

LOUISA COUNTY HIGHLY ERODIBLE PROCESS

THERE HAS BEEN A NUMBER OF RUMORS FLOATING AROUND ABOUT THE 1985 FARM BILL. MANY OF THE FARM ORGANIZATIONS WERE TOLD RECENTLY IN DES MOINES, THAT THE FARM BILL WILL REMAIN IN EFFECT AND WILL BE IMPLEMENTED. OWNERS AND OPERATORS IN LOUISA COUNTY WILL BE SENT THEIR HIGHLY ERODIBLE LAND DETERMINATION AFTER THE 1ST OF JANUARY. THEN THEY WILL BE INVITED TO A CONSERVATION PLANNING MEETING TO INFORM THEM HOW THEY CAN DEVELOP THEIR OWN CONSERVATION PLAN.

THE LOUISA COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE HAS GEARED UP TO DEAL WITH THE ENORMOUS TASK OF PROVIDING A CONSERVATION PLAN TO ALL OWNERS AND OPERATORS WITH HIGHLY ERODIBLE LAND BY JANUARY 1ST, 1990. THREE PART-TIME EMPLOYEES HAVE BEEN TRAINED AND ARE MAKING THE HIGHLY ERODIBLE LAND (HEL) DETERMINATIONS. LOUISA COUNTY HAS STARTED HEL DETERMINATION WITH THE STEEPEST GROUND IN THE COUNTY FIRST. THIS IS THE AREA WEST OF THE IOWA RIVER. THE EMPLOYEES, GAIL SWAILS, TODD MEYER AND JIM BUTCHER, ARE MAKING EXCELLENT PROGRESS. THEY HAVE A THIRD OF THE HEL DETERMINATIONS COMPLETE FOR THE COUNTY. UNION, COLUMBUS CITY, ELM GROVE AND MOST OF MARSHALL TOWNSHIPS ARE COMPLETE.

THE AREA TO THE WEST OF THE IOWA RIVER WILL BE COMPLETED BY FEBRUARY 1ST, 1988. THIS WILL PROVIDE THE HIGHLY ERODIBLE LAND INFORMATION TO OWNERS AND OPERATORS BEFORE THE NEXT CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CRP) SIGN-UP. THE CRP WILL PROVIDE THE MOST ECONOMIC ALTERNATIVE TO FARMING THOSE HIGHLY ERODIBLE ACRES. THE PAST CRP SIGN-UPS HAVE PROVIDED AN ANNUAL RENTAL PAYMENT OF \$85/AC/YR. \$85/AC/YR IS AN EXCELLENT CASH RENT AND A GUARANTEED PROFIT FOR THE NEXT TEN YEARS. THIS PROVIDES THE OWNER WITH A HIGH CASH RENT AND HELPS THE OPERATOR MAINTAIN HIS ELIGIBILITY FOR USDA PROGRAMS. THE CRP PROGRAM PROVIDES CASH FLOW FOR YOUR PRESENT OPERATION. FOR THOSE OWNERS WHO PLAN ON SELLING THE FARM, IT PROVIDES A GUARANTEED INCOME TO THE BUYER AND WILL MAKE THE FARM MORE VALUABLE.

I DO NOT HAVE THE TIME TO EXPLAIN THE PLANNING PROCESS TO EACH OWNER OR OPERATOR WHO WALKS INTO THE OFFICE. THIS IS THE REASON I HAVE SCHEDULED CONSERVATION PLANNING MEETINGS TO EXPLAIN THE PROCESS TO A LARGE NUMBER OF PEOPLE. THIS WILL SPEED UP THE PLANNING PROCESS FOR YOU AND US. ALL HEL DETERMINATIONS WILL BE COMPLETED BY OCTOBER 1, 1988.

CONSERVATION PLANNING WILL BE COMPLETED FIRST WITH THOSE PEOPLE THAT HAD REQUESTED A PLAN IN THE PAST YEAR. THEN WE WILL COMPLETE PLANS WITH THOSE OWNERS AND OPERATORS WITH HEL DETERMINATIONS WEST OF THE IOWA RIVER. BOTH OWNERS AND OPERATORS NEED TO ATTEND THEIR SCHEDULED MEETING, SINCE THIS IS A PROCESS THAT EFFECTS BOTH PARTIES.

IN SUMMARY, 1) WAIT UNTIL YOU RECEIVE YOUR HIGHLY ERODIBLE LAND DETERMINATION. 2) IF YOU WISH TO ENROLL IN THE CRP PROGRAM, CONTACT ASCS BEFORE FEBRUARY 1, 1988. ASCS WILL PROVIDE OUR OFFICE WITH A CROPPING HISTORY, SO WE CAN DETERMINE IF YOUR LAND QUALIFIES FOR THE PROGRAM. 3) AFTER YOU RECEIVE YOUR INVITATION TO YOUR CONSERVATION PLANNING MEETING, BOTH THE OWNER AND OPERATOR SHOULD ATTEND. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE LOUISA COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT TO PROVIDE YOU WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP A CONSERVATION PLAN. BUT IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO ATTEND THE MEETING AND DEVELOP YOUR OWN CONSERVATION PLAN.