, is fact, is a registered Maine-Anjou breeder.

Tom has always been conservation conscious and his farm operation reflects that interest. But the focus of this article is that fact that Tom is one of the owners of *Western Iowa GPS*. He said he became interested in the Global Positioning System

technology because he early-on could see the advantages it might provide for his own, as well as other, farm operations.

"But I also realized what a tremendous amount of computer power would be needed," Tom said a bit ruefully, "and began looking for another farmer with similar interests. Arlin Sorensen was the natural fit, for he owns *Sorensen Computer Connection*, and is also a farmer. I approached him with the offer to coordinate efforts, one thing led to another, and *Western Iowa GPS* was born".

Tom explained, for the layman, that theirs is an information management service. Information is gathered from yield monitors, soil testing, scouting, remote sensing, etc. This information is analyzed in a GIS software program and the results are used to assist farmers and ranchers in making management decisions. The company serves farmers, ranchers and other clientele in Iowa and Nebraska.

Global Positioning is the use of satellites which can mark a precise location in a designated area for whatever purpose is desired. According to Tom, surveyors, aircraft, trucking industries, etc. all use it.

"Actually, it was developed by the military in the 1970's," Tom related, "and culminated during the Gulf War. Sadaam Hussein did one thing for this country... he hurried the process along! There was a reason we could fly those missiles right down the streets of Baghdad!"

"GPS was only released for commercial use during the last ten years," Tom continued. "The government has a system of 24 satellites which cover the globe, strategically spaced. The signal is free, however it is scrambled in that they take away pertinent information which can only be descrambled by the use of what is termed a 'differential signal'. This is available commercially, and is the means by which we can access the information."

He admitted, with a lift of the brow and a dismissive wave of the hand, that his original idea has



Tom Schmitz feels that modern technology is providing more "environmentally friendly" opportunities for the farmer.

grown into a project which is like "having a Tiger by the tail".

"We foresaw the need for consultants to help farmers manage information, and be

assisted in implementing available technology," Tom pointed out, affirming that this is the company's basic goal. "We provide other services", he said, "such as mapping, soil testing, agronomy-related services, etc., and we have an agronomist on the staff. We are Beta-testing infra-red aerial photography services, and I am sure the future will provide even more opportunities."

"This technology will allow more efficiency in business operation, either by increasing income, reducing expenses, or both. It is of primary benefit to ranchers who want to efficiently implement range/pasture management."

Then after a moment of reflection, Tom added, "I feel one of the greatest benefits in the use of this technology is that it is more environmentally friendly. Next to the people, the soil is the most important resource we have, and we need to manage it accordingly. Everything that we have comes from the soil, so we have a need not to deplete the resource upon which the entire world is dependent."

Tom's wife Beverly is a personal banker at Shelby County State Bank in Harlan. Their daughter Tammy (Lynan) is a chemical engineer with Burns & McDonnell in Kansas City. Daughter Becky is employed by Keystone Resorts in Keystone, Colorado. Son Mark is a freshman at Iowa State University, pursuing a degree in Ag Education.

The Schmitz family attends St. Michael's Catholic Church in Harlan. Tom is a member of the Farm Bureau, Beef and Pork Producers; Corn and Soybean Growers; American Legion Post 150 and VFW.

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National Crop Residue Management Survey

The National Crop Residue Management Survey has become a valuable tool for annually updating and publicizing important aspects of environmental and economic progress among United States farmers.

About the survey

The nationwide survey has been conducted since the Conservation Technology Information Center (CTIC) was established in 1982. USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) field offices coordinate the county-level data gathering. CTIC compiles and distributes the data in print and computer disk versions.

Tillage definitions

CTIC, with assistance from NRCS, USDA Economic Research Service and Agricultural Research Service, standardized tillage definitions for classifying the data gathered and ensuring the uniformity of the national survey findings.

Survey results

The printed version of the National Crop Residue Management Survey contains national, regional and state summaries listing all tillage types by the number of acres planted and the percentage the acres represent for the following crops:

*full season corn, single season crop, *spring seeded small grains, *fall seeded small grains, *full season soybeans, *grain sorghum, single and double crop, *forage

crops (the seeding year) *category for other crops (vegetable and truck crops like dry edible beans, peanuts, tobacco, etc.) *double corn crop *cotton *double crop soybeans.

Non-crop acres are also outlined in percentage and acres for the following categories: *newly established permanent pasture *fallow *annual conservation use (which includes cropland idled for yearly government programs *CRP).

Since 1989, CTIC has also offered surveyed data on a computer disk. The disk contains county-level data by state and/or region.

Tillage definitions

Crop Residue Management (CRM). A year around system beginning with the selection of crops which produce sufficient quantities of residue and may include limited secondary harvest of residue. CRMS includes all field operations that affect residue amounts, orientation and

distribution through the period requiring protection. Site-specific residue cover amounts needed are usually expressed in percentage but may also be in pounds. Tillage types included under CRM are no-till, ridge-till, mulch-till and reduced-till.

Conservation tillage - Any tillage and planting system that maintains at least 30 percent of the soil surface covered by residue after planting to reduce soil erosion by water. Where soil erosion by wind is the primary concern, any system which maintains at least 1,000 pounds per acre of flat, small grain residue equivalent on the surface throughout the critical wind erosion period. Conservation tillage types are no-till, mulch-till and ridge-till.

Conservation tillage types - No-till: The soil is left undisturbed from harvest to planting except for nutrient injection. Planting or drilling is accomplished in narrow seedbeds or slots created by coulters, row cleaners, disk openers,

in-row chisels or roto-tillers. Weed control is accomplished primarily with herbicides. Cultivation may be used for emergency weed control.

Zone-till and Strip-till - Although these are popular terms in some areas, they are not official survey categories because they are considered modifications of no-till, mulch-till or other tillage types. Less than 25% row width disturbance would be considered mulch-till or other tillage type, depending upon the amount of residue left after planting.

Mulch-till - The soil is disturbed prior to planting. Tillage tools such as chisels, field sweeps or blades are used.

cropping, contouring, terracing, etc.)

Reduced-till - Tillage types that leave 15 to 30 percent residue cover after planting or 500 to 1,000 pounds per acre of small grain residue equivalent throughout the critical wind erosion period.

Conventional-till - Tillage types that leave less than 15 percent residue cover after planting, or less than 500 pounds per acre of small grain residue equivalent throughout the critical wind erosion period. Generally involves plowing or intensive tillage.

weed control is accomplished with herbicides and/or cultivation.

Ridge-till - The soil is left undisturbed from harvest to planting except for nutrient injection. Planting is completed in seedbeds prepared on ridges with sweeps, disk openers, coulters or row cleaners. Residue is left on the surface between ridges. Weed control is accomplished with herbicides and/or cultivation. Ridges are rebuilt during cultivation.

Other tillage types - 30% residue tillage and planting systems that may meet erosion control goals with or without other supporting conservation practices (ie strip

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sidehill acres back into the CRP program.

Headlands are eligible for CRP but they have certain restrictions ranking them on a lower priority. However, under a CRP grass bufferstrip system, the headlands tied to the grass strips could all be enrolled, even on areas under 5% slope where a top grass strip meets a fence. The width for headlands can range up to 66 feet.

Waterways are the third element eligible for continuous signup. The requirements for enrollment include proper size and shape for the drainage areas present and past cropping history. The waterways present on many farms may need to be modified and reshaped to be enrolled, for which East Pott NRCS has state cost-share available at 40 cents per foot for waterway construction.

Favorite Recipes of NRCS personnel

3/4 c shortening
1 c brown sugar
1 egg
1 tsp. vanilla
1/2 c pecans
2 c flour
1 tsp. soda
1/4 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. ginger
1/4 tsp. cinnamon

Cream shortening, add sugar and beat well. Add egg and beat. Add vanilla and nuts. Measure dry ingredients and add to creamed mixture until flour disappears. Chill several hours. Make into balls, dip each in sugar. Press with fork in crisscross pattern. Bake 8 - 10 min. @ 375 deg.

Circle all the things wrong in this picture.

A black and white line drawing of a farm scene. In the foreground, a cow is sitting on the ground. To its left, a pig is standing in a fenced area. Behind the pig is a scarecrow wearing a hat and overalls. In the background, there is a tree with fruit, a tank labeled 'CHEMICAL', a cornfield, and a bush with labels for 'PEAS', 'BEANS', 'CARROTS', 'PUMPKIN', and 'SWEET CORN'. The instruction 'Circle all the things wrong in this picture.' is written at the top.

These clues must be made into a rhyming pair. For example: a *Big Feline* is a *Fat Cat*. Good luck!

Huge Hog	_____	_____
Baby cow giggle	_____	_____
Cruel Vegetable	_____	_____
A Tidy Food	_____	_____
Place to learn	_____	_____
good manners	_____	_____
A male cow who	_____	_____
has just eaten	_____	_____

Answers: Big Pig, Call Lough, Mean Bear, Neat Head, Charm Farm, Pull Bull

Q: How do you get down from a horse?
A: You get down from a goose, not a horse.

Q: Why shouldn't you tell secrets around corn?
A: Because they're all ears!

Q: What play did Shakespeare write for little pigs?
A: Hamlet

Q: If a rooster laid an egg on the peak of a barn and the wind was blowing out of the north, which way would the egg roll?
A: Roosters don't lay eggs, hens do.

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8-oz. pkg. cream cheese
3 T catsup
3 dashes Worcestershire
3 slices onion, chopped
3 T Miracle Whip
Milk or cream to thin

Combine all ingredients but milk in blender. Blend until smooth. Add milk to dipping consistency.

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1998 STATE COST-SHARE POLICIES ARE ANNOUNCED

THE EAST POTTAWATTAMIE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS HAVE FINALIZED THE POLICIES FOR STATE COST-SHARE FUNDS. THE COMMISSIONERS CUSTOMIZED THE IOWA FINANCIAL INCENTIVE PROGRAM RULES TO BEST SUIT THE DISTRICT NEEDS. THE FOLLOWING COST-SHARE POLICIES WERE DRAFTED BY THE BOARD FOR 1998:

TERRACES

- 1) One "first priority" application per owner/operator will be allowed per calendar year. (Ownership documented in the office as of January 1, 1998). Applications for 1998 will be accepted beginning at 8:00 a.m. January 6, 1998, at the Oakland NRCS office.
 - 2) Maximum terrace footage allowed will be 7,500 feet cost-shared at 50% not to exceed 55c per foot. The maximum amount of cost-share available per terrace job is \$4,125, regardless of terrace type. Topsoiling will be required.
 - 3) Tiling will be cost-shared at \$400 per intake not to exceed a total cost-share job (terrace and tile) of \$7,000. Tiling will only be cost-shared in conjunction with the construction of new terraces.
 - 4) Signup will be divided into three lists: spring, summer and fall. One season may be chosen. Applications will be chronologically picked up as that season's funds become available. No assurances of any fall allocation. If applicant is not ready when their turn comes around, that applicant's name will be dropped from the list.
 - 5) Those persons receiving state cost-share the prior year (1997) will be a second priority. These applications will be placed chronologically by date of signup after those not receiving cost-share the prior year (1997).
 - 6) If the District still has funds after the list of first and second priority is allocated, approvals will be granted chronologically to a third priority. This priority could include applications from persons receiving cost-share earlier in 1998. These applications will be approved only after first and second priority jobs are covered. A person can have one application for terraces and one application for a structure, both as "first priority".
 - 7) For those landowners building their own terraces this year, the NRCS strongly recommends they have access to a hand level or transit and tripod for checkout.
- Applications taken out of the office to be signed cannot be accepted prior to January 6, 1998 nor show a 1997 date. If the application is returned by mail, it should not reach the office before January 6. All contractors will be spot-checked by NRCS staff.

WATERWAYS

Waterways staked and constructed to NRCS specifications will be cost-shared at 50% not to exceed 40c per foot up to 2500 feet in length, and not to exceed \$1,000. Please note: A 20-year maintenance agreement will be signed prior to receiving cost-share funds pursuant to Division of Soil Conservation rules in Section 27 of the Iowa Administrative Code, Chapters 10, 12, and 13. Please refer to the back of the cost-share application. No cost-share on tile.

SUMMER INCENTIVE

- 1) Maximum terrace footage allowed will be 7500 feet cost-shared at 60%, not to exceed 66c per foot. For terraces not needing tiling a maximum amount of cost-share available per terrace job is \$4,950, for all types of terraces. Topsoiling will be required.
- 2) Tiling will be cost-shared at \$300 per intake not to exceed a total cost-share job (terrace and tile) of \$7,825. Tiling will only be cost-shared in conjunction with the construction of new terraces.
- 3) Funds for summer construction can only be obligated after June 1 and the terraces must be completed by August 15. No extensions. People receiving summer cost-share funds will need to build terraces during the summer. Extensions will not be granted due to the operator having corn or beans to harvest. The district will help stake out areas for small grain where the terraces are to be constructed, to the best of the staff's ability.

STRUCTURES

One first priority application per owner/operator will be allowed per calendar year. Structures will be cost-shared at the rate of 50% not to exceed \$7,000 per structure. Structures include ponds, grade stabilizations (638), earthen and non-earthen structures, cattle panel, rock chutes, sheet piling, sediment basins, wetlands, etc.

WINDBREAKS

Cost-share at the rate of 75% up to \$700 per windbreak through the REAP program. Individual limits of \$12 per tree and \$2.25 per shrub.

NO-TILL INCENTIVE ON CRP

This incentive is offered to encourage the practice of no-tilling into CRP sod. Participants need to sign an agreement of understanding that payment would not come until the spring to verify that they did no-till. Although this is a one-time incentive payment per acre, it is hoped that the practice of no-till will continue on these acres. The incentive payment is \$10 per no-tilled acre of expiring CRP ground. No acre limit is set or cap on total dollars per person. Applications may be made by the landowner or the producer. Once the planting is completed, participants must sign a producer certification and supply chemical history on selected acres (to be used in future educational programs) and NRCS staff will verify no-till on CRP acres prior to payment.

WELLS

The Pottawattamie County Board of Supervisors offers a program whereby State funding can be utilized for the purpose of properly plugging abandoned wells. Cost-share on wells is available at 50% of the cost of the closure up to \$200 maximum on a first-come, first-served basis. Applications are available at the Oakland NRCS office. Plugging must be completed by a certified well-plugging contractor or with on-site supervision by the County Resource Planner.

REQUIRED INFORMATION

- Those coming to apply for any cost-share are asked to bring all necessary information with them.
- 1) Ownership and tract number of the site where the construction is planned. Do not sign up in the operator's name.
 - 2) Social security number if an individual, or federal ID number if a partnership, corporation, etc. will be required at the time of application. A separate form will be filled out with this information at the time of signup.
 - 3) The landowner's signature is required on the cost-share application. If there is more than one owner which will result in two or more checks charged to separate social security numbers, both

signatures are required. A signature may have to be obtained ahead of time or a Power of Attorney will need to be in the district file. A Farm Service Agency Power of Attorney cannot be accepted.

4) All applications must have the landowner signature. Any person may deliver the applications for the landowner if the landowner has signed an application with a 1998 date.

5) All cost-share projects must be located on land within the East Pottawattamie District boundaries. If land is located in West Pottawattamie, Mills, Montgomery, etc., the owners must apply for cost share in those district offices. This is a State policy, and no exceptions may be made.

To receive cost share, the landowner must sign a 20-year maintenance agreement.

Know the approximate footage even if it is less than the district's maximum amount allowed. Changes in applications footage will result in more paperwork for the individual and the office. If the landowner has an idea of the contractor he/she will use, they are asked to also give that information. This helps the technician schedule staking. Remember, a social security number or federal ID number is required!



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by Ed Weiner, DNR Wildlife Biologist

Continuous CRP

The special CRP continuous signup for filterstrips, riparian buffer areas, shallow water areas for wildlife and farmstead shelterbelts is still available at your local FSA and NRCS offices. This has been a very successful program across the state with thousands of acres enrolled for 10 to 15 years. Rental rates have averaged from \$120 up to \$180 per acre for filterstrips and riparian areas.

Filterstrips can be 99 feet wide and can be located next to and on both sides of any water course. Check with NRCS for details on how you can benefit from this program. Buffer strips of up to 150 feet can be used to meet a variety of needs for farming operations.

Check for availability of additional cost-share for establishment of switchgrass in filterstrips and buffer areas. Switchgrass is excellent wildlife habitat, tolerates spray drift and will prevent trees from invading your filterstrip.

Upcoming 16th CRP signup: October 14 begins the sixteenth signup for CRP to enroll eligible lands for the next 10 years. See NRCS or FSA about enrolling acres that were previously in CRP. It will be important to increase the environmental Benefits index (EBI) on any land being submitted, by increasing grass diversity and by submitting bids which will be competitive for a low cost per acre. Check with NRCS for recommendations which will make you a winner in getting and keeping your land in permanent seeding.

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Mark Shoemaker

New Interim
Director named
for PCCB

Recently, the Pottawattamie County Conservation Board named Mark Shoemaker as the new interim director. Mark is also managing duties as Park Ranger for Long's Landing and Narrows River Access Parks.

A native of Cedar Rapids, Mark has a bachelor's degree in Natural History Interpretation from the University of Northern Iowa.

During his time as a county Park Ranger, Mark has strived to improve the parks and is willing to make the extra effort to acquire skills needed to become a director

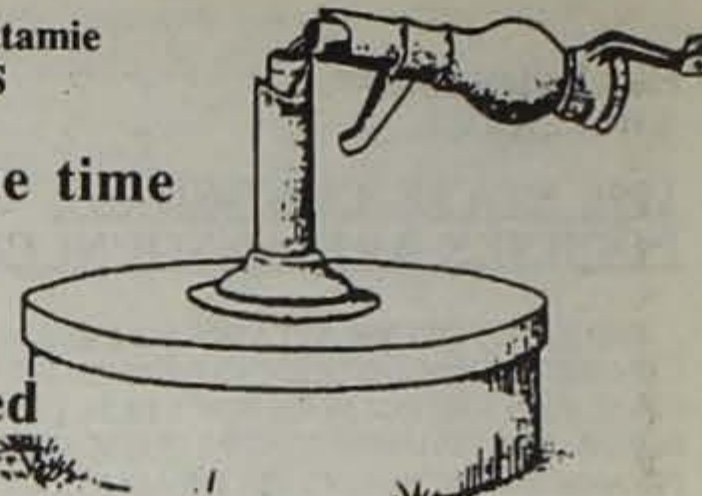
"During a challenging time of transition, I am trying to maintain a high quality of recreational opportunities available in all our county parks, while searching for new opportunities to keep each one growing and improving," Mark commented.

During his spare time, Mark said he enjoys playing basketball, softball, doing woodworking and spending time with his wife, Sara, and 5-year-old German Shepherd, Ripley.

"Mark is a highly dedicated member of our staff and is taking on the challenging leadership role for our parks," said Administrative Director Cindy Thompson.

East Pottawattamie
SWCD/NRCS

Now is the time
to plug
those
abandoned
wells



by Michelle Zimmerman

If you have been thinking about plugging your abandoned well, now is the time to act! The cost of the closure will be "covered" by Pottawattamie Planning and Development and East Pottawattamie Soil and Water Conservation District. Currently, Pottawattamie County will pay up to \$200 maximum. East Pottawattamie SWCD will pay the remaining cost of the closure. The total cost of the well closure

cannot exceed \$600. The first 15 applications received will be those eligible.

You, as a landowner, can close one well per tract (located in East Pott County) "free of charge" (or without digging deeper into debt). Your application needs to be received by Friday, October 31. Wells need to be closed by Wednesday, November 26, 1997, with a certified well driller or the designated county agent.

For "deeper details", call 712-482-6408 and ask for Michelle.

National Envirothon results

Blue Mountain High School of Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania, won first place in the National Envirothon, according to Michelle Zimmerman, one of the local Envirothon coordinators. The event was held August 5 - 9 at the University of Pittsburgh in Johnstown PA.

Approximately 2,000 students making up 37 teams from 34 states and 3 Canadian provinces took part. They were tested on their skills and knowledge about soils, aquatics, forestry and wildlife. They also made an oral presentation on modern pest management.

The National Envirothon Program is sponsored by Canon USA and local conservation district, in cooperation with Monsanto, the USDA Forestry Service, the US Environmental Protection Agency and the National Association of Conservation Districts.

This year for the first time, Canon contributed \$35,000 to be applied toward scholarships and other prizes for the national event.

Iowa was represented by Earlham High School, which had qualified by receiving first place at the Iowa Envirothon held at Springbrook State Park in April.



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