

KOSSUTH COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

IOWA-SCD-86

Algona, Iowa

SECOND ANNUAL REPORT

December 31, 1949

District Commissioners

J. C. Skow, Chairman
Jerry Heetland
T. E. Lagerstrom
A. L. Brown, Secretary

FOREWORD

To the farmers and all others who are interested in the land of Kossuth County:

"Soil conservation is fundamental to the welfare of our country. Our strength, our prosperity, and our happiness will be measured largely by the effort we, as a Nation, devote to this worthy cause."

This is the firm belief of the men who carry forward conservation farming in the Kossuth County Soil Conservation District.

This annual report for 1949 was prepared by your soil conservation district commissioners, to acquaint you with the progress which has been made to date, and with the procedure by which any Kossuth farmer, operator, or landowner, by his own voluntary decision, can avail himself of the services of the Kossuth County Soil Conservation District.

Your district was established in 1947 by a popular vote of landowners. It is administered by a committee consisting of three farmer-commissioners elected by the vote of landowners, and a secretary who is the county extension director. The technical services of the district are provided by a resident farm planner and his aid, a soil specialist, and a drainage engineer, all of the Soil Conservation Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

It is the duty and purpose of your district to assist you with your soil and water conservation problems. The district commissioners receive no remuneration, nor is the board a beneficiary of any local taxes. Neither does the district make payments for any practices or make crop allotments or acreage controls.

If you elect to obtain assistance from your district, you must make an application to the commissioners, and it will be reviewed by them. An approved application is usually assigned to a group of applications by neighboring farmers, so that the work (education, farm planning, and field demonstration) may be carried out with a group having similar problems and interests. Therefore, bear in mind that the district can furnish help to you only if you apply for it!

The purpose of the assistance your district has been called upon to furnish, in the majority of cases, has been to prepare a farm plan giving an inventory of the land capabilities. Based on this inventory and the kind of farming the farmer wishes to pursue, recommendations are made for a suitable crop rotation, fertilization program, waterways, drainage, contouring, windbreaks, shelter areas, livestock enterprises, etc., depending on the problems involved. These recommendations are determined upon discussion with the farmer, and also by consultation with the landowner, in instances where the owner does not operate the farm.

The farm plan thus developed and agreed upon by all concerned is then written up completely and maps provided showing the nature and capability of the soil on the farm, the recommended field layout, crop rotation, fertilizer

program, drainage system, etc. This blueprint of the farm and the conservation practices it provides become then the basis for a cooperative agreement between the farmer and the soil conservation district. The district will arrange for the technical help in putting the plan into operation. The farmer becomes a conservationist in carrying out this plan for better farming.

KOSSUTH COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Chairman
District Governing Body

Kossuth County Soil Conservation District

Organization

It seems relevant, at this place, to give a brief history of the soil conservation movement.

If we link man's domestication of his most important farm animal - the cow - to the beginning of man's endeavors with settled farming, then we can date this type of farming back to 10,000 B.C. We know that milk, butter, and cheese were common in Egypt in 3,000 B.C.; and general farming, of which the cow was an important part, was in progress in Europe by 4,000 B.C., from whence it eventually was carried to this country.

As ancient as farming is, it remains a fact that for about 10 dozen centuries man farmed largely in ignorance of everything but the most external aspects of soils, plants, and animals. It was not until the Seventeenth Century that the Renaissance set men searching into agricultural problems. The contributions of Justus von Liebig, "the father of agricultural chemistry," and of his contemporaries who established the first agricultural experiment station, gave farming a Science in the Nineteenth Century.

By our farsighted Federal legislation, development of agriculture in this country has been constant. Outstanding examples of government for agriculture, in addition to the establishment of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, are the Morrill Act of 1862 creating our agricultural colleges, and the Hatch Act of 1887 which provided for the establishment of agricultural experiment stations. The Soil Conservation Service was established by law passed in April 1935, and the Agricultural Adjustment Administration Act was passed in 1938. The objectives of the Soil Conservation Service and the long-time goals of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration were the maintenance of the Nation's soil resources.

It was soon found that the problems of soil conservation could not be solved by action of the Federal government alone, and that State legislation was needed to provide a mechanism by which farmers could organize themselves for cooperative action. Consequently, Congress authorized the Secretary of Agriculture to require the adoption of suitable State legislation as a condition for Federal conservation aid.

This Act provides a procedure by which soil conservation districts may be organized, such districts to be governmental subdivisions of the State. The Act establishes a "State Soil Conservation Committee" which has power to define the boundaries of each district, to encourage the organization of districts, to bring about an exchange of information and experience among the districts in the State, and to coordinate the several district programs "so far as this may be done by advice and consultation."

Each district is an independent unit, and is not subject to the control of the State Committee. Funds to finance the operations of the districts will

come from two sources: (1) Direct appropriations from the State Treasury, to be divided among the districts by the State Committee; and (2) Grants in aid made either directly to the districts or through the State Committee, by the U. S. Soil Conservation Service or other Federal agencies. The districts are not authorized to levy any taxes or special assessments nor to issue bonds.

The Legislature of the State of Iowa passed the "Districts Law" in 1939. Since then, 96 soil conservation districts have been organized. In accordance with this law, the elected officers of the State Committee and of the Kossuth County Soil Conservation District at present are as follows:

Iowa Soil Conservation Committee

Chris H. Jensen, Audubon, Chairman
Wm. Darbyshire, Rockwell City
Kenneth Wagner, West Liberty
James W. Foster, Albia
J. F. Engel, Maynard
Floyd Andre, Director of Extension, Ames
Harry D. Linn, Secretary of Agriculture, Des Moines
Frank H. Mendell, State Conservationist, SCS, Ames
H. Wayne Pritchard, Executive Secretary, Des Moines

Kossuth County Soil Conservation District

Commissioners

J. C. Skow, Wesley, Chairman
Jerry Heetland, Lakota
T. E. Lagerstrom, Burt

Secretary

A. L. Brown, County Extension
Director, Algona

The U. S. Soil Conservation Service is furnishing the following assistance to the Kossuth County Soil Conservation District:

Technicians Assigned to Kossuth County

Leon H. Laird, Farm Planner, Algona
Oliver S. Carlson, Conservation Aid, Algona

Specialists and Administrative Staff Assisting Kossuth, Hancock, Humboldt, and Winnebago County Soil Conservation Districts

L. E. Kuester, District Conservationist, Fort Dodge
C. R. Beem, Agricultural Engineer, Humboldt
Don F. Carlson, Engineering Aid, Humboldt
Donald A. Cowles, Soil Technician, Algona
Grace A. Looft, Clerk, Algona

In addition to those directly connected with the Kossuth County Soil Conservation District, the cause of soil conservation is being furthered by such other

organizations as the Kossuth County Production and Marketing Committee, the Extension Service, the Vocational Agriculture training program, and the Schools of Kossuth County. The cooperation and support which these organizations have given your district are reported elsewhere in these pages.

Soil Conservation Applied to the Farms of Kossuth County

The year 1949 was the first year during which the Kossuth County Soil Conservation District had available the full and competent assistance of the U. S. Soil Conservation Service in farm planning, drainage problems, and educational activities. Accordingly, considerable headway was made in applying conservation practices to the land of the county.

From the district office in the Post Office Building in Algona, under the direction of Leon Laird, farm planner, the work was carried forward in 11 townships of the county during 1949. To relieve the technical personnel of routine office duties, a conservation clerk was assigned to be of service to callers and to handle necessary correspondence and files.

Thus the technicians assigned to the district by the U. S. Soil Conservation Service assisted farmers in applying conservation practices on Kossuth farms by working with them 200 man-days on planning farms; 267 man-days on field layout, soil and farm surveying, drainage problems, and wildlife areas; and 106 man-days on group meetings and educational and cooperative endeavors. The technical accomplishments are detailed in the following table:

Practices	Unit	Planned		Applied	
		1949	To Date	1949	To Date
Contouring	Acres	120	120	120	120
Pasture Improvement	Acres	49	52	11	11
Seeding Permanent Past.	Acres	10	45	35	35
Farm Drainage	Acres	50	150	38	38
Crop Rotations	Acres	5,903	7,577	1,336	1,336
Field Reorganization	Acres	4,234	4,661	2,120	2,120
Green Manure Crops	Acres	2,970	2,970	116	116
Waterways & Outlets	Lin.Ft.	41,400	41,880	22,500	25,000
Closed Drains	Lin.Ft.	20,500	28,980	2,850	4,850
Wildlife Areas	No.	1	3	3	3

Conservation Farm Plans

	Number		Acres	
	1949	To Date	1949	To Date
Requests for Assistance Received	82	150	19,320	34,610
Plans Prepared and Signed	42	50	7,872	9,678

Miscellaneous

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
General Educational Meetings	4	350
Interest Group Meetings	5	43
Planning Groups	6	37
Demonstrations	1	80
Soil Conservation Films	8	550
Publicity	Special Edition during KOSSUTH COUNTY ADVANCE SOIL CONSERVATION WEEK UPPER DES MOINES	

Goals for 1949

Farm Plans	40
News Stories	12
Demonstrations (Plowing Demonstra- tions & Field Day)	2

The Kossuth County Production and Marketing Administration Committee of the U. S. Department of Agriculture reports the following practices completed for Kossuth County:

Lime (15)	932 tons
Construction of open farm drainage ditches (6)	1400 cubic yards
Tiling (7)	21,902 rods
Green Manure (17) - Red clover	25,896 acres
Sweet clover	66,278 acres
Contouring intertilled crops (2)	114 acres
Sod waterway (4)	1,809,000 square feet
Fertilizer (16) C.M.S.	1,278 tons
Fertilizer	2,409 tons

Kossuth County Extension Service

A. L. Brown, County Extension Director

Although Kossuth County is fortunate in having soils which yield well when increased production is demanded, as during the last war, the practice of heavy row cropping exacted a serious drain on the fertility of the soils. The application of better land use on the farms of the county is therefore of vital interest, and is a common concern of the Extension Service, the soil conservation district, the Soil Conservation Service, and other agricultural agencies.

In pursuit of these common interests, the Extension Service cooperated in work on the "Open Ditch Survey" of the district; the establishment of forage

crop and fertilizer plots for demonstration purposes; soil conservation demonstrations; a school for soil testing; and an inter-denominational Harvest Sunday service.

The U. S. Soil Conservation Service and the Extension Service both assisted the Production and Marketing Administration in their district soil testing school in this county. The Soil Conservation Service personnel cooperated with us in conducting 14 corn borer informational meetings on farms throughout the county.

We have had the full assistance of the Extension staff of Iowa State College, particularly in connection with the "Open Ditch Drainage Survey," a long-time project. The State Extension Service also provided seed and fertilizers used on the demonstration plots.

The State Extension staff presented material on soil conservation each week by radio and news releases, through movies, pamphlets and textbooks, by exhibition tours and educational meetings, as well as in consultations with farmers.

Conservation Study in the Schools of
Kossuth County

A. E. Lauritzen
County Superintendent of Schools

The Tri-County Institute (Kossuth, Humboldt, Palo Alto), conducted annually by the State Department of Education, introduced the new Handbook on Conservation to the elementary teachers of Kossuth County, at a meeting in Humboldt on September 16, 1949. All elementary teachers of Kossuth County were present for this orientation.

As the new Handbook is the product of several years of experiment and study led by Miss Ivah Green, State rural supervisor, the material and recommended procedure is very adaptable to classroom procedure. Conservation leaders, both State and Federal, were requested to present various phases of the Handbook at the Institute.

The bibliography in the Handbook is being added to the libraries of the various schools in the county and in the circulating library in the office of the county superintendent. More material is needed in the way of pictures. It is understood that film strips will soon be available on loan from the Soil Conservation Service to assist teachers in presenting the program.

Closer relationship with community surroundings is being encouraged among pupils of the country schools, and observances of bird shelters, erosion practices, crop rotations, and soil analysis studies are being reported.

Appearance of conservation officials in schoolroom classes would encourage and emphasize the study even further.

Activities of the Commissioners,
Kossuth County Soil Conservation District

Of the business with which your commissioners were concerned during 1949, two items are of particular importance and call for emphasis in this report:

1. Financial aid to the district from State funds.
 2. Establishment of a research farm in the Clarion-Webster soil area.
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1. The 53rd General Assembly of the State of Iowa voted \$250,000 for use by Iowa Soil Conservation Districts during the first year of the biennium. Each district is privileged to submit to the State Soil Conservation Committee budget requests for financial aid which will result in increasing application of soil conservation on the land.

Your commissioners deemed as most important, an increase in number of conservation farm plans completed yearly in the Kossuth County district. Requests for these plans doubled in 1949 over the period 1947-1948. However, there was no similar increase in completed plans due to lack of personnel. Since your commissioners desire that these plans be prepared and ready for application on the land in the shortest possible time, a budget request to the State Committee was submitted to hire from State funds a part-time technical assistant for field surveying work, and a part-time clerk for necessary office routine. This increase in personnel required also acquisition of additional office equipment.

We are pleased to report that the State Committee has approved this budget and has assigned to the Kossuth Soil Conservation District \$1650.00 for the period October 1, 1949 to June 30, 1950. Your commissioners will also be reimbursed from this fund for mileage expenditures made in pursuance of their duties.

2. Establishment of a Clarion-Webster soil research farm to be concerned with crop production, crop utilization, and soil tillage, as they relate to drainage, had the support of your commissioners and of numerous Kossuth County Farmers.

This project is sponsored by the Clarion-Webster Soil Area Experimental Association, representatives of soil conservation districts, and farmers located in the Wisconsin Drift Area, which contains the Clarion and Webster soil types. The project will be operated by the Iowa State College Experiment Station, which agency will also provide the funds necessary to carry out the research.

At this date we can report that Kossuth County farmers have provided \$2400 in memberships for this project, and that funds from all counties within the Webster-Clarion area are sufficient to proceed with purchase of sufficient land to establish the research farm in 1950.

Briefs of District Commissioners Monthly Meetings - 1949

January Arranged for Kossuth district election of commissioners. Announced Tiling School for March 1-2. Considered Research Farm project. Approved 5 conservation farm plans and 17 requests for plans.

February Arranged for soil conservation field demonstrations in the district. Appointed committee for Research Farm project. Arranged for county-wide publicity on commissioners' election (place and date). Approved 3 conservation farm plans and 4 requests.

March Planned Soil Conservation Service cooperation with the Production and Marketing Administration in soil testing school. Received petitions for commissioners elections, prepared ballots, approved 8 conservation farm plans and 11 requests.

April Announced and introduced duly-elected new commissioners, and received their signed oath of office. Elected officers of the district. District function reviewed by L. E. Kuester of Soil Conservation Service. Reported on drainage survey. Reported on forage and grass demonstration plots on the Raymond Steven farm. Approved 2 conservation farm plans and 6 requests.

May Arranged for demonstration tour on Raymond Steven farm June 22 and accompanying publicity; and Inter-Church assistance in observance of "Soil Conservation." Approved 4 conservation farm plans.

June Conference on State financial aid available to the district after July 1. Approved 2 conservation farm plans and 1 application.

July Prepared and adopted 1st quarter district budget from State Funds.

August Adopted plan to hold cooperators group meetings during winter months. Approved 4 conservation farm plans and 4 requests.

September Held soil type demonstration. Arranged for Harvest Sunday program at Swea City. Approved 4 conservation farm plans and 4 requests.

October Approved cooperation with County Board of Supervisors relative to County Drain #81. Considered educational program on Corn Borer. Approved 1 completed conservation farm plan.

November Reported on Research Farm project. Elected delegate to Commissioners Short Course at Iowa State College. Approved 1 conservation farm plan and 1 request.

December Conferred on State budget and the year's work by SCS personnel. Laid plans for 1950. Approved 13 conservation farm plans and 8 applications.