

INSIDE IOWA TODAY

News of
Interest

Thursday,
January 20, 2005

For the DYSART REPORTER, NORTHERN SUN-PRINT, REINBECK COURIER, TAMA NEWS-HERALD, TRAER STAR-CLIPPER

Conserving Soil & Water in Tama County —2004 Annual Report—



Tama Soil and Water District Commissioners

Left to right: Rollie Haynes, Commissioner; Cathy Wieck, Assistant Commissioner; Jeff Bruene, Commissioner; Jody Kasal, Commissioner; Stan Dostal, Commissioner; Dean McKenna, Assistant Commissioner; Mike Risher, Assistant Commissioner; David Beane, Commissioner.

Tama Soil and Water Conservation District Activities during FY 2004

July 2003 - District limits on state cost share funded projects were reviewed and changed. Conservation award winners were selected.

Free Watermelon Feed was served at the Tama County Fair.

August 2003 - The Division of Soil Conservation has funding for a District Employee.

September 2003 - The District voted to support 2 teachers to attend the Food, Land and People area workshop.

The District will continue seed sales and drilling of CRP acres again this year.

An audit was held regarding the District funds.

October 2003 - Resolutions for the Annual CDI conference were reviewed.

November 2003 - 4-H projects that were entered at the fair concerning conservation will be awarded savings bonds from the District.

December 2003 - A contribution was sent to the Tama County Nature Center for the use of the building for the annual conservation awards banquet. Two commissioners, David Beane and Stan Dostal, attended the Fall CDI Regional meeting that was held in Marshalltown.

January 2004 - The District approved to award two District scholarships - one in the amount of \$300 and another in the amount of \$200.

All 6th grade students in Tama County will be receiving a free tree or shrub from the District.

The District will match the \$5,000 from CDI for technical assistance for waterways, buffers, terraces, ponds and status reviews.

Commissioner Kasal will be the District's representative for RC&D.

February 2004 - The Memorandum of Understanding and Civil Rights were reviewed.

Extension dates for cost share projects was discussed. The District's policy for state cost share funding will be reviewed again in June. A Free Watermelon feed will be held at the Tama County Fair again next summer.

March 2004 - The District's Annual Work Plan was reviewed. A date of November 16th was selected for the annual conservation awards banquet. Tama County has received \$115,000 for EQIP funding.

The District sponsored the Envirothon competition that will be held at Hawkeye Community College.

April 2004 - The CDI spring regional meeting was held in Davenport. District's are encouraged to make the public more aware of different programs by way of newsletter, news releases, radio broadcasts, etc.

State cost share funding was approved by both the House and Senate.

May 2004 - RC&D Director, Ruth Izer and Chris Bair attended the May SWCD meeting. They both gave reports on what RC&D's responsibilities are. Conservation award nominees were selected. Melody Bro will continue as a District employee during the summer months.

June 2004 - The final selection of conservation awards was completed.

The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship funding will remain the same for FY 04-05.

Leroy Brown, State Conservationist for NRCS, retired effective May 31, 2004.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) - Iowa

by Larry Jones,
District Conservationist

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary conservation program of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) that promotes agricultural production and environmental quality. This program is available to farmers, and offers financial and technical assistance to install or implement structural and management practices on eligible agricultural land. Applications for EQIP can be made at local NRCS offices.

The EQIP application is based on assistance and decisions reached with producers during the conservation planning process. EQIP applications are prioritized for funding using a state or locally developed ranking worksheet that generally considers cost-effectiveness, resources to be treated, meeting national EQIP priorities, compliance with federal, state or tribal environmental regulations or reducing the need for future regulations and, to a degree, the location of the contract. Funded EQIP applications result in a contract which lists the practices to be applied along with an application schedule and federal funds committed. Conservation practices applied with EQIP funds are to be maintained for the service life of the practice, which may be longer than the term of the EQIP contract. The minimum contract length is one year after the implementation of the last scheduled practice with a maximum length of ten years. The implemented practices are subject to NRCS technical standards. Farmers may elect to use NRCS or a Technical Service Provider for EQIP technical assistance.

In Iowa, the primary resource concerns, at the state level, addressing the use of EQIP funds are surface and subsurface water quality related to the presence of excessive nutrients and organics related to livestock production by concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFO's) on open feedlots. State funds are limited to capof runoff from feedlots of CAFO's needing National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits through implementation of Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans (CNMP's). Practices eligible for cost-share in these systems are for the manure and wastewater handling and storage element of the CNMP. These practices are:

- 317 - Compost Facility; 362 - Diversion; 634 - Manure Transfer; 521C - Pond Sealing or Lining Bentonite; 521A Pond Sealing or Lining, Flexible Membrane; 558 - Roof Runoff Structure; 350 - Sediment Basin; 313 - Waste Storage Facility; 359 - Waste Storage Lagoon; and 393 - Filter Strip. These will be cost-shared at a rate of 50 percent, not to exceed \$0.0001 per sq. ft. (\$25/annual unit cost-share). These types of applications will be received in local NRCS offices, but will be ranked and funded at the state level. Utilizing these funds at the state level helps address national EQIP priorities related to the reduction of non-point source pollution due to nutrients. This is within the EQIP objective of addressing existing regulatory requirements and avoiding the maximum extent possible the need for future regulatory programs. The other elements of a CNMP are available locally if they are included in the local program. Funding of water quality issues from other types of livestock operations may be offered locally. Other resource concerns, which could be addressed locally, include plant condition and management to protect/improve pastureland, soil erosion control, and wildlife management to protect at risk wildlife species.

Statewide guidance to local work groups included:

- EQIP cost-share for eligible structural practices is not to exceed 50% of the cost of implementation.

- Maximum cost-share a participant can receive for grazing systems is \$50,000 of EQIP funds. Grazing system practices include: prescribed grazing, fencing, pasture and hayland planting, brush management, nutrient management, ponds/grade stabilization structures, wells and other water facilities.

- Property line fences are not eligible for EQIP cost-share.

- A locally established cost-share limit for a waste storage facility cannot be less than \$50,000.

- Incentive payments for nutrient management, pest management, no-till, strip till and ridge till cannot exceed the state-specific amounts by more than 25 percent.

- Incentive payments for land management practices are to be limited to the minimum amount necessary to encourage the producer to apply the practice and are limited to no more than 3 years of payments.

- Limited resource producers and beginning farmers MAY be eligible for a higher cost-share percentage, not to exceed 75% cost-share for the first \$50,000 of EQIP funding.

The following are TAMA County Resource Concerns to be addressed by EQIP:

- A.) Soil Erosion - sheet and rill, ephemeral gully, classic gully, and stream bank

- B.) Water Quality - harmful levels of pesticides in surface and groundwater, excessive nutrients and organics in surface and groundwater

- C.) Water Quantity - excessive runoff, flooding, or ponding

- D.) Plants - condition, productivity, health, and vigor

- E.) Domestic Animals - inadequate stock water

- F.) Air Quality - undesirable air movement, objectionable odors

The goal of the locally led group was to recommend a ranking system that rewarded and gave priority to those producers that help most to address the above resource concerns and, if located in the drainage area of either Wolf Creek or Deer Creek, receive additional points. The ranking will be completed for the specific practices to be applied through the EQIP contract. Sign-up is continuous at the NRCS field office. The ranking of the applications will be done periodically as funding allocations become available, will be announced through the NRCS State Office, and will be publicized by all levels of NRCS.

The local work group also recommended a list of conservation practices to be addressed, and the cost-share rates and/or incentive payments that are the most cost-effective, longest duration, and help most to address these priority resource concerns in the District.

For more information on EQIP and other NRCS administered programs contact the TAMA County USDA Service Center located at 203 W High St, Toledo, IA 52342, phone 641-484-2702, Fax 641-484-5289.

Soil conservation maintenance

by Chester Worden
Soil Conservation Technician

Maintenance of your Soil Conservation Practices and Conservation Plan should be done periodically, just like your pickup and tractor need maintenance according to a schedule in your owner's manual. A lot of the same reasons as to why maintenance should be done apply to both also. The oil filter commercial saying either pay a little bit now or a lot later apply to things like grassed waterways and terraces just like it does to machinery. Maintenance could also save soil and soil nutrients, keep them where they do the most good, help grow better crops, and make it easier to farm. In addition to looking at practices when planting and harvesting, a yearly drive over the farm and critically looking at each practice should be done, especially after heavy storms like this past summer.

The following are some ideas about proper soil conservation maintenance. Terraces and Sediment Basins - Is there washing or holes around the tile inlet? This could be due to a broken tile connection, tile leak or animal burrowing. It needs to be fixed before it washes the terrace out. Look for overtopping or holes in terraces. Overtopping usually indicates the channel and storage area have filled in and need cleaning out or animal damage that caused the breaks. Trees should be kept from growing on the terrace as the roots will loosen the soil and more rodents are around the roots. Is there damage to the terrace or tile inlet by tilling too close or from cattle? Grassed Waterways - Is there cutting down the middle? This could be caused by a tile break, insufficient tile, shallow tile, or tile too far away from the center. All of these reasons keep the center wet and wet soil washes easier. Washing in the center could also be caused because the waterway is V shaped and water runs mainly in the middle and not over the width of the waterway. These problems should be fixed before they ruin the entire length of the waterway. Is the water getting into the waterway or running down the sides and causing side gullies? If the center is still deeper than the side gullies, the sides can be graded down and/or slots cut through them every 200 ft.

Opening grain prices on Friday, Jan. 14, 2005:
Central Counties Co-op, Traer, corn \$1.75, beans \$5.12; Tama Benton Co-op, Dysart, corn \$1.73, beans \$5.08; Werner's Grain and Feed, Tama, corn \$1.73, beans \$5.07.

with a small dam below to make the water go into the center. This could make the waterway last a few more years. If the center is all filled in, then the entire waterway needs to be reshaped. Sometimes this side cutting is only near the top and only the top 2-300 ft. are filled in. A lot of times a new inlet cut directly into the top and the top reshaped is all that is needed and should be done before it continues on down the entire length of waterway. Is the waterway as wide as it was when made new or has it gotten narrower each year? This is like a tractor or pickup firing on only half its cylinders. You can't expect it to perform properly and may

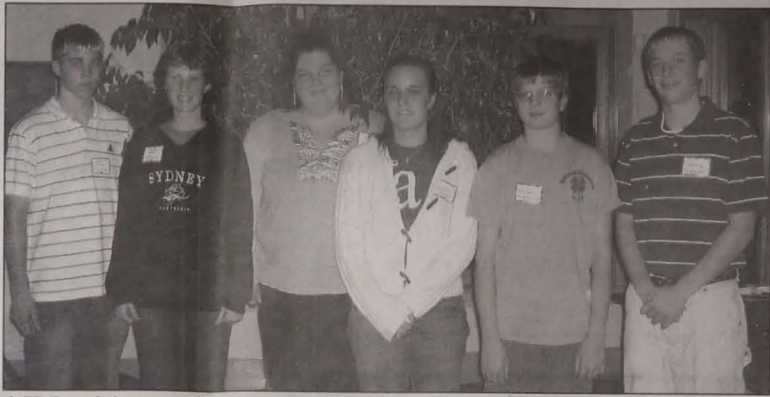
have cut its yearly expected life in half. It will cut sooner and fill in sooner. You really can't blame the waterway or rain for that, but have to blame the operator or farmer for allowing that to happen. The same is true if waterways fill in or cut sooner than others with similar rains, slope etc. The operator is not keeping the soil on the hills where the crops are growing, but allowing it to wash into or to the sides of water-ways. If the waterways fill up too fast, they are actually doing their jobs by keeping the soil on your farm and not letting it erode further into the Iowa River or Gulf of Mexico.

Conservation Plan — This is why you should check over your Conservation Plan periodically also. Is your plan doing a good job of conserving soil or does it need to be changed in certain parts of a field? Maybe your plan could be changed to make it simpler or easier and better to farm? Are there places that need grassed waterways now that weren't in the original plan?

Waterway Outlets and Outlet Structures — Is it cutting back a lot and you are losing the soil into the creek? Some sort of stabilizing is needed here. If you have a structure it is still functioning properly? Is it washing around the structure or are there holes where water is getting through? Is there a big hole in front or behind the structure? Are the rock and wing dams still in place? These are all items that need fixing before the entire structure washes away.

Ponds and Dams — Are the pipe and earth spillway still working properly or is there washing and gullies? Is the grass cover still good or need reseeded? Does the fence need fixing so cattle don't get on dam or edges of water? Are trees starting to grow on dam that could loosen the soil?

- A little maintenance now could keep your practices working better and longer and save soil and money in the long run.



4-H Participants For Conservation Project

These kids were each awarded a \$50 savings bond for entering and completing a conservation 4-H project at the Tama County Fair. (This was presented to the kids the night of the Awards Banquet.) Pictured are: Zachery Knaack, Jennifer Nieland, Amanda Warren, Amy Ledvina, Chris Hoeg, Kevin Trobaugh, Chris Hoeg.

SWCD's Resource Conservation Technician

Melody Bro
If you're thinking, "She may be a new employee, but her face sure looks familiar," you're right. My name is Melody Bro, and I began working in March, 2003 as Tama SWCD's "new" Resource Conservation Technician. My association with the District actually began in September, 1983 when I was hired as the District's state engineering technician. I "retired" from that position in August, 1992. But quitting my job here in 1992 doesn't mean I quit being involved in resource conservation. I served several years as an assistant commissioner and served a six-year term on the District board as an elected commissioner. Since March, I've been busy learning new engineering methods (everything's on the computer now) and helping update tract records. It's felt good to get out in the field to survey again!

My family lives in southwest Tama County. We farm, have a cow-calf herd, and feed out our own calves. My husband, Mark, and I have four children, all in the East Marshall School District: Samuel, a senior; Christopher, a sophomore; Laura, an 8th grader; and Eric in 5th grade. I spend most of my "spare" time involved with the kids' activities, but I also enjoy baking, reading, playing the piano, flower gardening, and being involved in nearly any type of outdoor activity. I serve our church in Toledo as choir director and am enrolled in Tae Kwon Do, where I've earned a first degree Black Belt.

It's been great seeing many old familiar faces again as I work around the County, and I look forward to serving your engineering needs!



Entertainment for the Conservation Awards Banquet held November 16 at the Otter Creek Nature Center was the Praise-byterians from the Toledo Presbyterian Church.

Soil Conservation Technician - Julie Watkins

Hello, my name is Julie Watkins. I am a Soil Conservation Technician in the Toledo NRCS Office. Please stop by the office, to say Hello and introduce yourself. I am looking forward to helping landowners who have conservation concerns.

I have a Bachelor of Science degree in Fisheries and Wildlife Biology from Iowa State. I started my technical career eight years ago working for the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship as a Soil Conservation Technician in Franklin County. Then, I transferred to Jasper County and worked there for six years. I decided it was time to broaden my job opportunities and switch over to a Federal Technician for NRCS. I started in Toledo in October. My field experience includes surveying and designing ponds, waterways, and terraces. I have also done some educational programs for groups of adults and children. My favorite challenge of my job is figuring out how to

conserve soil and slow down erosion by using the most effective and least expensive practices.

My home is in Mitchellville. I have several hobbies which include painting, scrapbooking, flower gardening, boating, fishing, water skiing, and attending car races. I am an active member of the Benevolent Patriotic Order of Does.

I hope you had a wonderful Holiday season and are working on your New Year's resolutions.

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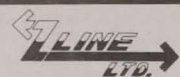


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Annual Conservation Awards Banquet



**Owner/Operator
Hempy Farms**

Craig and Donna Hempy have two daughters. Kara Hempy Maher, a botanist in Oregon. Kara is married to Michael Maher, an Environmental Specialist for the Department of Energy. They have a daughter, Ella. Kara recently completed her Masters. Daughter Dr. Tally Hempy, is a family physician in North Liberty, Iowa. She is married to a radiologist, David VanGoebel, and has two sons, Luke and Jake.

Interest/hobbies include hiking (recently completing 4 days of RAGBRAI), backyard conservation with native plants, horseback/trail riding.

Craig is a Soil Conservationist for NRCS in Marshall County. Donna is a social worker for South Tama Schools and Director of South Tama Partnership Center.

The Hempy's belong to the Living Faith United Methodist Church, Craig is a member of the National Farmer's Union and the Soil and Water Conservation Society.

Brian Hempy has two sons, Jason and Jared. Brian's wife, Barbara, worked at the Toledo FSA office for 27 years before losing her battle to ovarian cancer.

Jason and his wife, Nicole, are teachers at the Marshalltown Community School District. They have two daughters, Saylor and Brenna. Jared is an assistant manager at the Perkins restaurant in Marshalltown. His wife, Nina, is employed in Marshalltown at Access Direct. They have two children, Dylan and Brannon.

Vocal music is a strong interest of Brian's. He also enjoys volleyball, softball, golf, tennis, table tennis and hunting, as well as fishing, swimming, tubing and boating. He enjoys working with the youth and is rewarded beyond measure by the children at the Iowa Juvenile Home.

Brian is a full-time farmer with stock cows, CRP, hay, corn, soybeans and pasture with lots of fence to tend.

He is a member of the Fellowship Baptist Church in Tama, Excel Gospel Ministry group and the Iowa Cattleman's Association.

This farm operation includes approximately 1,012 acres. 258 CRP acres are owned by Hempy Farms. 318 acres are in corn, soybeans, alfalfa. 435 acres include pasture, building, cattle lots and roads.

No-till and minimum till are used in this operation. Brian farms the ground and lives in the farm house where he grew up. The house was built in 1918. "Farming is what I have done since I was old enough to walk," states Brian.



**New Windbreak Conservation Award
Keith & Renee Morris**

Keith and Renee are the parents of three children. Ryan is employed by Morris Enterprises, Inc.; Alyssa, is a senior at North Tama Schools and Whitney is a freshman at North Tama. The Morris's have lived at their present location since 1992. Their windbreak was planted in 1997.

Family activities are spending time at their lake home on Lake Thunderhead near Unionville, Missouri. They also enjoy boating, skiing, wildlife watching, snow skiing, snowmobiling and hunting.

Keith and Renee are owners of Morris Enterprises, Inc. Their construction company primarily involves the water main distribution for municipalities. Renee also works part time at the Department of Corrections in Toledo.

Organizations that the Morris's belong to are Construction Plan Room and Master Builders.



**Wildlife Award
Jack Flatt**

Jack has two brothers. One lives in Des Moines and the other one resides in Cedar Rapids.

Jack's interests/hobbies are: wildlife, grouse and pheasant hunting with his dog, Rocky; dog training; turkey hunting/accomplished grand slam with four subspecies of turkey; deer hunting with bow; muzzleloader and shotgun fishing; pleasure boating; wildlife habitat food plots along with timber management; native grass plantings and photography.

Jack is president and founder of Five Seasons Tire in Cedar Rapids and is a gentleman (city) farmer.

He currently is a member of the following organizations: National Wild Turkey Federation, Quality Deer Management, Ruffed Grouse Society, White Tails Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited, Iowa State Alumni Association, Iowa Tire Dealers Association, Alfa Tau Omega Fraternity and Masons Shriners.



**New Cooperator Award
Gary Whitsett**

Gary and his wife Kathy have three children and 6 grandchildren. Gary enjoys watching all sports and playing with their grandchildren.

Gary is a fulltime farmer and is a member of the Iowa Cattleman's Association, Poweshiek County Farm Bureau and Farmers 4 County Coop. He has been the director for 11 years. Kathy is a secretary at BGM schools.

More Conservation Awards on page 4C



**Rural Backyard Conservation Award
Wayne and Ella Mae Gibson**

The Gibsons have 6 children. Elaine is a ESL teacher at South Tama Schools; Joyce is a Director for the Lydia Home Association in the Quad City Area; Linda is a physical education instructor at the Lewisville Middle School in Flower Mound, Texas; Nancy is a receptionist at Wright's Law Firm in Flower Mound, Texas; Gary is an Assistant Principal in the Lewisville Middle School in Flower Mound, Texas; Sandra Bruton is an office manager/receptionist at Silicon Plains Technologies Inc. in West Des Moines, Iowa.

Wayne enjoys gardening, wildlife, bicycle riding and reading. He is a retired dairy farmer and now works at DeLong Sportswear in Grinnell as a shipping supervisor. Ella Mae is a retired registered nurse and is a Tama County Historical & Genealogical Society member. The Gibsons belong to the Fellowship Baptist Church.



**Urban Backyard Conservation
Howard and Delores Casebolt**

The Casebolts have 4 children. Doug, deceased, Mike and his wife live at Pella; Geri and husband David and son Brian live in Gladbrook. The Casebolts have 4 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren.

Delores enjoys working in the yard, collecting M&M's and Crayola memorabilia. She also enjoys crocheting afghans for the handicapped.



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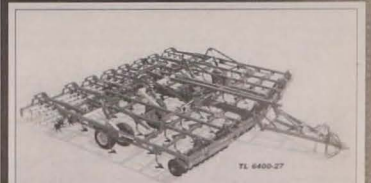
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Conservation Tillage Award Brian & Brad Benda

Brad and Brian currently farm 1,000 acres each in row crop which is a corn/soybean rotation. They also have a small cow/calf operation and a wean-to-finish hog operation.

Many of the conservation tillage practices they use today were introduced to them by their Dad.

Today they continue to improve their operation with the use of GPS, soil testing and residue management.

Landlord/Tenant Award

Allen and Janell Gienger/Dorothy Budde Family

Janell is employed at the F&M bank in Gladbrook along with helping on the farm. In December Al and Janell will have been married 36 years. The Gienger's have two children, Christina works at Tyson Meats in Waterloo, James is a salesman for New Century FS. His wife Jill is a nurse at the McFarland Clinic in Marshalltown. They have two children, Taylor and Eathan.

The Giengers enjoy traveling to Australia, Germany, New Zealand and Taiwan to visit friends and relatives. They enjoy playing volleyball in the winter and spending time with their grandchildren.

Al is a member of the Gladbrook Lions Club, American Legion and the United Methodist Church in Gladbrook.

The Gienger farm consists of 650 acres. Corn, soybeans, oats and hay are grown on this farm. There is also a small cow herd. Al uses a corn/soybean rotation, using mostly no till planting. Other land is on a rotation with oats, hay and pasture. There is no set time this land will be in grass, some has been in pasture since 1990 and some hay stands are 6, 7, and 8 years old. "When I seed oats, we apply 22 to 23 lbs. alfalfa, 3 lbs. brome grass and 3 lbs. orchardgrass. We try to place the hay where it will protect the land most in danger of eroding."

Gary farms 450 acres (180 acres owned, 270 acres rented). He also feeds 125 feeder cattle. Gary has farmed his entire life and has lived at his present location for 30 years. He uses minimum till and no-till. He also has 120 acres of alfalfa hay per year.

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Norway Spruce	18-24 in.	25/bundle	\$35.00				
Black Hills Spruce	6-12 in.	25/bundle	\$30.00				
White Spruce	12-18 in.	25/bundle	\$35.00				
White Pine	12-18 in.	25/bundle	\$35.00				
Blue Spruce	6-12 in.	25/bundle	\$30.00				
Bur Oak	2-3 Ft.	25/bundle	\$35.00				
Pin Oak	18-24 in.	25/bundle	\$35.00				
Red Oak	8-24 in.	25/bundle	\$35.00				
Sugar Maple	3-4 ft.	25/bundle	\$85.00				
American Cranberry	2-3 ft.	25/bundle	\$45.00				
Red-Osier Dogwood	2-3 ft.	25/bundle	\$25.00				
NATIVE NUT TREE PACKAGE 15 TREES/PKG							
Northern Pecan (3)	12-18 in.	Hazelnut (3)	12-18 in.				
Walnut (3)	2-3 ft.	Butternut (3)	2-3 ft.				
Shellbark Hickory	12-18"	PACKAGE PRICE		\$52.00	\$		
SHADE TREE PACKAGE 15 TREES/PKG							
Sugar Maple (3)	3-4 ft.	White Oak (3)	2-3 ft.				
Red Oak (3)	2-3 ft.	Silver Oak (3)	2-3 ft.				
Swamp White Oak (3)	2-3 ft.	PACKAGE PRICE		\$56.00	\$		
WILDLIFE SHRUB PACKAGE 15 SHRUBS/PKG							
3-American Plum	2-3 ft.	3-Hazelnut...	12-18 in.				
3-Red Osier Dogwood.....	2-3 ft.	3-Arrowwood -	12-18 in.				
3-American Cranberry.....	12-18 in.	PACKAGE PRICE		\$50.00	\$		
			SUBTOTAL	\$			
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Jayme Ollendieck family

Grocery Sack Recycling Contest Award Winner - Jayme Ollendieck

Every year the Tama Soil and Water Conservation District conducts a Grocery Sack Recycling contest by using the conservation theme that is selected by the Conservation Districts in Iowa. All students attending school in Tama County from grades 3 through 5 are encouraged to attend.

This year there were 356 participants. \$5.00 is awarded to every first place prize winner. Then a grand prize of a free airplane ride is awarded to the grand prize winner.

This year Jayme Ollendieck, student at Dysart Genesee Elementary was the grand prize winner. Jim Pippert, Dysart, is the pilot that generously donated the airplane ride for Jayme.

These grocery sacks are donated by the local grocery stores and then returned after the contest is concluded and recycled by being used to sack groceries.

The Tama Soil and Water Conservation District would like to thank the local grocery stores that make this contest possible by contributing their sacks for this popular event.



FSA Staff

From left to right the FSA staff members are: Karla Novotny, Gene Long, Joyce Wiener, Nikki Novak and Nancy Smith.



Tama County Natural Resources Conservation Service

Front row left to right: Melody Bro, Resource Conservation Technician; Nancy Hayran, Department of Soil Conservation, State Secretary II; Julie Watkins, Soil Conservation Technician. Back row left to right: Tina Hayek, Soil Conservationist Student Trainee; Mark Pokorny, Resource Conservation Technician; Chester Worden, Soil Conservation Technician; Larry Jones, District Conservationist.

Meet your SWCD Commissioners

Commissioner - Mike Snider
As a new commissioner I look forward to serving on the Tama Soil and Water Conservation District.

Our family operation consists of growing corn, soybeans and alfalfa on our 400 acre farm in Perry Township.

We use a no-till system most years and occasionally deep rip to incorporate lime. Grassed waterways, headlands and riparian strips are important conservation practices used on our farm. We also have a small area planted to trees we purchased through the Tama County Soil and Water Conservation District. This area makes a great wildlife refuge.

Along with operating a LG seed dealership, we custom farm for a neighbor, no-till planting beans and harvesting both beans and corn for him.

My wife Nancy and I have two sons, Ryan, an eight year old, is home schooled and Aaron

is 22 months old.

Jeff Bruene

As I start my third year as a Tama County Soil Commissioner I reflect on some of the ways we have promoted stewardship of our lands and streams. This has included cost-sharing programs for waterways, terraces, structures, and ponds; to seed sales for CRP and buffer strips.

Not to mention the tree sales for groves and windbreaks. Educating the next generation is the key to conservation. Response to our grocery sack contest in county elementary schools is huge with the winner receiving a plane ride over his or her home as a reward. Recognition of 4-H'ers who have done projects related to our land and scholarships for graduating seniors are other ways we keep the public aware of our work; and yet, there is so much more work to be done. I am looking forward to the challenges and rewards of being a part of these programs.

Soil and Water Conservation Practices Benefit Generations To Come!

by Mark Pokorny

Mid-contract management (MCM) is performing an activity such as spraying, disking, seeding, or burning periodically on CRP ground to diversify or improve wildlife habitat. The old traditional broom grass CRP fields have very little value to wildlife in just a few years. MCM is required on all of the recent CRP enrollments at least twice during the contract period. Owners with older CRP contracts may voluntarily revise their plans to include management activities if they choose. No management activity may occur during the primary nesting season, May 15 - August 1. The years to perform MCM are specified in the CRP plan. There is some flexibility if the weather doesn't cooperate. Management activities should only be performed on 1/3 of the field each year for 3 years to protect soil loss and

provide cover for wildlife.

Spraying is done by applying a 1/2 rate of a burn-down herbicide to actively growing grass stands to try and weaken, not kill, the stand. Mowing or burning prior to spraying is encouraged to get the stand actively growing. This management activity will allow a more diverse plant community for a few years until the original grass stand takes over again. Fields with heavy noxious weed pressure history should be approached cautiously.

Disking is another method of diversifying the plant community. Disking 2-4 inches deep leaving 50% cover is ideal. This may require 2-3 passes to obtain optimum cover. You may have to reduce the vegetation cover prior to disking to get effective results.

Seeding legumes into existing grass is another option. Site preparation such as spraying, disking, hay-

ing, grazing, or burning will be needed before seeding to provide a better seeding stand. This can be done in the spring, fall, or as a frost seeding. This creates an excellent habitat for birds. The legumes attract many bugs that make an excellent food source for young chicks.

Burning is the best way to invigorate a native grass stand. This reduces the smothering effect of the organic matter that native grasses produce. Burning, when timed right, also reduces competition of other grasses and small trees. This also allows the ground to warm up sooner allowing native grasses to thrive. Planning a burn is very critical.

Some of the MCM practices work better or allowed only for certain seeding types. Consult the NRCS or technical service provider for any help you may need with your mid-contract management requirements.

Mid-Contract Management

Iowa Financial Incentives Program			
December 31, 2004	Total Allocation	Funds Spent	Remaining Balance
04/05	\$38,808.00	\$22,108.75	\$16,699.25
03/04	\$38,808.00	\$26,439.94	\$ 2,368.06
02/03	\$44,146.11	\$20,643.36	\$ 23,502.75
01/02	\$73,563.52	\$68,813.38	\$ 4,750.14
REAP Practices 05	\$7,940.00	—0—	\$7,940.00
REAP Forestry and Native Grasses 05	\$1,985.00	—0—	\$1,985.00

District Accomplishments

Conservation Cover	2,218	Ac.
Contour Farming	1,391	Ac.
Critical Area Planting	5	Ac.
Field Border	6,300	Ft.
Filter Strip	82	Ac.
Grade Stabilization Structure	2	Number
Grassed Waterway	91	Ac.
Pasture and Hay Planting	108	Ac.
Residue Management	1,443	Ac.
Shallow Water Management for Wildlife	10	Ac.
Terraces	6,900	Ac.
Water & Sediment Basin	6	Number
Windbreaks	1,075	Ft.
CRP Contracts	2,802	Ac.
Wetland Reserve Program	317	Ac.

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Tama County Pheasants Forever will be planting thousands of trees and shrubs this spring as part of our conservation efforts



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