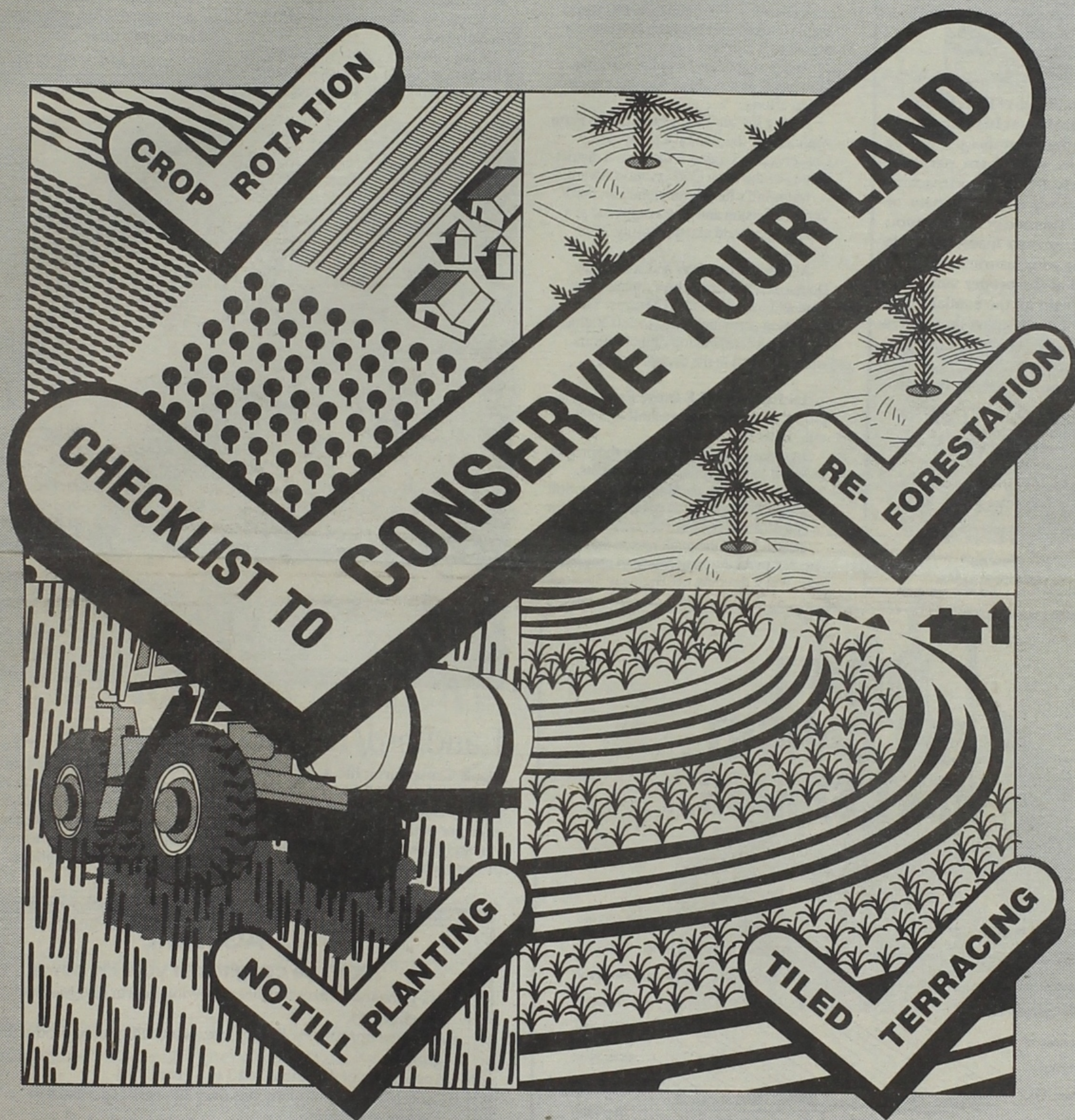


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VINTON

Section B • A Supplement of The Cedar Valley Daily Times • September 19, 1995

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Maple Grove Farm, Jeff Rathje win Landlord/Tenant Division of the Iowa Conservation Award

By NANCY GREGERSON
Times Staff Writer

ATKINS — For more than 140 years, Maple Grove Farm has been in Ruth Mumford's family.

And during those 140-plus years, the farm has been the site of ongoing conservation efforts.

During the summer, Maple Grove Farm was cited by the Benton County Soil Conservation Service, Vinton, as a district winner of the Iowa Conservation Award.

Mumford's farm won in the Landlord/Tenant Division and was recognized at a picnic supper and ceremony July 21 in Vinton.

Mumford's daughter and son-in-law, Donna and Richard Scheer, manage the farm and own 40 of the 320 acres. The remaining acres are rented to Jeff Rathje.

It was a combination of their efforts which resulted in the award.

IN 1993, MAPLE Grove Farm began a project to prevent soil washoff of a 3/4-mile waterway.

In order to receive funds for the project, they had to meet certain requirements. They worked with the Benton County Soil Conservation Service to develop a plan for the project.

Richard said the main reason they decided to do the project was to protect the soil. Water draining off Highway 30 would

wash out the waterway, requiring it to be repeatedly reseeded.

By reconstructing the waterway and adding tiles and standpipes, the process of drainage was slowed. A pool at the northern end of the waterway helps slow the drainage process. The waterway also was widened.

Jeff follows other conservation efforts on a daily basis.

He has rented approximately 90 percent of the farm for about 20 years. Prior to that, he had worked for the previous

tenant.

JEFF SAID HE has been farming on his own for about 13 years.

Currently, he and his wife, Tammy, farm about 800 acres. He owns 240 acres and rents the rest.

The Rathjes combine a dairy cattle and crop operation. They milk approximately 70 cows twice a day.

MAPLE GROVE

Continued to page 3

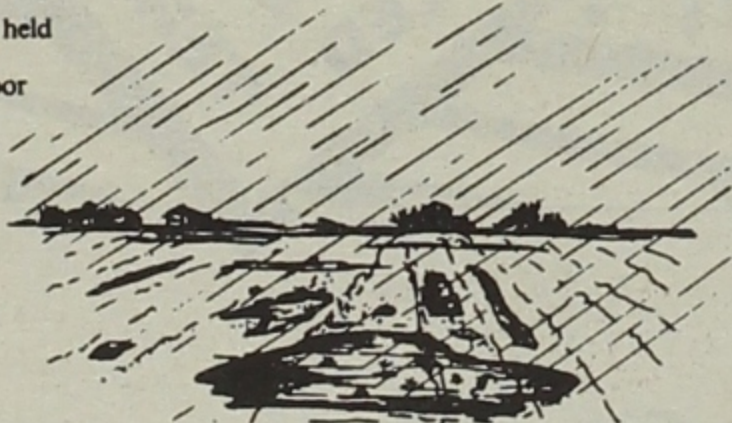


Landlord/Tenant Division

Maple Grove Farm, Inc. and Jeff Rathje were named winners of the Landlord/Tenant Division of the 1995 District Conservation Award. Pictured are, left to right, Richard Scheer, manager of the farm; Ruth Mumford, owner of the farm; and Donna Scheer, manager of the farm. Jeff Rathje rents the farm, but was unavailable for the photo. A variety of reasons led to the group winning the award. A waterway was reconstructed to prevent soil washoff. Rathje performs contouring and minimum tillage.

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Continued from page 2

The majority of their crop space is split between corn and beans. Jeff noted that he has 350 acres in corn, 285 acres in beans, 40 acres in oats and 100 acres in hay.

Jeff explained that the conservation department contacted him about the highly-erodible level of his soil. To attempt to combat the problem, he worked with the department to develop a plan to prevent soil erosion.

While the plan could be changed, it basically remains the same from year to year. Jeff said the purpose of the program is to develop a long-range focus of soil conservation.

Part of that program includes a small portion of no till on one of his parcels. In addition, he performs some contouring and minimum tillage.

The Rathjes have four sons: Matthew,

11; Josh, 8; Adam, 6; and Robert, 2. While it is too early to tell if any of them will want to be farmers, Jeff indicated they do help out now.

While he and Tammy milk cows, the boys feed the calves and help out with chores.

DAILY OPERATION COMBINED with long-range planning and ongoing efforts to prevent soil erosion have earned Maple Grove Farm and the Rathjes a

district award from the conservation department.

Ruth, Richard and Donna said they were surprised to hear that they had been selected for the award.

Ruth said the first time she heard about the award was when she received a letter informing her that Maple Grove Farm Inc. had won.

Plaques were presented to both Ruth and Jeff at the ceremony.



District winners

1995 District Conservation Award plaques were awarded to both Ruth Mumford and Jeff Rathje in the Landlord/Tenant Division. The awards were given during a picnic supper/ceremony in late July.

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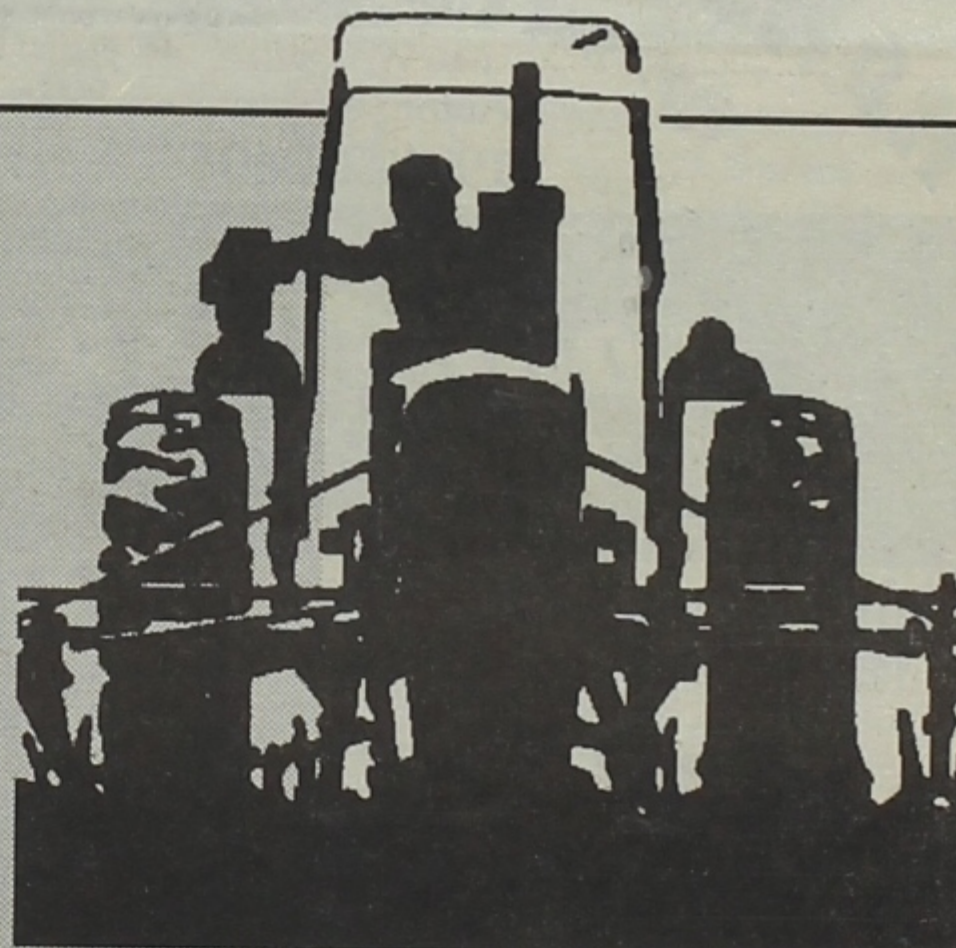
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Hach is continuing a family tradition

Benny Hach honored for conservation practices in Owner Operated Division

By DOUG LINDNER
Publisher

TIMESNEWS— Benny Hach likes the view of his fields at about 1,000 feet.

"It's quite interesting what you can see from the air over the years," explained Hach, the Owner Operated Division winner of Benton County's conservation practices award. The 36-year-old native of Bruce Township in northwest Benton County has a private pilot's license, and likes to fly rented Cessnas from Nichols Field near La Porte City.

From an altitude of between 700 and 1,000 feet, Hach can see light spots in the soil during spells of hot, dry weather, as well as weeds and cultivator blight. During the summer months, he was in the air about once a week, but for the last three weeks he hasn't had the time, and during winter, he has to have a strong urge to fly before he'll make the trip.

So how does his land look from the air?

"I've got a little pride in it— it looks

okay," he said. "It's comparable to what other farmers are doing. If we can keep our heads above water, we're happy."

If Hach's farm is comparable to anyone else's, it would probably have to be due to his father, Don. Benny has been farming with his father "since I was knee-high to a grasshopper," and many of the conservation practices he has put into place, he learned from his dad.

Benny grew up on his parent's farm, and started farming on his own shortly after graduating from Dysart-Geneseo schools. He still has a farrow-to-finish hog operation in partnership with his father, but Don is looking to retire in the not too distant future, and Benny will likely try to continue by himself.

Benny Hach owns 160 acres in Section 32 of Bruce Township, a farm he started in 1984 and has slowly added to over the years. He still rents a 40-acre parcel of the land, as well as several other acreages in the area.

THE CENTERPIECE of his conservation efforts over the last few years has been the development of a system of terraces, recently extended by about 1,300 feet. Benny also implements contours, strip

"It's comparable to what other farmers are doing. If we can keep our heads above water, we're happy."

— Benny Hach

cropping, and some no-till practices on his farm, enough to win him recognition in the Owner Operated Division of the conservation awards in 1995.

But the history of conservation practices goes back much farther than the three years it has taken to build the terraces.

"My dad started early— a long, long time ago," explained Hach. In fact, he added, Don Hach won a conservation award in the tenant division back in the early 1970s. Using the methods instilled upon him by his father, and from courses at Hawkeye Technical Institute, Benny has created a 6,000-foot-long series of terraces to protect his crops.

"I like them for several reasons," he

said of the terraces. "The main reason is saving the soil— keeping it in place."

The damage caused to a field by a heavy rain is just phenomenal, he added. "I just wanted to protect myself from that," he noted. "And I think this terrace system is going to do that."

BUT HACH also sees a benefit to terracing because it simplifies his operation. Instead of strip cropping with rows of corn, beans, oats, and hay, the terraces allow him to alternate rows of only corn and beans. And because he is able to finance the terraces on a cost-share basis, he feels he's able to put some of his tax dollars back into his operation.

With 6,000 feet of terrace, one might think that Hach would be satisfied with the practices he has in place, but he still sees room for improvement.

Some of his neighbors are doing quite well with no-till, something he hasn't done to a great degree because he land spreads manure from the hog operation. But improvements to no-till and its accompanying products and equipment have convinced him it's the way of the future, and he plans to add more of it to his operation as time goes by.

"If I get to that, I'll be as close as I can get," he commented.

Hach was surprised when he won the

HACH

Continued on page 5



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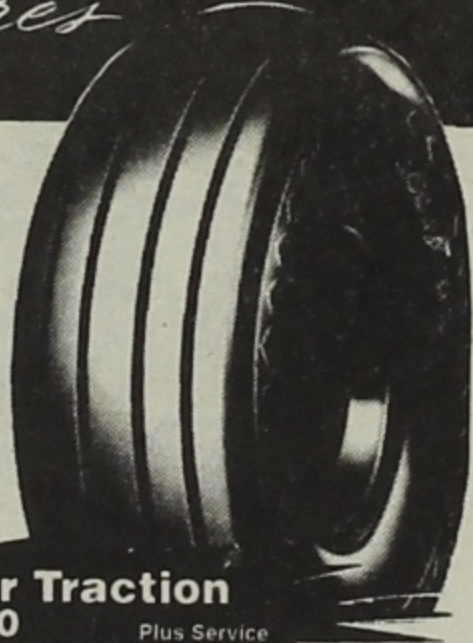
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Continued from page 4

award for the Owner Operated division of the Iowa Conservation Awards, but he's pleased to be a recipient, and glad that the contests are held to recognize conservation efforts.

"I'm glad they promote it (the conservation awards), because we're helping keep the soil where it needs to be, and that benefits everybody down the line."

— **Benny Hach**

"I'M GLAD they promote it, because we're helping keep the soil where it needs to be, and that benefits everybody down the line," he observed. If conservation is to be an everyday part of agricultural life, he explained, the public has to be kept aware of it. Water quality is becoming a serious issue in rural areas, and conservation practices like terracing can prevent topsoil from eroding into creeks and streams.

The diverse farm operation takes much of his time, but Hach spends his off hours with family and friends, attending church in Dysart, and flying the rented Cessnas from La Porte City.

He and his wife Merri have two children—Eddie, 5, and Tiffany, 4. "They're a typical four-and-five-year-old on the farm," he explained.

SWCD winners announced at conference

DES MOINES—Supporters of soil conservation practices across the state were honored at the 49th Annual Conference of the Iowa Association of Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners (IASWCDC) held in Des Moines, September 7-8.

Those honored included:

NACD-Zenaca Ag Products Conservation Education Award

—Secondary Teacher -Robert Schulze, Council Bluffs

—District - East Pottawattamie

Izaak Walton League Windbreak Awards

—Farmstead Winner - Donna Robinson, Masonville

—Newly Established Windbreak Winner - Gary and J.D. Debner, Storm Lake

—Field Shelter Belt Winner - Bob Hild, Webster City

Woodland Owner-of-the-Year

— Steve and Ramona Archer, Moulton

Watershed Achievement Award

—Lawrence, Steve and Dave Turnquist, Alta

Iowa Soil Conservation Awards Program

Teacher Division

—Kindergarten - 8th Grade Teacher - Debbie Wieskamp, Muscatine

—Grades 7 - 12 Teacher - Mike Malloy, Williamsburg

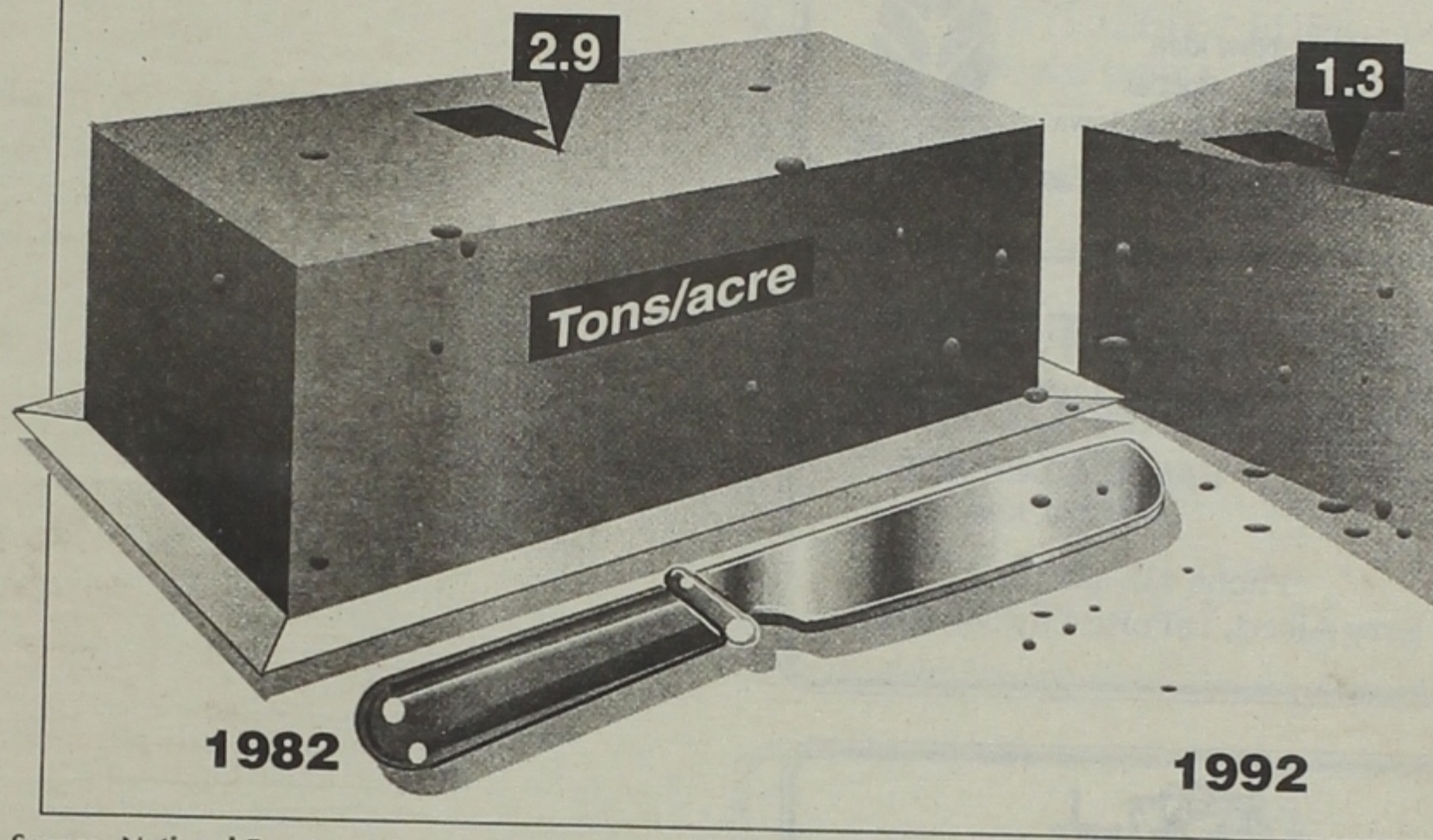
Farmer Division

— Gerald Anderson and the Flying "A" Cattle Company, Red Oak

Wind erosion cut

TIMES • SEPTEMBER 19, 1995 PAGE 5

Between 1982 and 1992, estimated soil loss on Iowa cropland from wind erosion was cut from 2.9 to 1.3 tons per acre per year.



Source: National Resources Inventory, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. NRI data cover the 48 contiguous states, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, but not Alaska.

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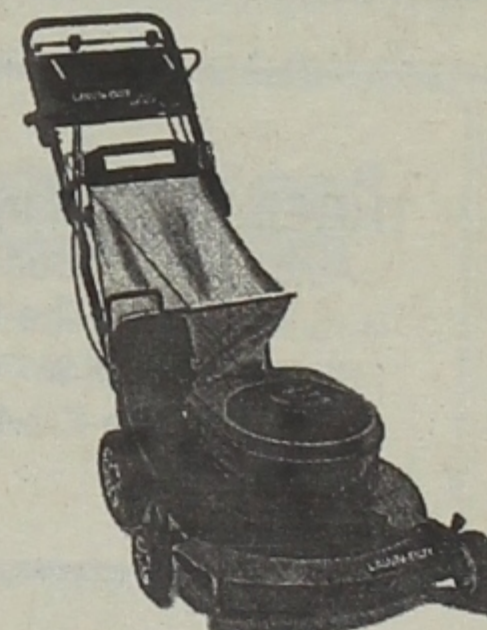
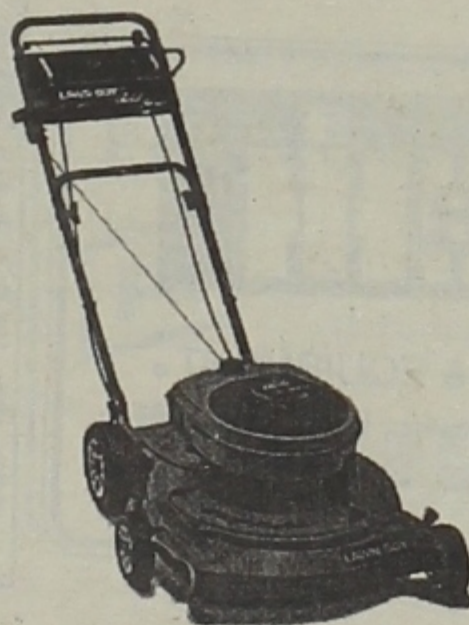
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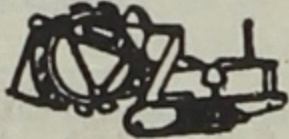
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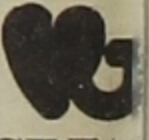
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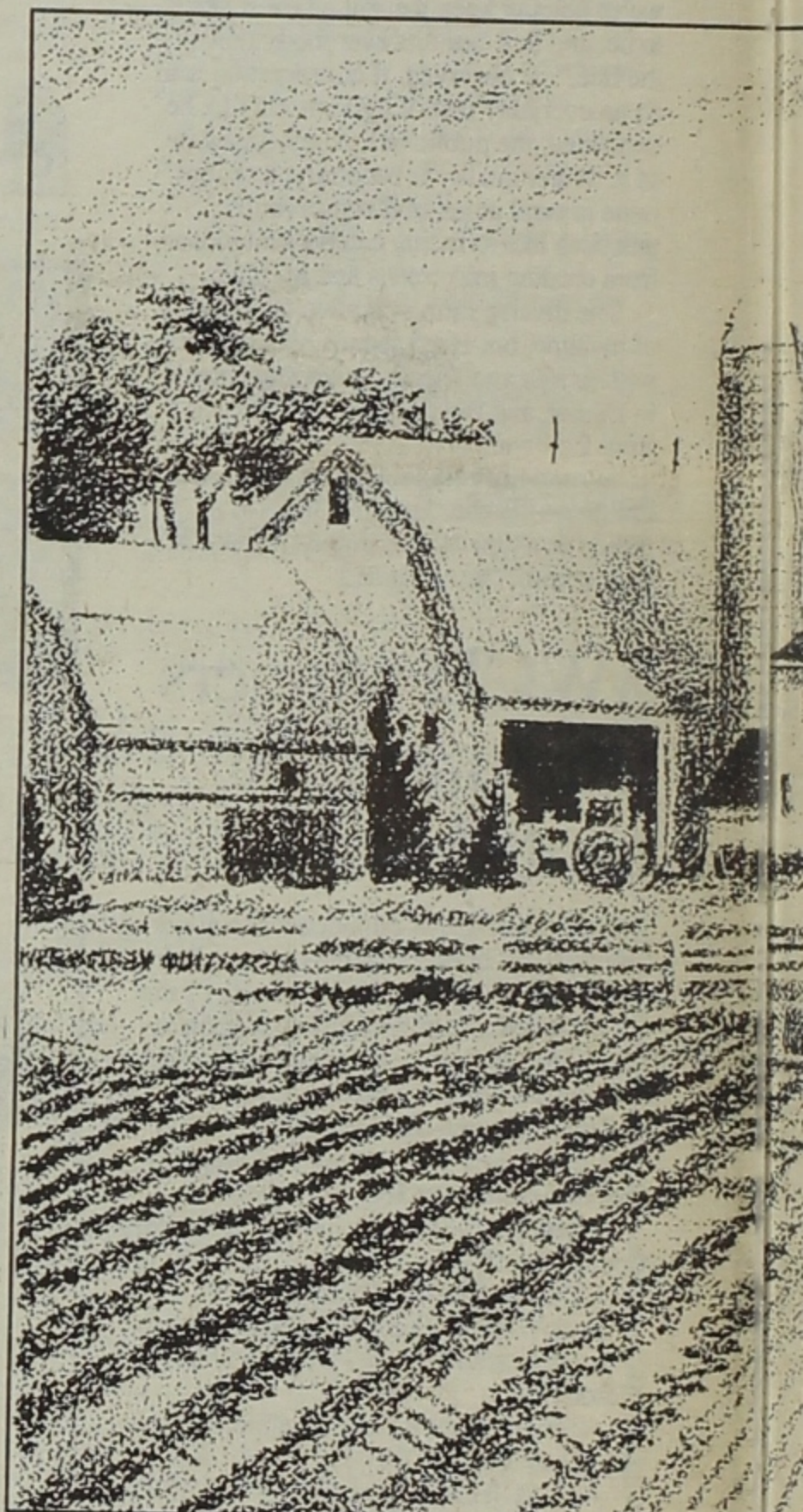

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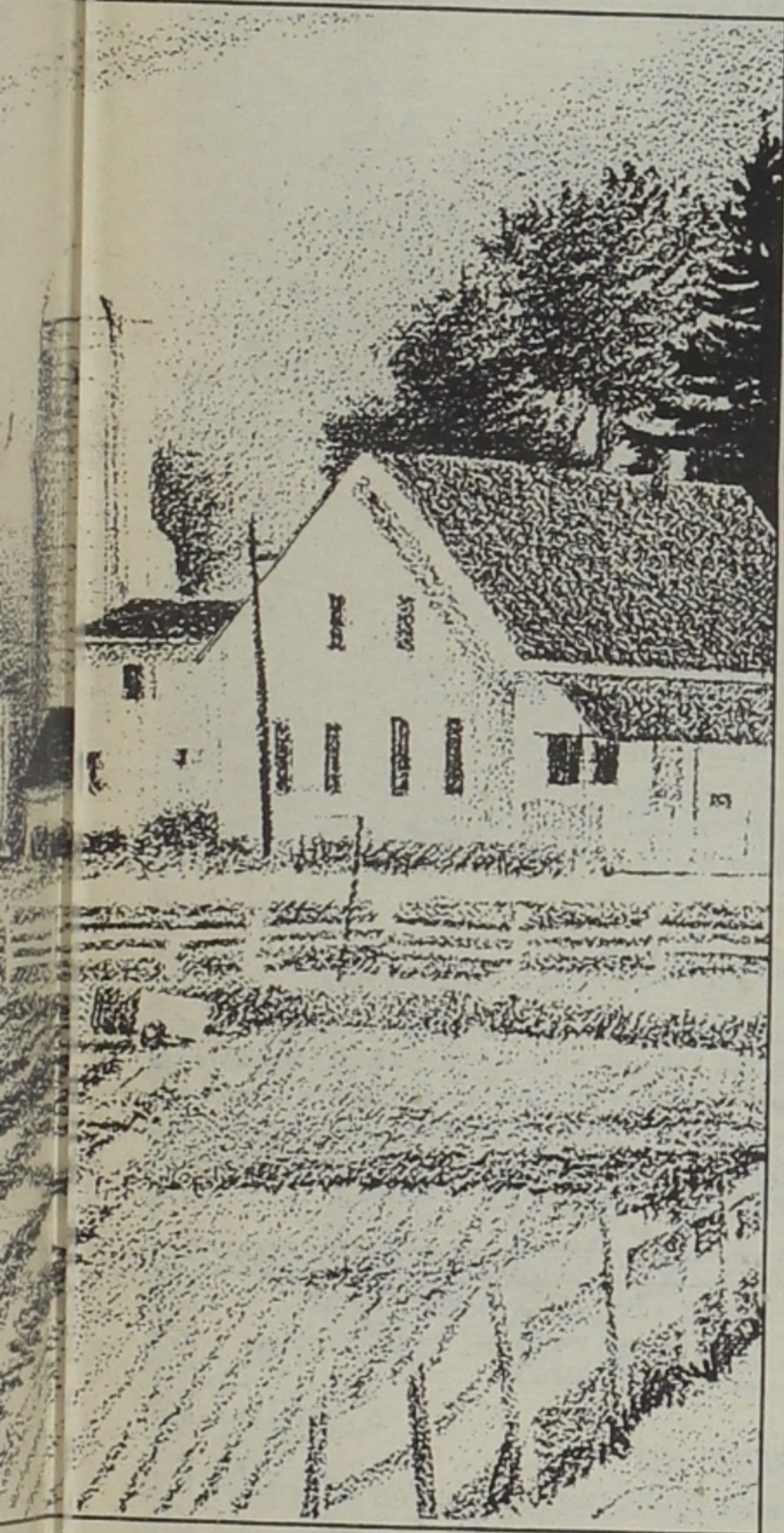
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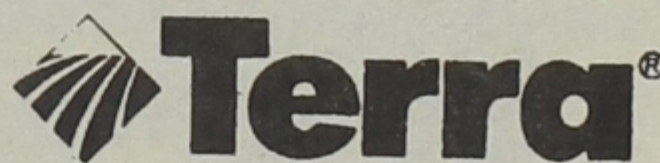


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Schulte's farm has a sweet smell of success

Norway farm wins conservation award from BCSWCD for manure control and soil conservation efforts

By DAN ADIX
Times Staff Writer

NORWAY — When you think of most farms, especially ones that raise a lot of livestock, one of the first things that comes to mind is probably the smell of manure.

It's a fact of life, when you have livestock, you have manure and with manure, you often have that unpleasant odor, especially on hot summer days. This isn't the case on John Schulte's farm.

When you visit Schulte's farm south of Norway, for the most part, all you smell is the aroma of the great outdoors, despite the fact that he operates a large dairy operation.

"Take a deep breath," Schulte said during an interview last week on his farm as we stood next to his cattle yard. "You don't hardly smell a thing, do you?"

He was right.

What's his secret? It's really no big secret, according to the 36-year-old farmer.

It's simply manure management.

LAST YEAR, in 1994, Schulte built a waste storage pond on his family's 160 acre farm 1 1/2 miles south of Norway on 29th Avenue. And because of this development and his other conservation practices, this summer, he was named as the Benton County Soil and Water Conservation District's New Cooperator Division winner. His farm was also selected as the District's overall winner and will now advance to the Regional competition.

"These waste storage ponds are kind of a newer thing. There's a few of them around, but not too many. But as you can see, they do really cut down on the smell produced by the cattle," Schulte commented.

Schulte's award was presented as part of the Iowa Conservation Award Program that the Benton County Soil and Water Conservation District participates in each year. This award program recognizes outstanding producers, like Schulte, who are using soil and water conservation practices on their farm operations. The

SCHULTE

Continued on page 9

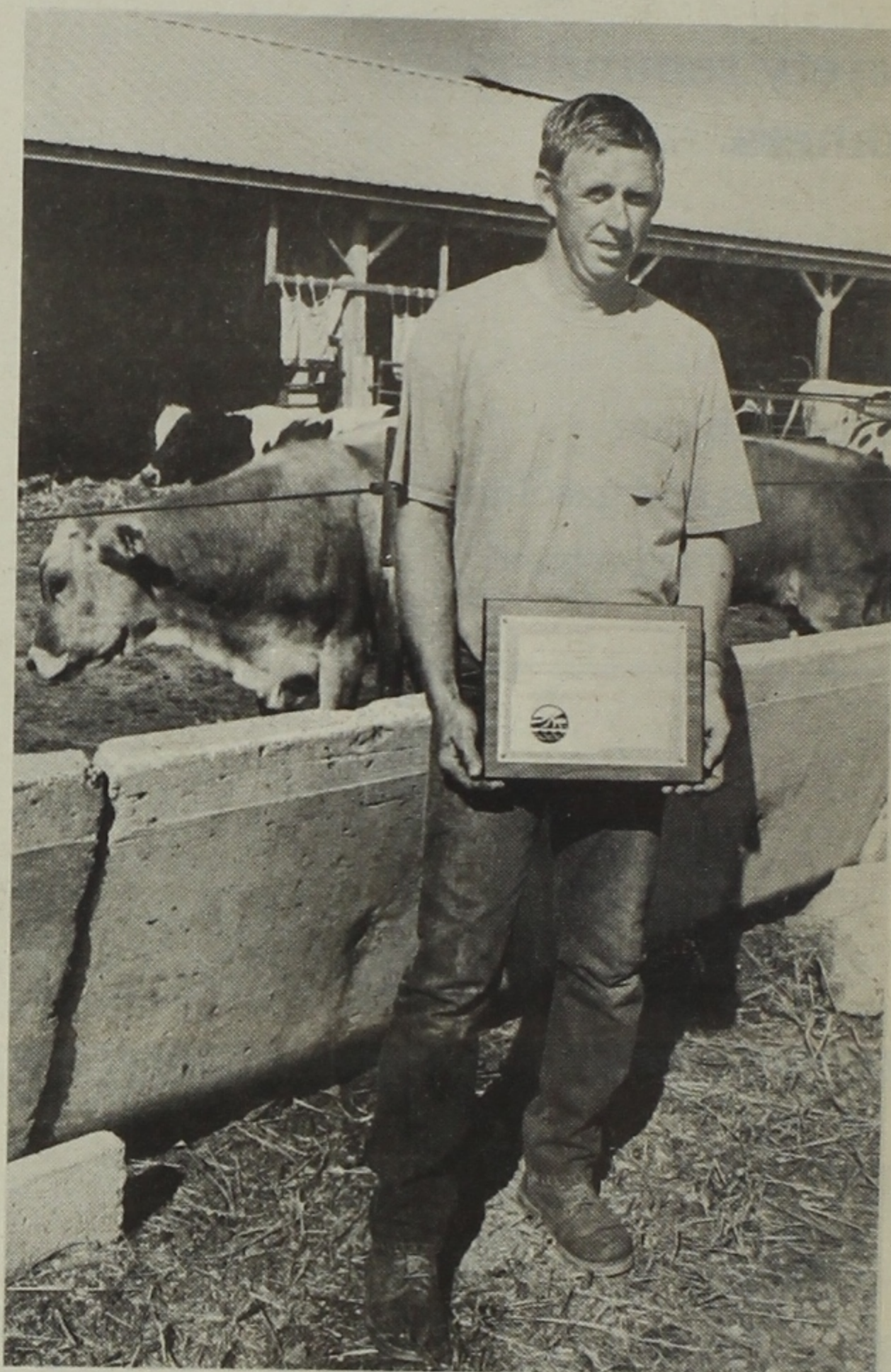


Photo by Dan Adix

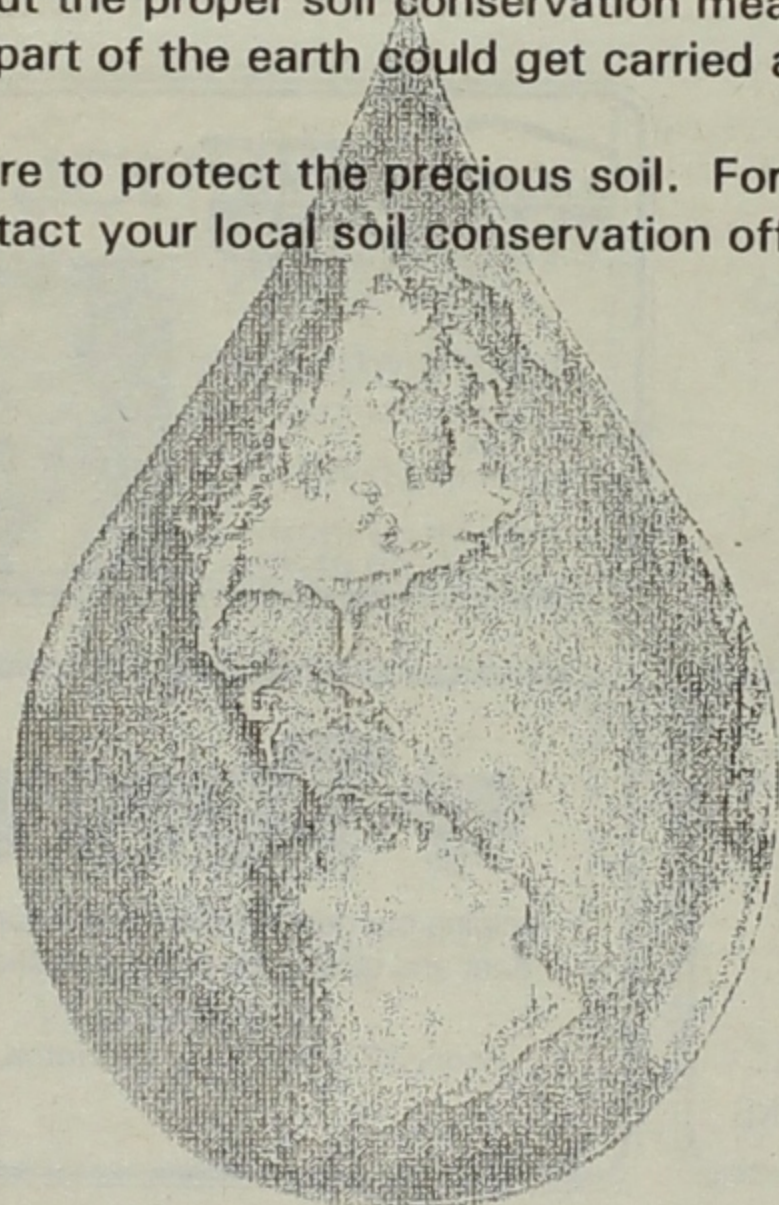
New Cooperator Division winner

John Schulte of rural Norway was named as the Benton County Soil and Water Conservation District's New Cooperator Division winner. Schulte farms 160 acres in Florence Township and uses a rotation with hay and minimum tillage to control soil losses to the "T" level, or only five tons per acre per year. Schulte raises corn, hay and a few soybeans to feed his 80 head of dairy cattle. His farm was also chosen as the District's overall winner and will go on to Regional competition.

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Continued from page 8

program recognizes winners at the District, Regional and State levels. The program is sponsored by the State Soil Conservation Committee and the Iowa Association of Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners.

SCHULTE EXPLAINED THAT the waste storage pond is an earthen structure that holds 1/2 million gallons of runoff manure from his cow and heifer lot.

"It catches everything, the lots are real clean," he said.

The waste storage ponds are becoming more prevalent as farmers are trying to prevent a mass collection of slurry in fields, according to Schulte.

"Before, if you didn't have a collection pit, all the manure would just run off in your fields and collect in a big pile. With this type of lagoon, you don't have that problem," Schulte said.

He noted that the waste storage ponds will hold approximately six months worth of runoff.

"It's real easy. You just hire someone to come in here a couple of times a year to pump it out and then you spread it on your fields," Schulte said.

BESIDES HIS MANURE management, Schulte was recognized for his rotation of hay and minimum tillage to control soil losses to the "T" level, or only five tons per acre per year on his farm in Florence Township.

"I guess soil conservation has always been important to our family," commented Schulte, who for the past fifteen years has farmed the land that has been in his family since the 1940s.

Schulte said that when he took over

SCHULTE

Continued on page 10

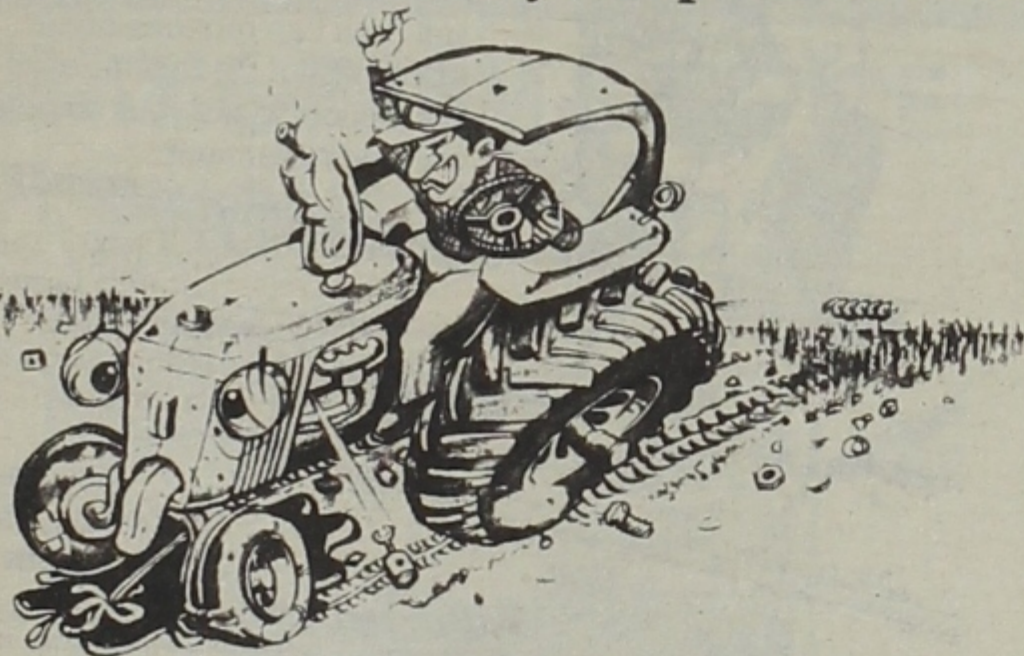


Photo by Dan Adlx

Manure management

John Schulte is shown in front of the earthen waste storage pond he built on his farm in 1994. The pond collects all of the manure runoff from his Brown Swiss Holstein cow and heifer lots and practically eliminates all of the smell associated with livestock yards. Schulte said the pond holds 1/2 million gallons of runoff and only has to be pumped twice a year.

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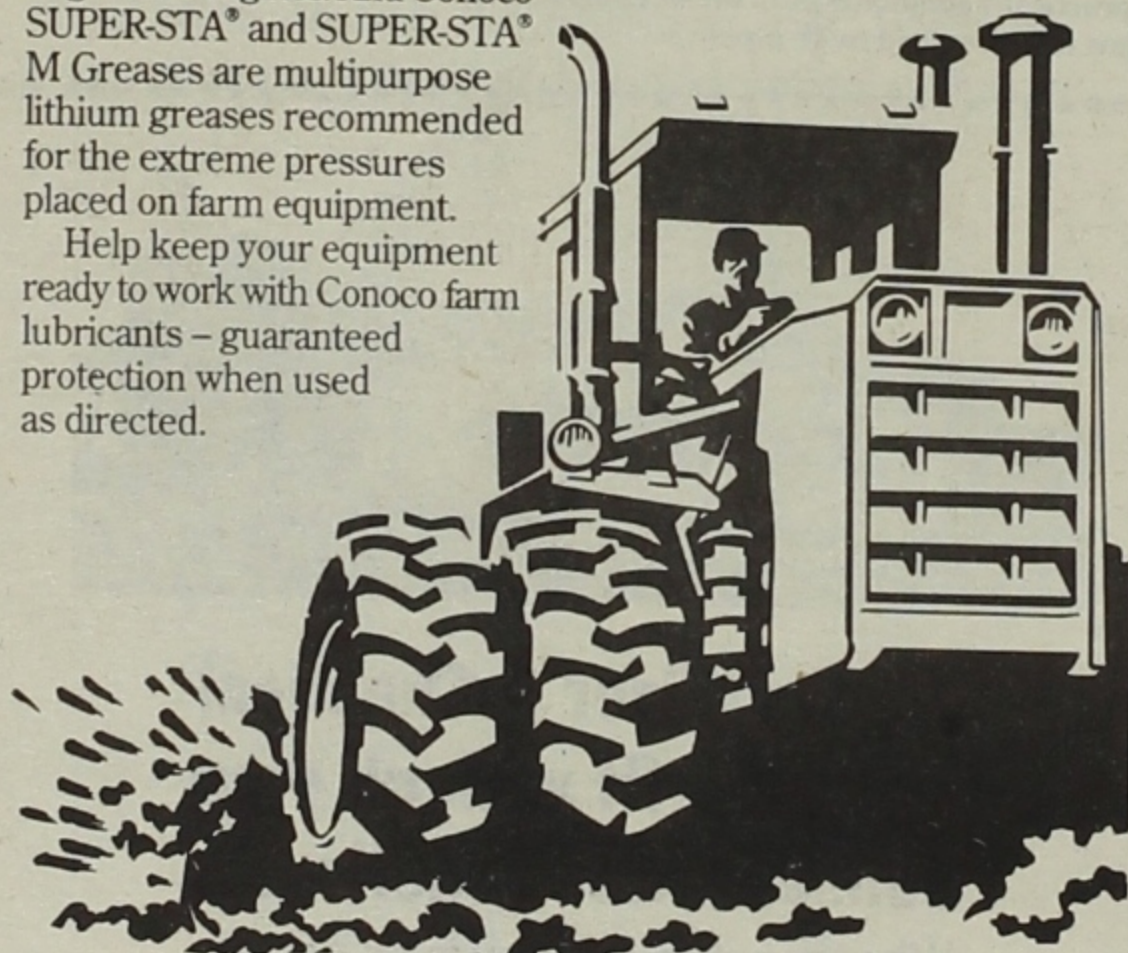
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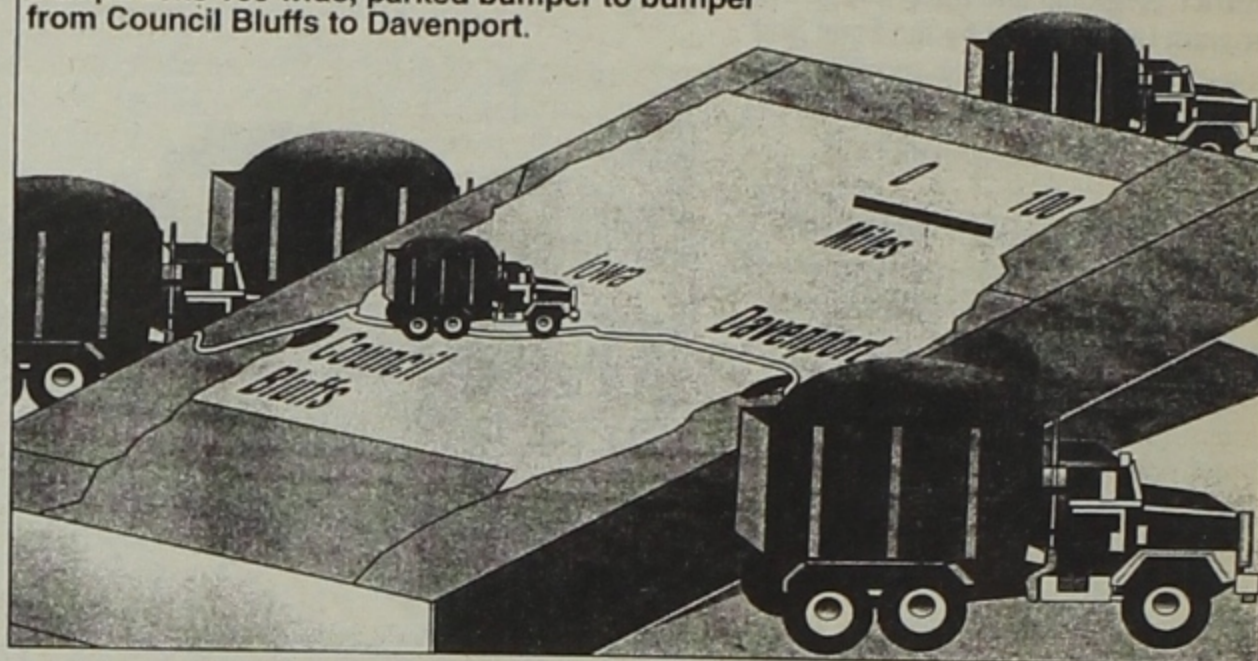


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By 1992 Iowa farmers applied conservation practices to save 100 million more tons of topsoil than in 1982—enough to fill a convoy of dumptrucks 105 wide, parked bumper to bumper from Council Bluffs to Davenport.



Source: National Resources Inventory, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. NRI data cover the 48 contiguous states, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, but not Alaska.

Schulte

Continued from page 9

the 160 acre farm from his father, Herbert, he followed in his footsteps, as far as planting and conservation practices.

"We've been doing it the same way out here for a lot of years and it seems to work," Schulte explained.

He noted that he plants mostly corn, hay and a few beans on the 160 acres he owns

and the 190 acres he rents.

"We had to develop a conservation plan a few years ago so we're following that," he said, adding, "We have the waterways and plenty of hay ground around the whole farm so we cut down on soil erosion that way. What we're doing is pretty adequate to save the soil for the future."

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Concern growing for fate of CRP land in Iowa

TIMESAREA — Concern is growing for the fate of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) which is before the U.S. Senate at this time.

Conservation partners from throughout the United States are worried about the future of the CRP program which is outlined in Senate Bill 854, introduced in May by Senators Lugar (R-IN) and Leahy (R-VT).

Most worrisome to wildlife groups, including Pheasants Forever, and agencies are potential changes in eligibility requirements which are not spelled out in the bill, but could create sweeping changes in the geographical distribution of CRP. The definition of new and more stringent erosion criteria in the rulemaking process could shift the program out of the Great Plains and Midwestern states.

Pheasants Forever officials point out that S. 854 states that only Highly Erodible Land

(HEL) which cannot be farmed in accordance with a conservation plan will be eligible for CRP, and only on lands which cannot be farmed with the "best economically attainable conservation system," an

were signed up under the more stringent rules enacted in 1990. Officials are worried that with new eligibility structures under S. 854, CRP in North Dakota may soon be a fond memory. North Dakota is but one ex-

in S. 854, including CRP levels up to 36.4 million acres and increased emphasis on riparian buffers and filterstrips. Pheasants Forever and other wildlife groups, together with state wildlife agencies, are trying to secure the following improvements to S. 854:

— Make all HEL, except prime farmland, eligible for CRP.

— Make cropped wetlands and Waterbank Lands eligible for CRP.

— Delete the "manure management" provisions of S. 854, which would reduce funds available for land conservation.

— List wildlife as co-equal objective, along with soil and water conservation, of CRP.

Pheasant Forever officials urge residents to call or write your elected officials to discuss the fate of CRP because it will affect everyone, whether you farm or not.

CONSERVATION UPDATE

open-ended wild card that is as yet undefined.

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department noted that 3.1 million acres were enrolled in CRP in that state under provisions of the 1985 and 1990 Farm Bills, but only 42,500 acres (out of 311,000 acres offered)

ample of what could come to pass throughout the prairie states and Iowa.

The losses to CRP are not the only concern with S. 854. An analysis by North Dakota State University indicates the Lugar / Leahy Bill would reduce farm income by 35% and depress land values by 51% over seven years.

There are a number of positive provisions

Midwest governors urge Congress to continue CRP

IOWA — In a June 21, letter to Senator Richard Lugar, Midwest Governors Terry Branstad of Iowa and Arne Carlson (MN), Tommy Thompson (WI), and John Engler (MI) called on Congress to provide the maximum funding and acreage possible in a reauthorized Conservation Reserve Program.

The Governors' letter states, "We join with the many commodity, farm, and conservation groups which enthusiastically support this program. We strongly encourage that you ... give top priority to reauthorization of the CRP. As you consider budget options, we strongly urge you to provide the maximum funding and

acreage possible for CRP. To the extent reductions are made, we urge you not to reduce CRP funding to any greater degree than those applied to commodity programs."

Among the benefits of keeping CRP noted by the Governors were: stimulation of rural economies through increased hunting and wildlife-related recreation; increased pheasant, waterfowl and grassland songbird populations; water quality improvements benefiting streams, lakes, rivers and fish species because of reduced sedimentation; improved farm income through rental payments; and high commodity prices.

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Soil and Water Commissioners honored

DES MOINES—Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Dale M. Cochran congratulated Buford Floy of Thornton, who was recognized as the 1995 Outstanding Iowa Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioner during the 49th Annual Conference of the Iowa Association of Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners (IASWCDC) held in Des Moines, September 7 - 8. This annual award honors commissioners for investing their time and efforts to encourage others to conserve soil and protect Iowa's water quality for future generations.

Floy is now in his fifth year as a commissioner in the Cerro Gordo District, and serves his district as the vice-chairperson. He also chairs the 22-member Clear Lake Enhancement and Restoration Project which he helped to establish for the protection of water quality in Clear Lake.

Floy practiced soil conservation on his Cerro Gordo County farm before retiring recently. He used no-till planting and conservation tillage. He installed terraces and grassed waterways to reduce soil erosion. He also restored a pothole wetland and native prairie area to promote nesting and protect wildlife habitat.

"BUFORD'S DEDICATION to soil and water conservation goes far beyond his own farm. He has demonstrated sound resource protection and helped other farmers implement conservation practices to protect water quality in Cerro Gordo County," Cochran said.

Floy was selected from nine regional fi-

nalists for the award including: Roy Folkerts of Inwood, Tim Hemphill of Milford, Donald Schmitt of Holy Cross, Clint Goos of Treynor, Kim Bates of Scranton, Leland Roudybush of Muscatine, Kenneth Caldwell of Creston, and Donald Avery of Ottumwa.

Melvin Sanders, of Donnellson, was presented with the Ken Wagner Award, which is given to outstanding young soil and water conservation district commissioners. Sanders has been an active member of the Lee Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), providing leadership and publicity for many district programs. He also practices soil and water conservation on his farm where he produces corn, soybeans and hogs.

The Sioux and Audubon SWCDs received Goodyear - NACD Conservation Grand Awards in recognition of their efforts to provide assistance for a variety of soil conservation and water quality protection practices and for their extensive conservation education programs. The Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company and the National Association of Conservation Districts co-sponsor this annual award in appreciation of farmers' efforts to produce agricultural commodities while sustaining agricultural opportunities for future generations. The Linn, Woodbury, Cedar and Wapello SWCDs received Goodyear - NACD Conservation Honor Awards.

THE IOWA Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship's Division of Soil Conservation and the State Soil Conservation Committee (SSCC) recognized Gover-

nor Terry Branstad and former SSCC chairperson Sally Puttmann, of Kingsley, during the conference for their long-term contributions of time, energy and leadership to soil and water conservation programs.

The IASWCDC presented honorary memberships to the Association's legislative liaison Joe Kelly, of Des Moines, Puttmann,

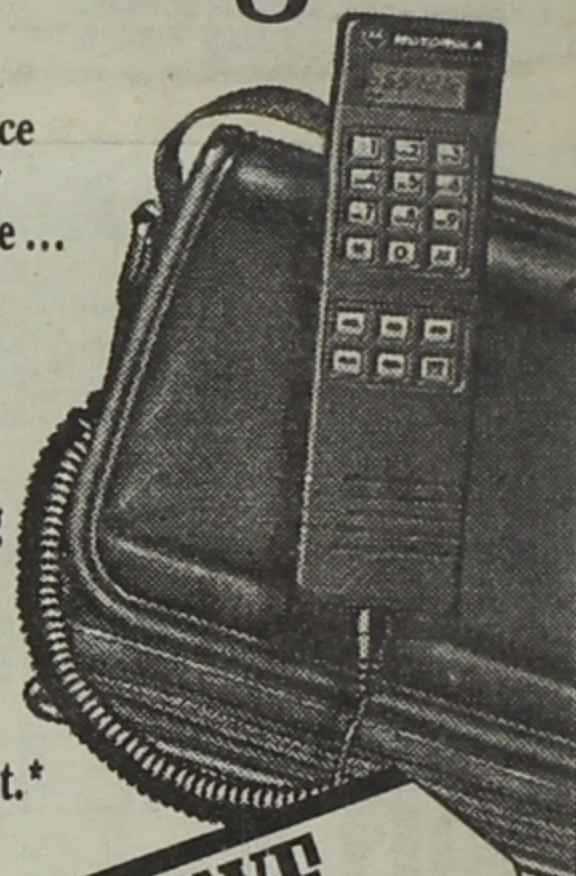
IASWCDC past-president J. Kelly Tobin, of New Market, and former USDA Soil Conservation Service State Conservationist for Iowa, Jeff Vonk, of Lincoln, NE, during the conference in appreciation of their significant influence on the Iowa soil and water conservation program.

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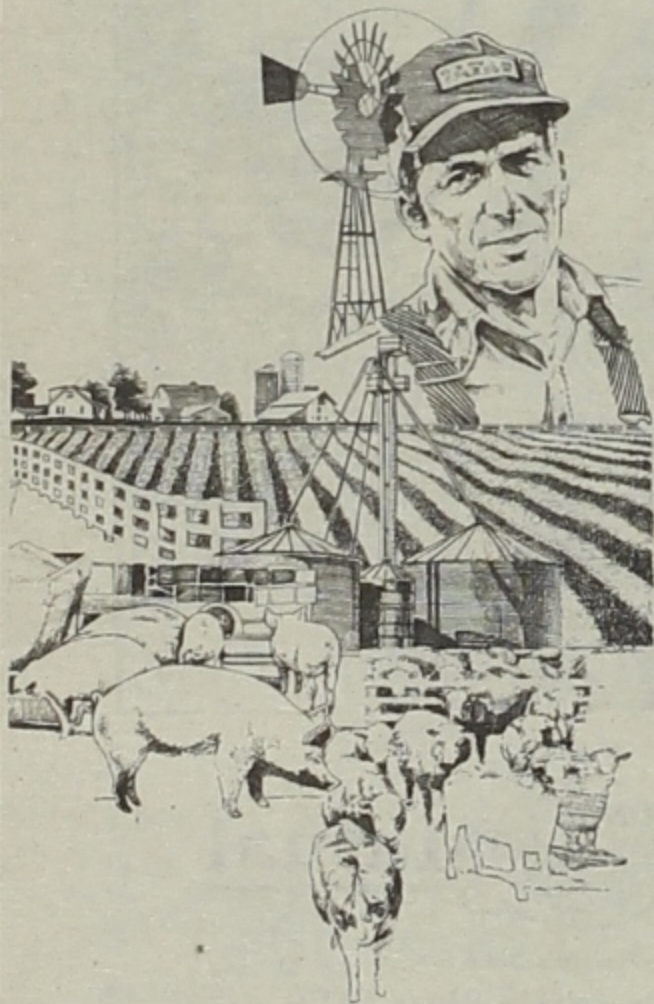
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