

THE Bloomfield Democrat

Founded September 15, 1869/Bloomfield, Davis County, Iowa/April 26, 1984/No. 17

Second Section

Annual Soil Conservation Report

39th Annual Report of
Davis County
Soil Conservation District

Report on 1983 activities

Commissioners

Robert Boatman	Chairman
Don Chickering	Vice-Chairman
Phillip Melvin	Treasurer
LaVern Weilbrenner	Member
Don Herteen	Member
Tim Hooper	Assistant Commissioner
Wayne Birchmier	Assistant Commissioner
C.I. Heady	Assistant Commissioner

1983 Office Staff

Fred Hainline	District Conservationist
Julie Falcon	Conservation Technician
Roger Fry	State Engineering Aide
Christine Botts	Clerk & District Secretary
Edwin Cossel	Conservation Technician (Part-time)
Jearld Scott	Conservation Technician (Part-time)
Robert Overstreet	Conservation Technician (Part-time)
Lori Cossel	Volunteer Conservation Aid
Patrick McLane	Volunteer Conservation Aid
Patricia Hainline	Volunteer Conservation Aid
Gary Keasling	Volunteer Conservation Aid
Lyle Asell	Area Conservationist
Eldon Weber	Area Conservationist
Darlene Lauder	Area Clerk
Suzette Betts	Secretary (Part-time)
Thomas J. Brown	Civil Engineer
Susan Long	Civil Engineer
Kent Rice	Civil Engineer
Dale D. Kraus	RC&D Coordinator

LaVern Weilbrenner was administered the oath of office for another 6-year term as SCD Commissioner. He was re-elected at the November 1982 election. Re-elected to serve as chairman is Robert Boatman; Vice Chairman, Don Chickering; Treasurer, Phil Melvin; Secretary, Christine Botts, Wayne Birchmier, Tim Hooper and Fred Hainline attended the annual SCD Short Course in Ames. Jerry Storke, who has been training as a Soil Conservationist in our office, transferred to Elkader, Iowa for further training. The No-till Conference was held in Ottumwa.

A special meeting with Jim Seaholm, party leader for the soil survey in Davis County, was held the morning of February 3. Seaholm explained the Davis County soil survey progress to date. The three soil scientists who have been working here are transferring to other areas, so a new crew will be continuing the Soil Survey here. Questions regarding the survey were answered by Seaholm. Eldon Weber, AC for the Soil Conservation Service, reported the new soil survey crew will be stationed in Bloomfield and should be here by May.

The commissioners agreed to handle the no-till planter program this spring. They agreed to approve no-till cost share payment on a maximum of 40 acres per farmer. Don Chickering and Fred Hainline attended the spring Region 9 SCD meeting in Fairfield.

The annual report for the district was published in the Bloomfield Democrat April 14. The Southeast Iowa Hay Growers Association was organized this month with Ronald Campbell serving as Secretary/Treasurer and Bruce Knapp on the Steering Committee. Christine Botts completed 20 years as secretary for the Davis Co. SCD.

A short district meeting was held with only routine items to discuss. John Lucassen, SCS Soil Scientist, started working here in May. He moved to Bloomfield from Anamosa.

Lori Cossel and Jearld (Jake) Scott are working in this office during the construction season. Seeded a 3-acre plot of Indian Grass at the County Farm. Two RC&D funded county road structures were approved and the project agreement and maintenance agreement signed by Chairman Boatman.

The district discussed and approved a point system for priority in approving cost share requests received for soil conservation practices within the district. Davis SCD had a soil conservation display at the County Fair held in July.

\$32,000.00 was allocated for soil conserving practices in the Lake Wapello watershed at 75 per cent of cost. Lyle Asell is our new area SCS conservationist. He replaces Eldon Weber, who is now serving on the SCS state staff as assistant state conservationist. Lori Cossel completes her summer work here August 11 and will be returning to her college courses.

The annual Big Wyacondah watershed inspection was held on the 13th of September with the Co. Board of Supervisors and Davis SCD commissioners doing the inspection. The contract was let September 7 for two county road (RC&D) structures. Howard Burch of Sigourney got the contract. The fall Region 9 SCD meeting was held September 14 (evening) with Bob Boatman, LaVern Weilbrenner and Fred Hainline in attendance. The Isaac Walton League sponsored windbreak award was awarded to Jim Botts for this district. The Davis Co. land use commission has completed their report. They met to discuss the report in the SCS Office.

Funds for a no-interest loan in the amount of \$7,197.00 was allotted to Davis SCD. Repayment must be made within 10 years in equal payments. Gary Lindgren, soil scientist living in Albia, started surveying in the district October 3. He will continue to live in Albia and commute here each day. Gary Keasling, Jearld Scott and Robert Overstreet have been working in the district during the past month.

Several approved practices were cancelled by the farmers during October and November because of the drought and economic conditions

here. Discussed the format we will use for the district conservation folders to be implemented this year. The SCD made an amendment to the 1983 Annual Work Plan to include assembling conservation folders on 10,000 acres by December 31, 1983. The commissioners decided to purchase a cyclone seeder and allow farmers to use it rent-free (with \$20.00 deposit) to use in seeding narrow base and steep base

terraces.

Conservation folders were prepared for each commissioner and thoroughly reviewed and discussed. Also prepared by the staff were conservation folders on 14,973 acres, which were certified by the commissioners. The SCD 1984 Work Plan was discussed and completed. It will be presented for final approval at the January 1984 meeting.

Conservation needs use of many methods

It is seldom true that a single soil conservation practice will solve the erosion problems on a farm.

After a rainstorm, corn and soybean fields with no conservation protection show the most erosion. But in most cases, fields with only partial protection have visible signs of erosion, too. The more the rains come, the more apparent it is that the fields with adequate protection are those protected by a combination of soil conservation practices.

Consider conservation tillage, the practice of leaving the past year's crop residues on the soil surface. Conservation tillage, particularly no-till farming, offers perhaps best hope for controlling soil erosion on corn and soybean land.

No-till farming—leaving all the previous year's crop residues on the soil surface—reduces soil losses by as much as 90 per cent. But it has limits. If no-till planting is done up and down hill, seeds or young plants could wash out. On long, steep slopes, especially those protected only with soybean residues, sheet and rill erosion will be excessive. A crop rotation which allows more hay or small grains may be needed on long, steep slopes with no-till to control erosion. In addition, there is still a good deal of water runoff from a no-till field, and the concentrations of water runoff cause small gullies to form during heavy rains. Some

method to take runoff water safely from a field is also needed—a system of grassed waterways or tile outlet terraces may be part of the complete conservation system.

Terracing is an excellent water management practice. But again, on long, steep slopes, sheet and rill erosion between terraces is a problem, especially on land farmed in continuous rowcrop. Some kind of conservation tillage is needed as part of the complete system.

Times have changed

Farming methods have changed a lot in the last 50 years, yet farming is the same. Seeds are placed in the soil, protected from weed competition, and with a little rain we get back more than we planted. The process used to require many horses pulling a wide array of equipment. It took a lot of labor to plant a few acres. We can now plant many acres from the cab of an air conditioned tractor.

We have seen the change from horse power to tractor power, development of hybrid seed corn, wide spread adoption of commercial fertilizers, chemical control of weeds and insects, change from mud to all weather roads, radio and T.V., electricity, etc. all in a relatively short period of time. Changes were not always accepted rapidly, but their benefits were usually acknowledged and accepted. The change to little or no tillage before putting seeds in the soil is another transition in farming. It requires a change in our thinking and an adjustment in our management—just like the other changes. I wonder what the next change will be?

Lyle Asell, Area Conservationist
SCS at Fairfield, Iowa

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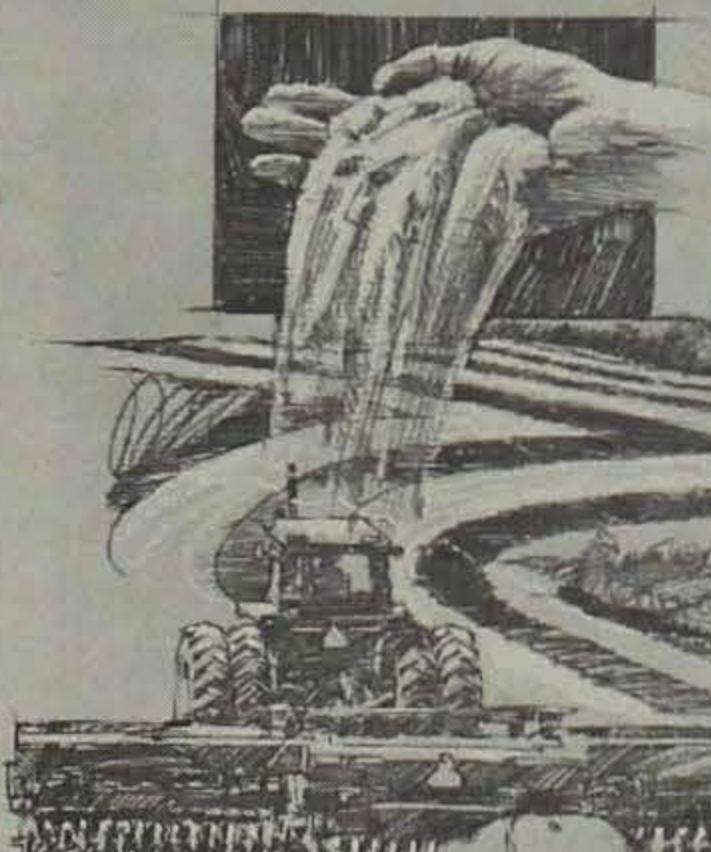
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"We support and encourage soil conservation"

Davis soil survey progressing

By John Lucassen, Soil Scientist
Soil Conservation Service

The Davis County progressive soil survey began in July 1980. It is part of the National Cooperative Soil Survey. That means the project is a cooperative agreement between the Davis County Board of Supervisors, the Iowa State University Extension Service, the Iowa Department of Soil Conservation and the USDA Soil Conservation Service.

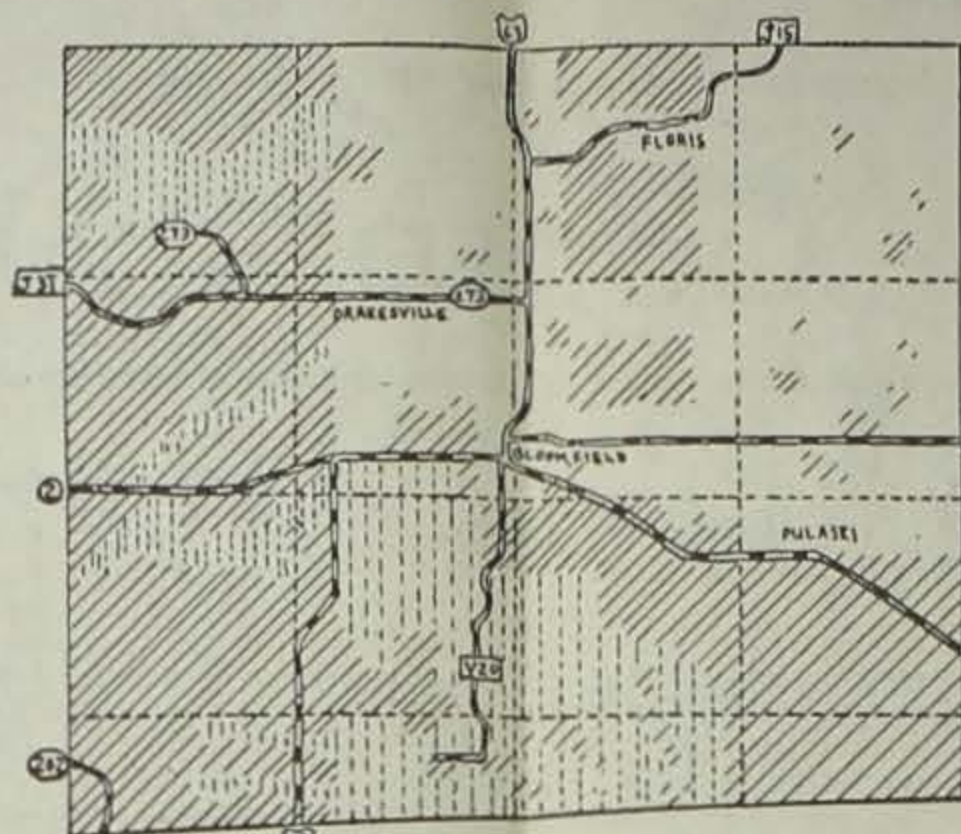
Field work for the soil survey is being done by the Soil Conservation Service. A new crew of soil scientists, John Lucassen, the survey party leader and Gary Lindgren, have moved to Davis County. John and Gary replace the original survey crew, which have left the state. The soil survey crew have an office located at the west end of South Street in Bloomfield. During the past 3½ years soil scientists have walked over many fields, pastures and woodlands completing soil maps on approximately 148,000 acres, or about 45 per cent of the county. The soil survey progress map below shows the areas of the county that have been soil mapped and also the areas of the county where the survey crew will be making soil maps during 1984. The soil survey crew anticipate completing soil maps on all areas of Davis County by December 1986.

In addition to the mapping completed, typical areas of soil found in Davis Co. have been located and described in detail. These spots are called soil series site locations.

Twenty-nine of these sites have been located and described. There are approximately 54 soil series found in Davis County. Many of these soil series are found on several slopes (the inclination of the land surface from horizontal), and erosion classes. The combination of the soil series type, slope and erosion class result in the soil map unit. An example is 222C2, which stands for: 222= Clarinda soil series, C= slope of five to nine per cent and 2= moderately eroded. These combinations result in over 150 soil map units found in Davis County.

When the soil survey is completed, that is all areas are soil mapped and all soil series and soil map units are described, the maps, soil descriptions and other information such as predicted crop yields, soil conservation needs for each soil type, soils engineering and recreational potential uses, etc. will be published in a book form. This book will be available at no cost to all farmers, landowners and land users in the county. The book titled "The Soil Survey of Davis County, Iowa" will be published several years after the completion of all field work in 1986.

Anyone interested in seeing a soils map or soils description or soils information on those areas of Davis County where soil maps are completed, may do so by stopping at the SCS Office located at 106-108 North Dodge St., Bloomfield. Copies of the individual farm maps are made as part of the conservation plan and are furnished at no cost to the cooperators.



Soil survey progress map

- ▨ Areas with completed soil mapping.
- ▤ Areas to be soil mapped in 1984.

Good alternatives to field terracing

In cases where forages are used on the farm, stripcropping or crop rotations may be selected as part of the system rather than—or in addition to—terraces. If the topography isn't well-suited to terraces, a farmer may include some water and sediment control basins in the system to make farming operations more convenient.

An important component often left out of cropland conservation systems is a grassed headland or turn strip. A terrace or contour system with conservation tillage controls sheet and rill erosion on most of the field, but erosion can be

serious at the edge of the field, where end rows are planted up and down hill. Grass or legumes in place of row crops in these areas would control erosion.

Because so many variables are involved—farming operations, cost of conservation practices, soil types, slope length and steepness—the system which fits one farm will probably not fit another. Similarly, a system that works in one field may not fit an adjoining field.

A farm-by-farm and field-by-field analysis is the best approach to planning a complete resource management system for the farm.

Stewardship week is held

by Christine Botts

Each year the Davis County Soil Conservation District promotes Soil Stewardship Week in Davis County churches by providing materials to the churches of the county through the Davis County Ministerial Association. The material has been developed through the National Association of Soil Conservation Districts and is used in soil districts throughout the nation.

Twelve churches received materials the ministers requested for their church. Special observance was made either on Sunday, May 8 or Sunday, May 15 to give emphasis that "The Earth is the Lord's". We appreciate the cooperation we receive each year from our county churches in using these special materials. They are all based on Bible teachings and noted ministers of several faiths have helped with compiling them.

We are stewards of the soil only. The land will be here for future generations and it is the duty of every good farmer to be a good steward of the land under his management so that it will be left in as good condition when he leaves it as when he first obtained the land. We need to create a love of the land that will not permit abuse of a natural resource so precious to all living things.

FOSSILS AUTHENTIC—

Arthritic lesions have been found in Egyptian mummies, human skeletons unearthed at Pompeii, Italy, and fossils of vertebrates that lived 200 million years ago.

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION



Conservation stamp issued

The U. S. Postal Service issued this new stamp which went on sale nationwide February 7, 1984. The stamp marks the 50th anniversary of the soil and water conservation movement in the United States. It shows a hand holding a flower, symbolizing the protection of natural resources. The flower is a bright red, the leaves and stem is a rich green. The top of the hand is white, as is all the lettering on the stamp. There is one blue band across the hand to represent water and three earthen bands for layers of soil. The background is black.

ACP program

The Davis County ASC Committee spent \$65,000 on ACP practices in 1983. Top priority for Davis County is cost-share approval. The County Committee approves seeding of cropland for six years counting the year in which it was seeded. Seven practices for tile terraces, two sod waterways, five erosion control structures and one water impoundment reservoir were also approved for the ACP allocation. We also approved one forest improvement practice.

The County Committee approved one Long Term Agreement for the 1983 year. Three years of conservation practices are being put into use on this farm for a total of \$10,500 cost-share.

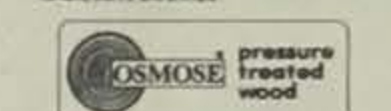
Davis County farmers are conservation wise, and are very conscientious about taking measures to control soil erosion. Crop rotation, hay, and terracing are a way of life on the rolling terrain in this area.

1983 was a drought stricken year in Davis County. Feeling the worst is behind them, most farmers have rallied and are looking forward to 1984 with optimism.

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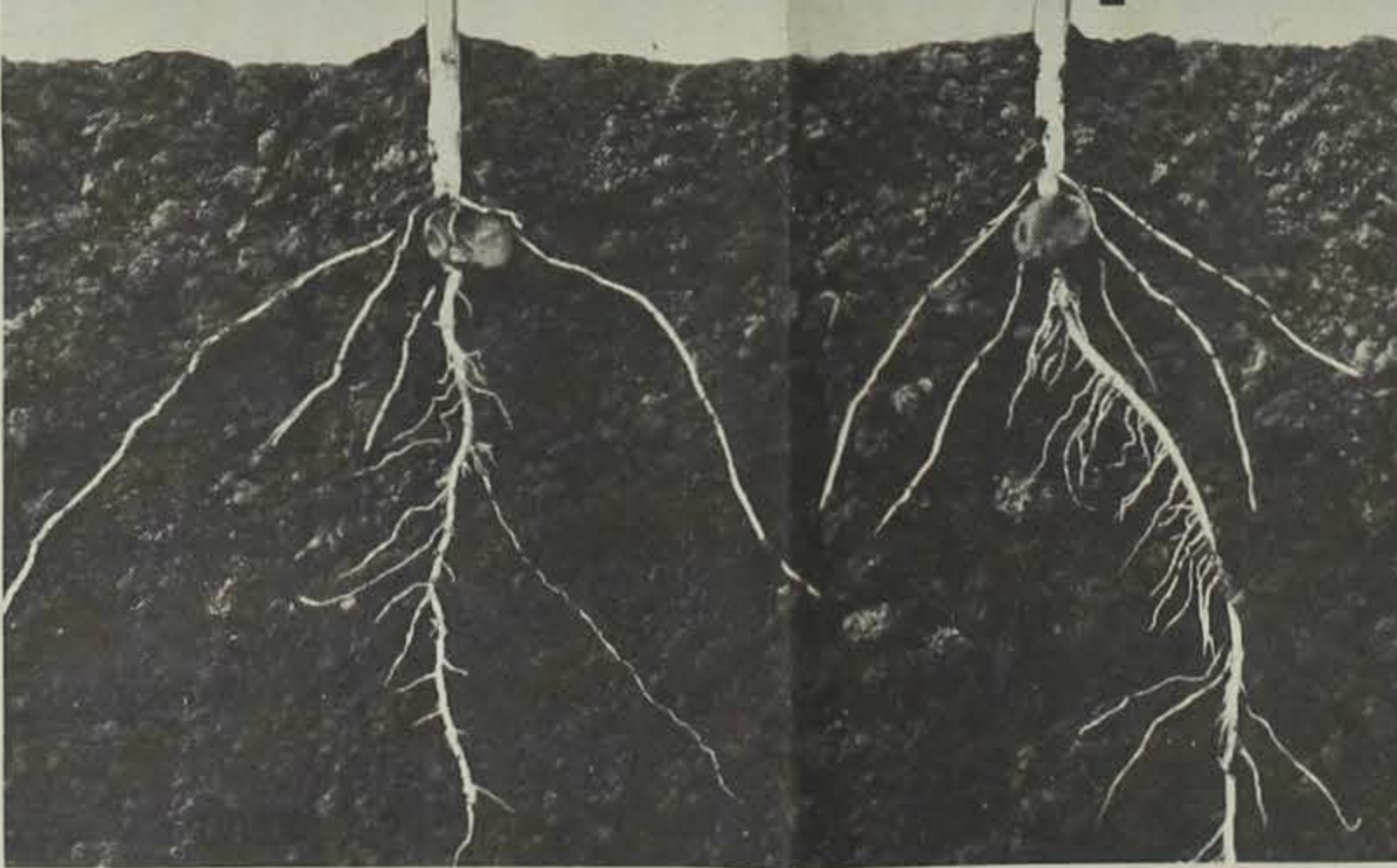
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Soil conservation efforts at peak

By James B. Gulliford, Director
Iowa Department of
Soil Conservation

Efforts on the part of Iowa's soil conservation districts, and the state and federal soil conservation agencies that support them, have never been greater. Yet, erosion persists as much today as in the past. More than two-thirds of our state's cropland is eroding at a rate greater than the soil regenerates itself. The reasons for this continuing erosion are both obvious and obscure; managerial as well as physical.

The erosion problem we face is dynamic in nature due to the many forces that influence it. Physical factors including slope steepness, slope length, and rainfall intensity govern the amount of erosion that occurs based on the amount of vegetative or residue cover that protects the soil. The balance of all these factors is the result of the agricultural management used by the farmer.

Agricultural management is more than choosing seed varieties, planting dates, equipment purchases, and other farm decisions. It should include conscious soil conservation decisions as well. As crop rotations are chosen, consideration should be given to the impact that intensive row-cropping has on soil erosion. As farm equipment is purchased, consideration should be given to adopting conservation tillage systems that hold down farm costs and save soil. As fields are laid out for planting, consideration should be given to planting on the contour and leaving grassed headlands, waterways, and buffer strips. The cost of acres lost from crop production is not nearly so great as is the benefit of reduced erosion.

The Iowa farmer continues to be the best farm manager and crop producer in the world. The management skills that farmers have allow them to deal with erosion at the same time that they produce crops. Our soil conservation districts are committed to helping the farmer in this regard.

Districts across Iowa have initiated the Iowa Soil 2000 program and are beginning to contact their farmers through development and distribution of conservation folders. These conservation folders contain information that describes both the nature of erosion occurring on each farm and the production and yield consequences that sustained erosion causes. The folders also offer alternatives to treat erosion and offer the services of the soil conservation district in developing conservation management systems to control erosion. In years to come, all farmers can expect to receive this information.

The Department of Soil Conservation, through soil conservation district, also continues to be committed to provide financial incentives to assist farmers who need permanent soil conservation practices to solve their erosion problems. The Department's cost-share program is funded at an all-time high, and now is complemented by a no-interest loan program to assist low net worth farmers. Details of these programs can be received by contacting the Davis County Soil Conservation District office.

As stated above, our efforts to address erosion problems are great. We look forward to 1984 as a milestone year toward initiating new and sustained efforts toward helping farmers meet their soil conservation needs.

Agriculture agency personnel



SOIL CONSERVATION COMMISSIONERS—Members of the Davis County Soil Conservation District commissioners are (from left) Don Chickering, Phil Melvin, LaVern Weilbrenner,

Bob Boatman and Wayne Birchmier. Don Herteen, Tim Hooper and C.I. Heady were not present for the picture.



SCS STAFF—Those making up the staff at the Davis County Soil Conservation Service office are (from left) Roger Fry, Fred Hainlin, Chris Botts (seated) and Julie Falcon.



ASCS STAFF—Members of the Davis County ASCS office staff are (from left) Mary Jane Foster, Donna Hutchings, Deanna Herteen, Evelyn Humphries, Susan Moore and LuEtta White.



EXTENSION SERVICE STAFF—The Davis County Extension Service staff consists of (from left) Lana Minnick, Susan Hooper, Robert Musselman and Carolyn Pickrell.



FmHA STAFF—Those providing the services of the Davis County Farmers Home Administration office are (from left): Front Row, Mary Ann Fisher, Mary Belle Davis and Brenda Comer. Back Row, Tony Putz, Doyle Schmitter and Jerry Mozingo.



FmHA COMMITTEE—The Davis County Farmers Home Administration Committee consists of (from left) Delbert Tarbell, Bob Boatman, Floyd Porter and Jerry Mozingo.

FmHA knows value of soil conservation

The Farmers Home Administration supports the work of the Soil Conservation Service in Davis County. Over the years, FmHA has noted that families who take care of the soil and are good stewards of the land make financial progress.

On all Farmers Home Administration farm purchases we are encouraging families to sign up as cooperators with the Soil Conservation Service District, to participate in ASCS cost-share and use SCS technical services to improve and

preserve their farms. It just makes good sense to use USDA programs that provide cost-share, technical service, and long-term financing to improve these farms.

Farmers Home Administration loans for soil conservation practices when other forms of credit are not available. These loans can be used for establishing permanent pasture, ponds, water control structures, terraces, grass waterways, basic land treatment including lime, fertilizer, seeding, fencing, wells and water supply systems for home and livestock use, and pollution control facilities for livestock wastes.

The interest rate on Soil and Water loans through Farmers Home Administration is 10 1/4% with a maximum 40-year repayment period. The Davis County Farmers Home Administration Committee determines eligibility. Applications may be filed at the FmHA Office, 106 N. Dodge Street, Bloomfield, Ia., 52537.

SNAKES IN TEMPLE—

The exotic island of Penang in northern Malaysia is often referred to as the "Pearl of the Orient." In its perhaps unique Snake Temple poisonous snakes curl among the temple carvings, crawl over the joss-stick stands and wrap themselves around branches of potted plants. Yet no visitor has allegedly ever been bitten.

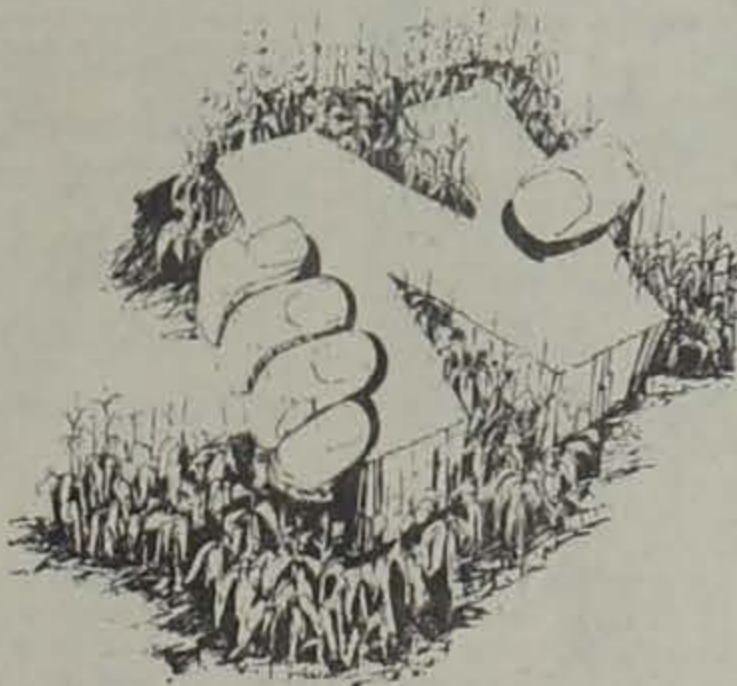
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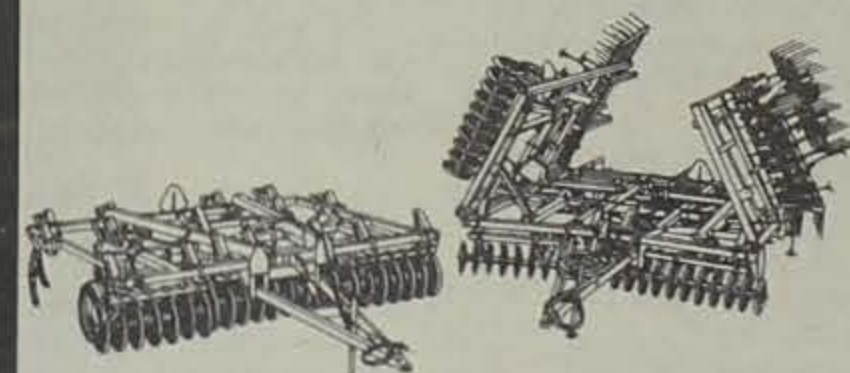
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