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Fayette SWCD Annual Report

1997 annual report dedicated to retired SWCD commissioner: Carl Nus

For 12 years Carl Nus served as a faithful Fayette Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioner.

In 1996 he decided, for health reasons, not to run for a third term. Even though Carl was not an elected official from then on it didn't stop him from doing conservation work. He continued to help with the third grade conservation field days, building birdhouses, and doing other public service work.

Carl has always found a way to help other people. Past service includes: being a school



... Carl Nus ...

teacher, FSWCD commissioner, farmer and always a conservationist. Carl has always delivered his best and we are proud to be associated with him.

A big "Thank You, Carl" from all of the Commissioners and staff for all your work and being the person you are.



Uhlenhops honored, See story pg. 6

Christens awarded woodland owner of the year

Louis and Cheryl Christen are the winners of the woodland owner of the year for 1997. They have 58 acres of timber which Louis has improved over the years. The following is a list of woodland improvements including timber stand improvement, fencing, fire and pest control, wildlife habitat, and recreational development.

1978 - Improved harvest 15 acres, 21 MBF (million board feet) of oak and elm lumber ties.

1979-1988 - Interplanted 15 acres with walnut and oak using tree shelters on 50% of the trees.

1985-1988 - Removed culled trees on 15 acres.

1988 - Protected additional 12 acres from grazing. Salvage harvested ten acres, six MBF of elm and hard maple lumber and veneer. Constructed one acre pond for wildlife and to control erosion in ravine.

1992 - Planted two acres to mixture of pine and walnut.

1994 - Selected harvest, 28 acres, 35 MBF of mixed hardwood.

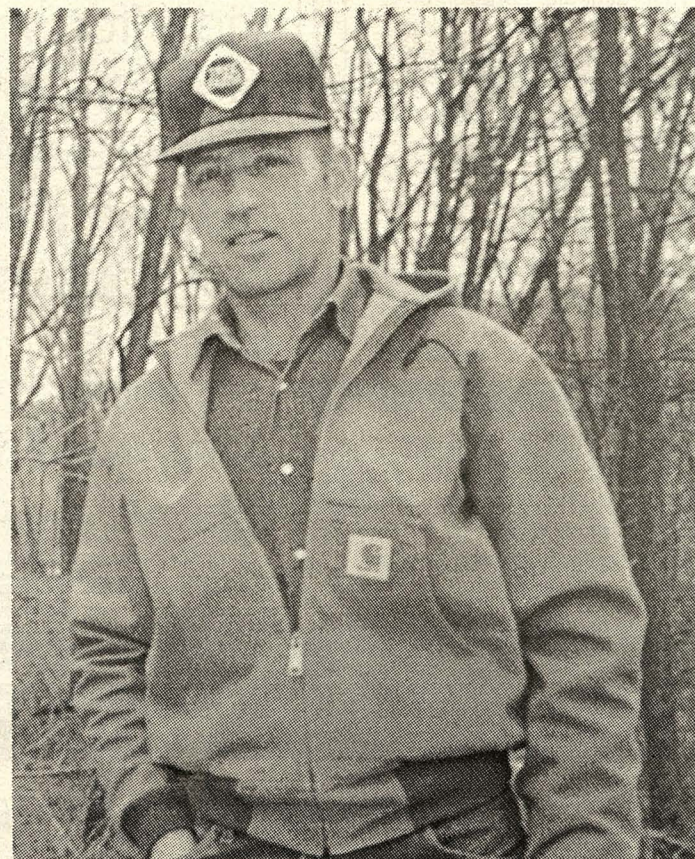
1996 - Constructed 5.5 acre shallow water area. Planted oak, walnut, and ash seed on two acres.

Louis is a graduate of the Master Woodland Manager program. In 1991 he hosted one of the "best ever" forestry field days in Fayette County. Seventy-five people attended the day long session to view the work Louis had accomplished. As one of the participants stated, "How can one man find time to milk cows and accomplish all of this forestry work?"

Louis rarely misses a forestry field day in the area. He is truly a steward of the timber. His woods have a good stocking of

export quality walnut that he is maintaining as an investment. He has tracked the growth of the trees over the past several years to determine the point of growth at which they are slowing down in appreciation of the value.

Louis leads by deeds rather than words. His first project was to convert 15 acres of poor quality black oak into higher quality timber. Over the past 15 years that he has been working on the area, he has established an excellent stand of high quality walnut. Everyone in the area marvels at what he has accomplished. We would like to congratulate Louis and Cheryl on their stewardship of the woodlands.



Fifth annual third grade field day

The 5th annual 3rd grade Conservation Education Field Day was another great success! Over 550 children from 13 schools in Fayette County participated this year. The entire event coordinated by the Fayette SWCD is made possible by all the volunteers who operate stations, provide food, equipment and give so generously of their time for the three day event.

The Fayette County Pork Producers donated and cooked sandwiches for the field day and Doug Easton - Culligan Water donated water for the event.

The Fayette SWCD would like to thank everyone who makes this event possible!

The eight stations featured at

3rd grade field day were: 1) Bob Vobora - Soil Scientist - Area Office, "Soil Station"; 2) Tom Baker - Earth Team Volunteer, "Pond Station"; 3) LaVonne Koch - NRCS Soil Conservation Tech., "Lines on the Land"; 4) Julie McCready - NRCS - WAE, "Bee Station"; 5) Dick Jensen - SWCD Commissioner, "Erosion Station"; 6) Jodi Jeanes - Fayette County Recycling Coordinator and Fayette County SWCD Asst. Commissioner, "Recycling Station"; 7) Dawn Amundson - Fayette County Environmental Ed. Coor., "Wildlife Station"; and 8) Tom Brown and John Olds - One Stop Forestry, "Forestry Station".



Area third graders learn about soil conservation at the annual field day on the Dick Jensen farm, rural Elgin.

Iowa's natural resources

Mark Habiger
Area Conservationist

Have you ever taken something for granted, and then realized later how precious that something was? Many of you may have pondered this question, but have you ever applied it to Iowa's natural resources?

Since arriving in Iowa I have been impressed with several of the state's qualities. However, the natural resources top my list for several reasons. The first is the quality of the resources. The second is the conservation ethic of the land stewards, and the third is the "can do" attitude and agricultural leadership of Iowa's farmers.

Iowa's natural resources are second to none. I have never been to a place where the top soil is as rich, dark and deep as Iowa. Western states irrigate their best farmland to produce comparable crops Iowa raises on steeper land without irrigating. Very few places enjoy the quality of water and its recreational benefits as Iowa. In fact, I'm not aware of too many places that offer the fisherman the variety of sport fish opportunities as northeast Iowa.

One of the first things I noticed about Iowa, was the picturesque contour strip cropping, terraces, and winding waterways across the fields. Credit is due to the early conservation promoters in Iowa, but even greater credit is due to those farmers who apply and maintain those practices.

I recently visited with a farmer who won a Soil Sentry award. He addressed all the resource concerns on his farm and lowered erosion to tolerable levels. As I relayed my congratulations for his conservation work, he said that he didn't do anything special, only what was right for the land. His attitude reflects that of the majority of Iowa's conservation minded farmers.

Iowa is a quality place to live. Her resources are of top quality. However, it is her people and their conservation ethic that makes it the place it is. Although we may have a way to go before we protect every acre of farmland, Iowans have a lot to be proud of when it comes to conservation and protecting its natural resources.

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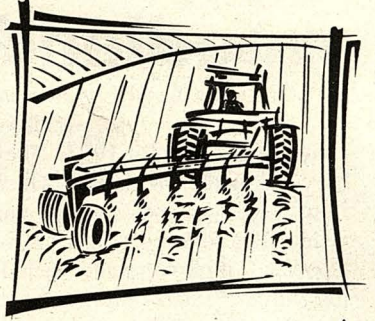
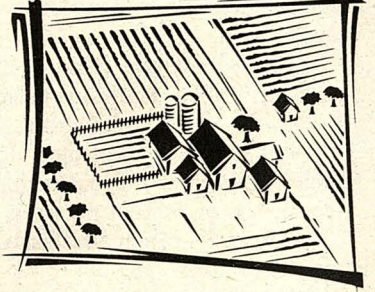
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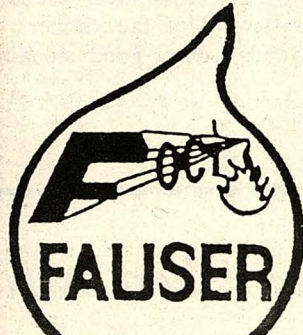
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EQIP projects to benefit forestry and pasture management in Fayette Co.

By Jerry Muff
DC NRCS Fld. Office

Fayette County is included as one of the four northeastern Iowa counties approved for two conservation incentive projects through the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP). Soil and Water Conservation Districts, NRCS, FSA and other conservation representatives will be meeting soon to determine priorities for these programs, set cost-share rates and determine which practices will be eligible for funding through these programs. Fayette Co. was fortunate to have two projects gain approval in the first round of approvals. EQIP is a different approach from the past in terms of spending federal dollars for conservation. Local conservation partners worked together, and in this case multi-counties, to develop these EQIP proposals which were recently approved.

Cost-share rates can be as high as 75% for eligible practices. Producers can apply for a multiyear project to spread the cost and work out to make it workable. Some of the standard practices for forestry are timber stand improvement, tree planting, and fencing woodland for livestock exclusion. The four county area received \$120,000 for the first year to allocate to cost share applicants.

The pasture management program is aimed at promoting intensive rotational grazing. Intensive rotational grazing is just what the name implies. In simple and general terms, livestock producers implement a high level of "grass management." This involves dividing pastures into smaller pastures, or paddocks, then rotating the animals according to the quality and availability of the forage. The "Grazing Hills" EQIP currently has \$20,000 to allocate for eligible practices. Standard practices for intensive rotational grazing may include fencing, watering systems, seeding and fertilizer application. Keep in mind that priorities and eligible practices for both of the grazing and forestry program have not yet been determined, but will be very soon.

The northeast portion of Iowa is also fortunate to have Jim Ranum, NRCS Grazing Specialist on board to assist livestock producers not only make the transition to intensive rotational grazing, but offer technical assistance to any producer interested in improving his/her pasture or forage management. His office is at the NRCS office in Elkader, but can be contacted through our NRCS office in West Union.

If you are interested in making application for either or both

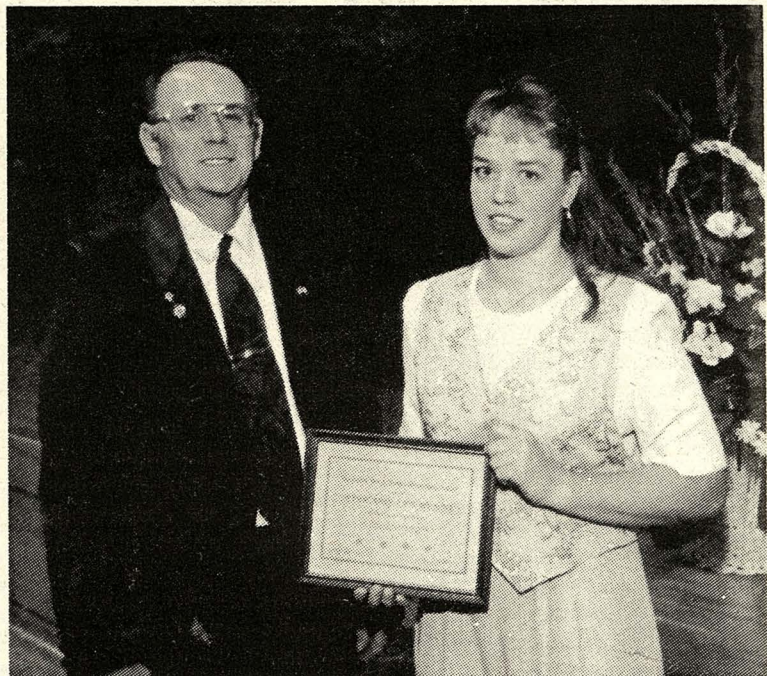
of these programs, contact us at the USDA Service Center.

"Soil is not usually lost in slabs or heaps of magnificent tonnage. It is lost a little at a time, over millions of acres, by the acts or carelessness of millions of people. It cannot be saved by heroic feats of gigantic technology, but only by millions of small acts and restraints conditioned by small fidelities and desire."

- Wendell Berry in his address at the 46th annual meeting of the Soil and Water Conservation Society

Notice:

The district prohibits discrimination in its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, disability, political beliefs, and family or marital status.



Stephanie is pictured receiving her award from Bill Benett.

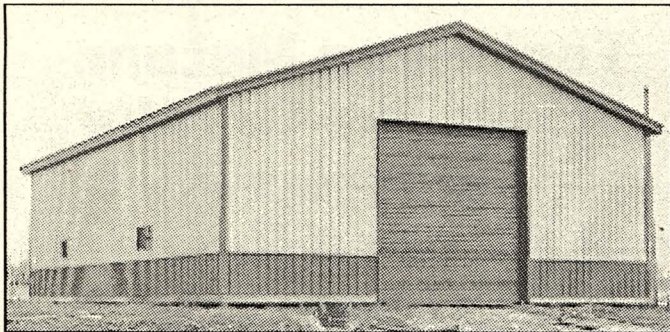
Menne receives scholarship from SWCD

The 1998 Scholarship Contest, sponsored by the district and the Iowa Association of Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners, had approximately 20 entrants.

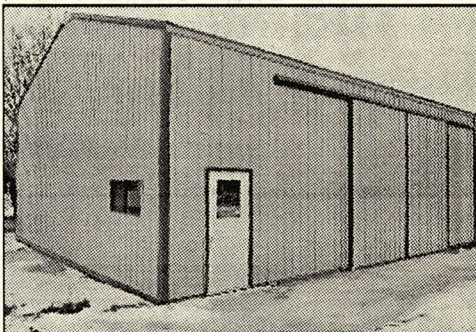
Applicants were evaluated on the basis of scholastic performance, service, character, leadership, and financial need. The commissioners appreciate the interest shown by all the applicants.

Stephanie Menne of West Union was the recipient of the \$100 scholarship. She is the daughter of Richard and Kathy Menne. Stephanie attends Iowa State University.

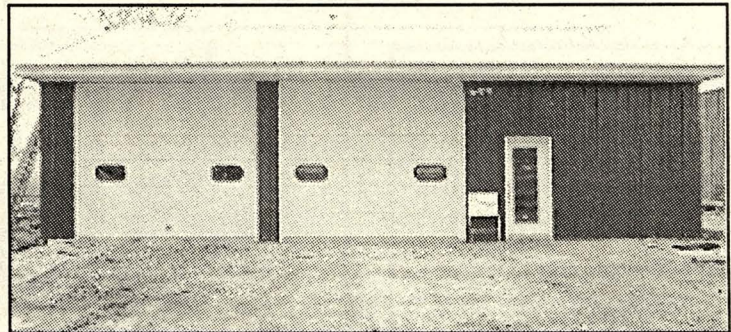
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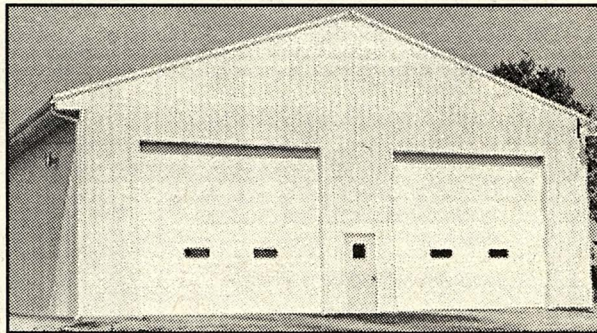


V. Buhr, Alpha

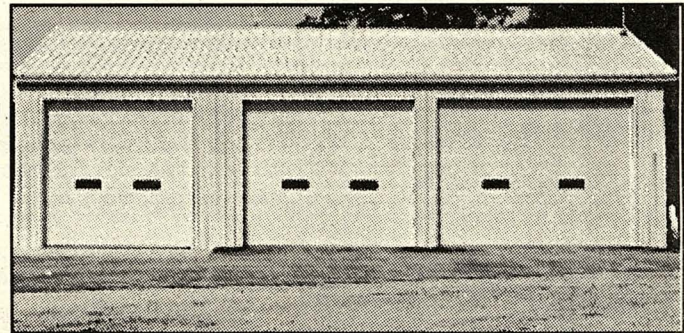


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1998 herbicide manuals available

By Brian Lang

ISU Extension Crop Specialist

The "Weed Management Guide for 1998" Pm-601, is now available at the Fayette County Extension Office at no charge. This 35-page guide provides the latest herbicide recommendations for weed control in corn and soybeans. This publication can also be found in the January issue of the "Iowa Soybean Review".

Another excellent publication available through ISU Extension is the "1998 Herbicide Manual for Agricultural Professionals" WC-92 for \$2.50. This 120-page manual provides more detailed information than the "Weed Management Guide" and is used by many of the agri-suppliers in the state. This publication is also available on the World Wide Web at

<http://extension.agron.iastate.edu/extweeds/wc92/default.htm>.

Developing an integrated weed management program is the key to a successful weed control program. The use of herbicides alone has not provided the solution for economic weed management. Herbicides are most effective when integrated into a program that uses several strategies. Tillage, rotary hoeing, row cultivation, crop rotation, and crop scouting are some of the options that should be considered in an integrated weed management program. Call Brian Lang, Iowa State University Crop Specialist, at the Winneshiek County Extension Office, 319-382-2949, for further information.

The Iowa Cooperative Extension Service's programs and policies are consistent with pertinent federal and state laws and regulations on nondiscrimination. Many materials can be made available in alternative formats for ADA clients.



Fayette County Pork Producers prepare pork burgers for youth participants in the annual field day for area third graders

Fayette district commissioners to host workshop

By Bill Bennett

A workshop "Strengthening Yourself and Your District" will be held in West Union on Feb. 24 for commissioners from six districts in northeast Iowa. The workshop was developed by and will put on by the Iowa Conservation Partnership. The Iowa Conservation Partnership is a partnership of people from local conservation districts, local RC&D's (Rural Development & Conservation) boards, CDI (Conservation Districts of Iowa), IDALS (Iowa Department of Agriculture & Land Stewardship), NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service), and NACD (National Association of Conservation Districts) that worked to

develop this training program and is bring it to all the commissioners in the state over a two week period of time.

The workshop will cover: the role of conservation districts and commissioners, focusing district programs on your customers, understanding customer behavior, developing programs around priority needs of customers, the importance of cooperative work, and developing district marketing plans. The commissioners will be better able to take care of the needs of their customers (all the people that live and work in their district) when they have completed this course. Additional workshops are being planned to

build upon this workshop next year. It is hoped that we will be able to continue to improve the service to all customers of the district as a result of this and additional training.

The team members that developed the workshop are: From IDALS - Paul Valin, Des Moines; Sandra Adams, Osage; Rick Maaske, Malvern; from NRCS - Les Betts, Keosauqua; Jeff Zimprich, Atlantic; from CDI - Jill Knapp, Johnson;

Jeanette Winegarden, Cedar Falls; from districts - Bill Bennett, Elgin; Jeff Bergman, Burlington; and Laura Krouse, Mt. Vernon.

Ray Ledgerwood from the NACD will be leading the team putting on the workshops across the state. Other members of the team will include several of the people that developed the training and commissioners from across the state that have volunteered to help.

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Grasslands targeted

By James Ranum

Grassland Conservationist

Nationally NRCS has made a commitment to increase technical and cost share assistance for pastures. Iowa has created three full time positions to provide a staff person to concentrate on pasture improvement. James Ranum NRCS grassland conservationist has been assigned to assist Fayette County.

Working through the local field office Ranum is available to provide planning assistance to producers wishing to improve their grazing programs. Technical assistance is available for improving individual pastures by re-seeding, interseeding or increasing fertility. Priority is given to the planning of intensive grazing system components such as paddock and lane layout, water supply location and forage management.

Selected EQIP priorities to be announced soon

A four county grazing EQIP priority area covering Fayette County will be approved when the final selections are announced in February. Clayton, Allamakee and Winneshiek are the other counties included in this priority area. Producers interested in new

or expanding existing pasture systems are eligible for a five to ten year contract.

EQIP applications will be ranked in the four county area based upon an environmental benefits index. They will be approved starting with the highest score until the funds run out.

Some of the practices cost sharing are available for which may be part of a grazing system are:

Practice	Anticipated Cost Share Level
Pond	75%
Trough or tank	75%
Lane stabilization	75%
Spring Development	50%
Well	50%
Pumping plant	50%
Pasture planting	50%
Pasture and hayland management	\$15/acre for 3 years
Nutrient management	required with pasture management
Planned grazing system	\$15/acre for 3 years with 5 or more paddocks
	\$15/acre for 3 years with 4 or less paddocks.

A sign up period will be announced as soon as the official notification of accepted priorities areas is completed. Applications will be taken at the NRCS or FSA office. Contact the NRCS or FSA office for additional information or to set up an appointment.

Ralph Houg bequeaths land to FSWCD

By Richard Jensen

There are some folks who can live without wild things. They seem to exist outside the natural community of sun, wind, soil, plants, animals and the four seasons that create our environment. It would seem they deny a relationship of seeing, feeling, understanding, loving and having faith in the land.

Ralph Houg was not one of these men. His relationship with the land was far different. His ethics of respect for nature were rooted deeper than the roots of the many red oaks in his well-managed forests. This individual had no conflict with nature or contempt for any season. A stroll with his dog through the fields was an adventure in living. A short visit with me provoked stories of past encounters with the birds, beasts and blooms. Fishing for trout in Otter Creek became a frequent pastime. Every encounter with the wild critters expanded his appreciation for life.

Last month Ralph went on to meet his maker. His life of love

for nature was over. He has left his farm to the FSWCD to be cared for as he had done for his entire life. I hope we can continue his fine example of stewardship of the land. We are privileged to be remembered by this caretaker of the wild things.

Thanks to the many land users who are treating their farms with the attitude of respect for the health of the land. This health of the land means it can be used but not wasted, enjoyed but not ruined, benefited from but not violated, and profited from but not depleted. As you drive down our country roads it is easy to identify these farmers who have accepted their obligation to the land. They seem to employ a true value of ecological concepts based on damage control to the environment. Land users that subscribe to long term environmentally friendly practices deserve recognition for their efforts. Those land users who subscribe only to economical gain practices need to be recognized also because this will invite compulsory regulations.

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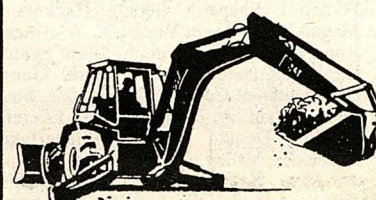
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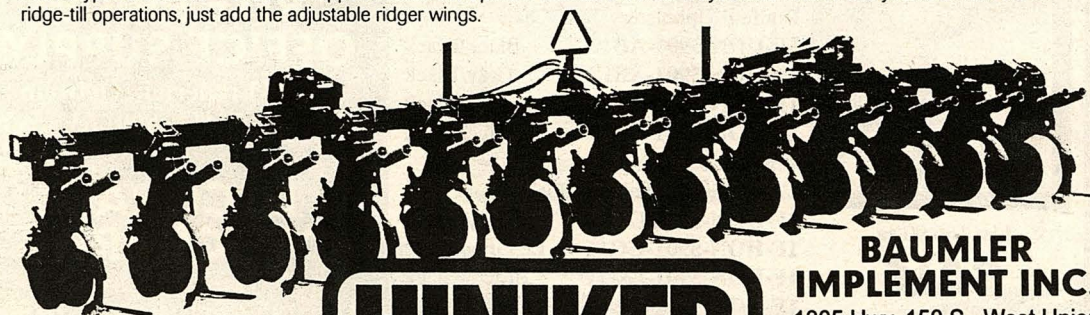
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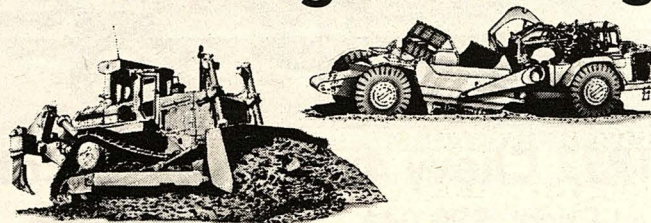
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Soil & Water Saver - Harold Heins, Eugene Franzen, Paul Schuchman, Raymond Kueker, Bruce K. Fink, Mark/Vickie Rhea, Karen Martin, Kenneth Diemer, James R. Smith, Matthew A. Parter, Hazel Tope, Tom Claassen, Kenneth Blockhus, Balz/Shirley Kamm, Louis Fritz, Sidney Peterson, Robert Cowles, Rush Farm Mgt., Larry Thole, Lydia Winter, Jack Treloar, Tom Reinert, Gary Burger, Elsie Kittleson, Evelyn Halverson, Raymond Harford, Willis Grundmeyer, John McFadden, Dwight/Kathy Maurer, Minnie Kuehner, Marvin Kingdon, Bob Campbell, Lois Wood, Samuel Koehler, Croell Redi-Mix, Roger/Connie Halverson, Lane Ash, C&W Farms, J.R. Wyntien, Melvin Janssen, Veryl Burghardt, Hearty-Hudson Farm Act., Max Jennings, D & J Pumping, Ron Seedorf, Aileen DeLong, Four Strong Farms, Allan Sloan, Figdore, Rick Westendorf, TJ/Christi Stecklein, Rehors Farm Mgt., Don Dursher, Lyle Jurgensen, A.D. Berman, Jon R. Saboe, Lulu Cowles, Helen Halstead, Warren Iliff, Arlington Coop Comm., Luke Kuennen, HC Brown, Stanley Ney, Dwayne Ott, Keith Valesh, Dan Winter Jr., Berniece Walsh, Bostrom's Super

Value, Darwin Fink, Randy Nus, RDR Farms Inc., Elsie Mae Anderman, Marilyn Mihall, Eleanor Swent, Busse Farms, Mike Heins, Kenneth J. Miller, Ilo Mae Rau, Roger Decker, A.F. Farms Ltd., David Keppler, Bob Stoessel, Gerald/Ruth Lynch, Joe Ogle, Harris Kjos, Merlin Bauml, Dean Rueber, Merrill Nerem, Marvin Ingels, Leon Gruetzmacher, Gary/Nancy Mauer, Leonard Benter, Bill Hogan, Neola Hartman, Helen Roberts, Chad Engels, Citizen Savings Bank, Eugene Wenger, Kenneth Wagner, Zupke's Sand & Gravel, Gary Brownell, Marjorie Allenstein, Edith Mann, Florence Robinson, Owen Ott, Carl Recker, Franklin Thompson, A.O. Arthur Oldenburg, and Lynn/Bev Kelck.

Soil & Water Steward - Donald Buhr, Burrack Farms, Boyer Tree Farms, Dr. John McEnaney, Will Ogle, Jim Oltrogge, Jerry Cole, Fauser Oil Co., Floyd Stensland, Alice Koempel, Henry Fedeler, Pheasant Ridge Farm, Grasey Mkt. Ltd., Willis Ruff, Miriam Colvin, Dan Forsyth, Violet James, First National Bank - Oelwein, Lucille Dierks, Clarke Campbell, Farmers Coop - Ft. Atkinson, Bill Rhoades, Urban Feed Supply, Ciba-Geigy (Cheri Lane), Frank Hangartner, Hurdal Inc., Cunningham Farms Ltd., Vernon Shaw, Keith Lansing, Grimm Farms Inc., Tom Murphy Farm, Wm. Bennett, Marie Stewart, Carl Nus, Mike Puff, John F. Fedeler, Dick Egan, David Palas, John R. Adams, Harold Denner, Michael Helgeson, Rosemary Hartman, Robert Mohlis, George Fettekether, Elgin State Bank, Mark Kuennen, First State Bank, Brian Rodman, Varykino Inc., Keith Voigt, Lucille Rueber, Gerald Cook, C.M. Barker, William Thompson, Charles Whitt, Donn Bunn, Robert Bertch, Dan Rosburg, Jack/Joy Van-Sickel, Patrick Minger, Lorraine Jackel, Forden J. Shepard, George Hackman, Magna Bank, Roger Winter, C.W. Antes, Ron Beermann, Dick Smith, Glass Farms Inc., Lois Heick, Duane Mork, Gene Nuss, Charles Corkery, James Cue, Siemers, David A. Pleggenkuhle, Everett Mueller, Donald Mueller, Eileen/Jake Schneider, Valley Coop, Millard Nelson, Jr., Mike Hotz, Bernie Lincoln, Chris Schlatter, Bill Johnson, Dow/Elancoe, Paul Nuss, James Ingels, Hawkeye Coop, Bruce Crandall, Eugene Sieck, Darwin Peterson, Lorus Drilling, Tammy Hallberg, Larry Hiemes, Paul Niemann Const., Maynard Savings Bank, NEOWA FS Inc., Warren Trotter, Volney Palmer Est., Ken Iliff, Paul Boess, Leona Gregory, Roger Biermann, 1st National Bank - West Union, Kunkle Barry Farms, Noel Smith, Harlon Pederson, Ray Steffens, Raymond Forsyth, Neil Schwake, Clarion Winzenburg, Edward Pope, Arlene Broughton (Boess Family Farms), Dummermuth Farms Inc., Leslie Lauer & Sons Construction, and Richard Beckwith.

Uhlenhopp receives Izaak Walton League Windbreak award

The Phil Uhlenhopp family is the winner of the Izaak Walton League Windbreak award for 1997. Their windbreak was established in 1985 to protect their farmstead from north and west winds. It also gives the farmstead protection from drifting snow.

The windbreak consists of two rows of Arborvitae and one row of Colorado Blue Spruce.

The Uhlenhops maintain the windbreak by mowing, excluding cattle and practicing good weed control.

We would like to congratulate the Uhlenhops for this award.



Recycling today...for tomorrow

By Jodi Jeanes

Fayette County Recycling Coordinator
SWCD Assist. Comm.

The Fayette County Recycling Center has gone through many changes in the past six months. This is largely due to the ban of commercial cardboard at the Fayette County Landfill.

The cardboard ban has been in effect since Nov. 1, 1996. This ban was put through by the Fayette County Solid Waste Commission in order to help meet the county's reduction rate, mandated by the state. The rate has been set for a total of fifty percent reduction at the landfill by the year 2000. The county has already achieved a 37.7 percent reduction as of July 1, 1997. This is a positive thing for the people of Fayette County because it will help increase the life span of the landfill and also encourage citizens to recycle as much of their waste as possible.

This ban has increased the activity at the recycling center by haulers bringing in all of the

commercial cardboard pick ups on their routes and by the bins located throughout Fayette County being very full.

A helpful hint to recyclers, please flatten all cardboard boxes that are placed in the roll off bins. This is done to save room for our neighbors and to keep the cost down due to extra pulls.

The most frequently asked questions for the recycling center are, "Do we take magazines, phone books, hard cover books, or Readers Digest?" The answer is YES! We do ask that you please place all magazines, white paper, and hardcover books in separate bundles. This can be done with twine string, placing in a separate bag with the handles tied, or in a box clearly marked with what it contains and placed in the section marked newspaper in the roll off bins. The phone books and Readers Digest may be placed in among the newspaper. The recycling center also requests

that all recyclable material please be cleaned and placed into the appropriate section of the roll off bins.

If you have any questions pertaining to the recycling center, please call Jodi Jeanes, Recycling Coordinator, at 319-422-3712.



Jodi Jeanes

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1F-HON-502-P
1F-HON-502-Q

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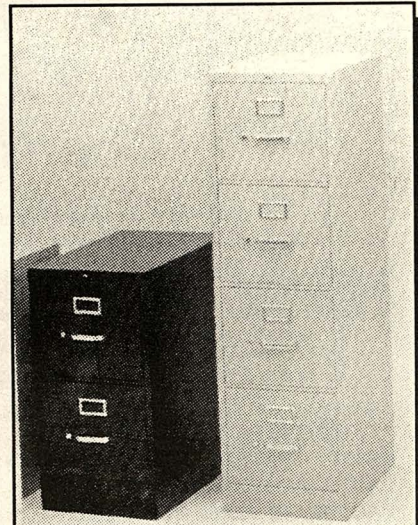
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Quass' named outstanding conservation award winners

By Alan Crowe

State Technician NRCS - FO

The Fayette SWCD has selected Wayne and Phyllis Quass as the recipients of this year's award which honors an owner/operator who has excelled in applying conservation practices to their land.

Wayne and his wife own and operate approximately 770 acres of land in Dover township, of which 600 acre is cropland. Wayne has been in the farming business ever since high school. He has been practicing conservation for as long as he can remember. As he told me -- "my father taught me to respect this land." The Quass family was one of the first families in Dover township to plant crops on the contour. Now days Wayne practices contour farming on all of highly erodible land, irregardless of whether or not it is a required component for compliance purposes. In addition to contour farming, most of his fields are stripcropped, alternating strips of row crops with strips of grass/legumes.

Wayne has used a rather unique approach to land in CRP. He did not want to plow under vast areas of expiring CRP ground and expose the land to potentially heavy soil losses. So Wayne made great use of the CRP "early release" program.

What he did was to early release strips on the contour. This way he avoided breaking out the entire field all at once and the same time establishing a contour strip-cropping system.

He is also a great believer in grassed waterways. Wayne established waterways where needed as does not consider them as just "travel" lanes. If he needs access to his strips he plants field borders in lieu of end rows.

Wayne is a very busy man. Along with is crop production activities, he care for 300 head of cattle and markets, 1000 head of lambs each year. When I asked him how he manages to handle such a large operation he said, "I get an awful lot of help from my wife. She does a lot of the field work, much of the trucking and most if the computer input. I couldn't do it without her!"

I asked Wayne what were the biggest changes he has faced the past few years. He mentioned two things. The first was volume. He said that today's farmer needs to produce in much larger quantities in order to compete on the open market. Secondly, especially in his case, "pleasing the meat packers is often the hardest part of my job."

Concerning the future of farming, Wayne said, "You HAVE to be optimistic -- or you

"My father taught me to respect this land."

Wayne Quass

can't be a farmer."

I certainly feel Wayne and Phyllis are very deserving of this award. Their concern for the environment is genuine! As Wayne put it, "I don't own my land -- God owns it -- I'm just the caretaker!"

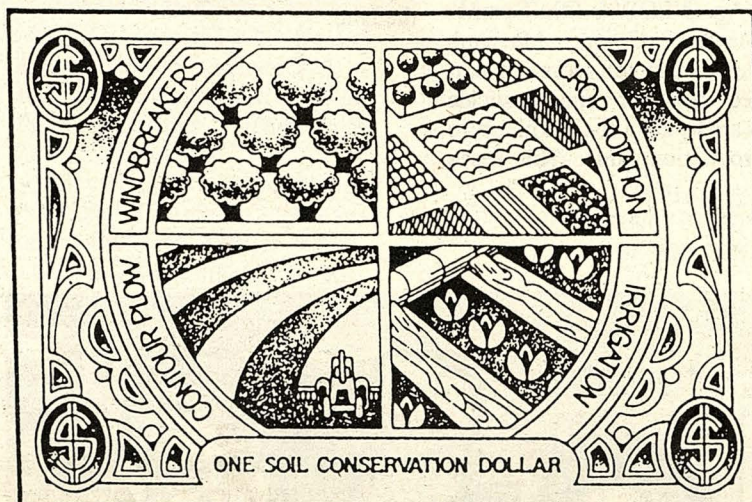
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Phyllis and Wayne Quass standing on contoured fields of their farm. Quass is the landowner/tenant award winner for 1998.

CONSERVATION DOLLARS



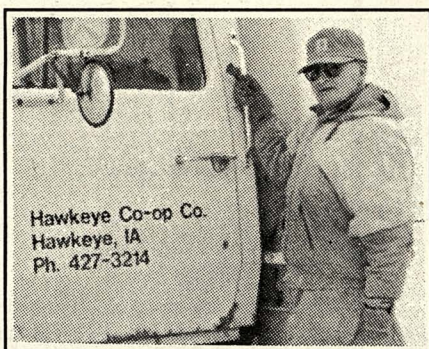
NET HIGH YIELDS

FOR THE FUTURE

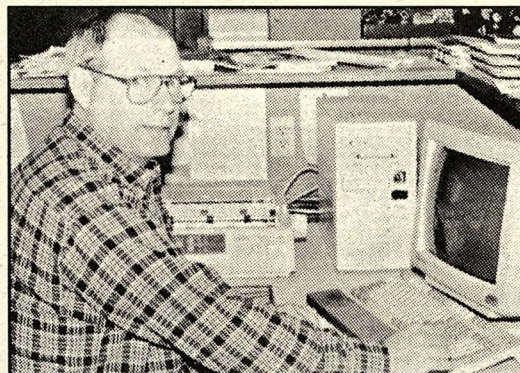
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We've been meeting farmers' needs in the Hawkeye area since 1911. As one of the town's oldest businesses still in operation, we're pleased to offer the latest in technology for our customers.

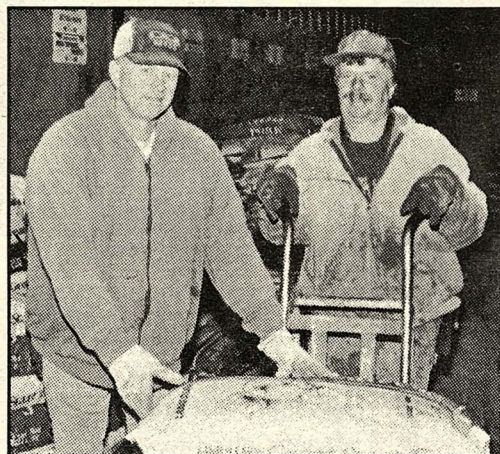
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Ronnie Senner, maintenance dept.



Randy Wurzer, agronomy manager



Dave Ungerer, feed mill operator

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Buhrs receive landowner/tenant award

By Julie McCready
NRCS-FO

Don and Diane Buhr and family are the 1997 winners of the Landlord/Tenant award given by the Fayette SWCD. The Buhrs have four children: three married daughters, Annette Cahoy, Atlanta, Ga., Angela Gibson, Ames, Lori Johnston, Sumner, and a son, David who is in 8th grade. They also have seven grandchildren.

The Buhrs farm a total of 1700 acres of land and run a 250-300 cow dairy. They milk three times a day in a herring-bone style parlor where they can milk 20 cows at a time.

Paula Radke is the landowner. Her husband's family was originally from Illinois, bought the farm to retire in Iowa. After they passed away her husband had the farm. She now lives in Illinois.

The Buhrs have farmed the 160 acre Radke farm for 13 years.

Many improvements have been made over the years. When they first rented the farm it was just coming out of the PIC program, where it had set idle for two years and had gone to weeds and had eroded severely. Don started out by contouring the land and going with a corn-bean rotation. They no-till drill beans into corn stubble and field cultivate one pass when planting corn into bean stubble. Then in 1992 they started to add broadbase terraces for maximum soil conservation. They also hauled manure on the land for a couple of years to bring the soil back to the highest production value it could be. They regularly have their soil tested by Oran Ag, NEOWA FS, Sumner or Maynard Co-op, Maynard. They then can tell what recommended fertilizer and pesticide needs are to keep their soil up to top production value. This keeps

the land going as one of the best producers in Northeast Iowa. Future plans for this land include tiling a 14 acre area. Also, Don says they may be looking into using ICM (Integrated Crop Management) in the future. Otherwise Don says the land is in good shape.

One thing Don would like to share with other farmers is the good programs that are available through the local NRCS and SWCD office. Don said that it would be good for the farmer and the land if these programs could be used more.

We would like to congratulate Don and his family for the fine work they are doing to conserve the land.



Donald Buhr, rural Sumner, received the Fayette SWCD Landlord/tenant of the Year, along with landlord Paula Radke, who resides in Illinois.



SWCD Staff pictured above, first row, from left- Lori Kohlmeyer, Julie McCready, and Lavonne Koch. In back- Jerry Muff, director; Alan Crowe.

This Soil & Water Conservation District issue was published by Newspapers of Fayette County, in cooperation with the Fayette SWCD

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Fayette Soil Water Conservation District commissioners

Soil Conservation... February, 1998

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John Grafenberg

John Grafenberg, 46 has lived in northern Fayette County all his life. Since graduating from Iowa State University in 1973, he has been actively farming a dairy farm of 450 acres both owned and rented.

He and his wife, Janice, own and operate The Butler House Bed and Breakfast. They have twins, Jessie and Jaci, 13, and a son, Jacob, 9. They belong to St. Peter's Church in Eldorado.

John has been a commissioner since 1996 and is a trustee of Dover township.

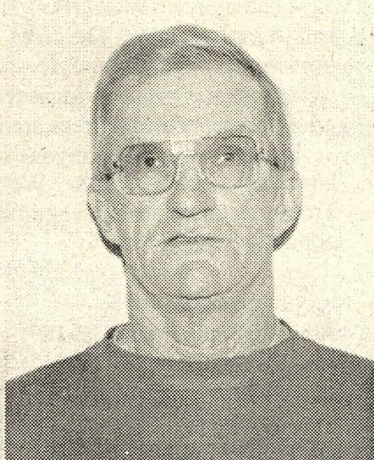


Jodi Jeanes

Jodi Jeanes is the Recycling Coordinator for Fayette County. She and her husband, Keith, reside in Westgate with their two boys.

Jodi started as an assistant commissioner in 1996. Her family is involved in farming, Boy Scouts, sporting events, and religion.

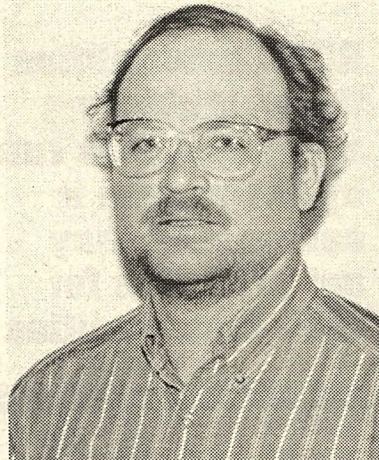
She is a 1994 graduate of Upper Iowa University.



Richard Jensen

Richard Jensen was elected as a commissioner in 1990. He and his wife Dorothy operate a livestock farm in Union and Pleasant Valley townships. They raise cattle, corn and oats.

They are active in the United Methodist Church, Cattlemans Association and SWCD activities. They are fortunate to host the 3rd grade education field day at their farm every September.



Matt Stewart

Matt Stewart was elected a commissioner in 1995. Matt and his wife Diana have five children, three boys and two girls. His family dairy is on the southeast edge of Oelwein.

In 1994 Matt switched over to rotational grazing and has been active in the promotion of increased use of grasslands.



Paul Nuss

Paul Nuss has been a commissioner for 18 years. He and his wife Jean farm south of Hawkeye on W-14. They have been farming here for their entire married life. They raise beef cows and calves, buy feeder calves and raise sheep.

They go to the Lutheran Church in Hawkeye. Their daughter, Connie and her husband Larry Popenhagen live in Wadena, with their children, Devin Sieck and Ean.

ESB congratulates
Louis Christen

**Woodland
Owner
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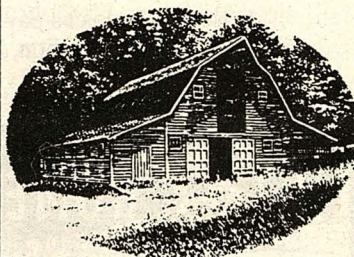


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Deb Dessel

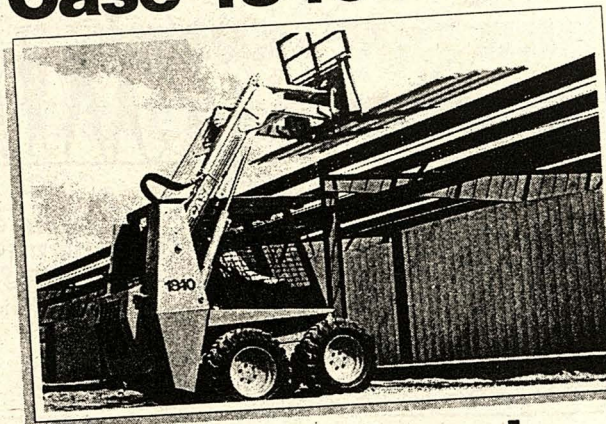
Deb Dessel was appointed assistant soil commissioner in 1994. Deb resides in West Union with her husband John and daughter Janell.

Deb taught third grade in the North Fayette Community School District for 20 years. She was instrumental in helping to establish the annual third grade soil conservation education field day.

Deb is the new education committee coordinator for the Fayette Soil Conservation District.

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CASE III

What is RC&D for northeast Iowa, Inc.?

By Jim Frederick
RC&D Coordinator

Resource Conservation and Development for Northeast Iowa, Inc. (RC&D) is made up of a six county area in northeast Iowa including: Allamakee, Buchanan, Clayton, Fayette, Howard and Winneshiek counties.

RC&D is a combination of people, needs, opportunities and solutions working through local groups and agencies to promote community development.

Within the RC&D concept, groups and communities can do anything local people want to do. Through the RC&D program, citizens gain access to a network of public and private services and financing to accomplish community projects. Help is provided by working "with" people rather than "for" people. The development of local leadership and community pride is a key part of RC&D activities.

RC&D for NE Iowa, Inc. can help groups define problems, set goals and then develop a workable plan to get the desired results. RC&D networks with many other groups to find technical assistance, information, contacts, and sometimes funds to get the job done.

RC&D projects often create jobs - jobs that were waiting to be developed in Agriculture, Forestry, Tourism and other industries.

Other projects focus on the protection and improvement of natural resources and community facilities. Still others work on improving a community's quality of life. All are designed to make rural communities more viable, and better places to live.

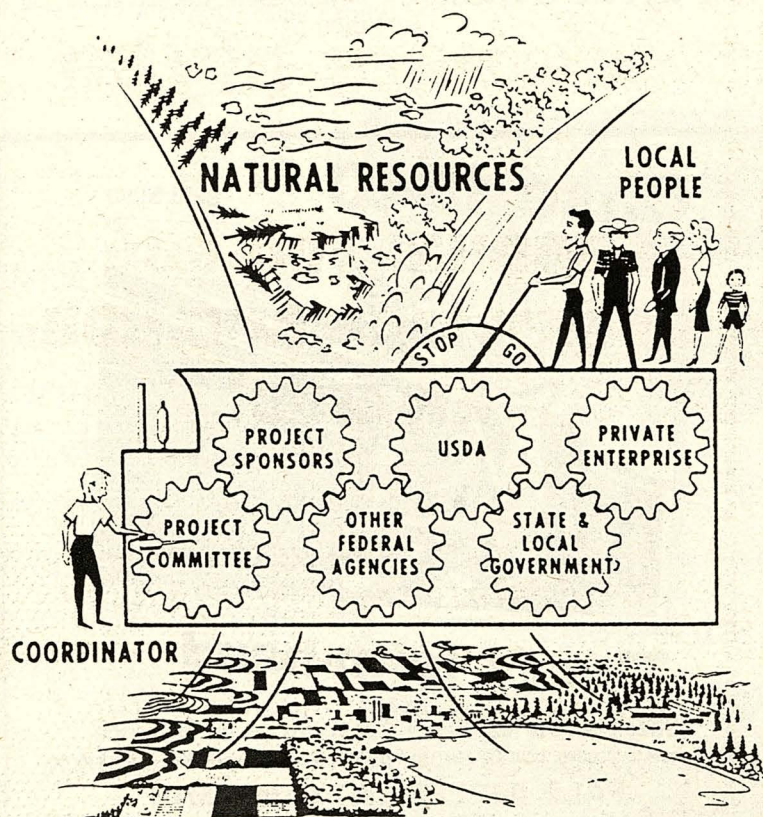
RC&D exemplifies the neighborly approach. It is run by the people it serves and they set priorities for their communities

RC&D exemplifies the neighborly approach. It is run by the people it serves and they set priorities for their communities. It can be a catalyst for action, but the full credit goes to those who are working to make their communities better places to live.

Last year RC&D assisted several organizations and small businesses in Fayette County with small business loan applications, development of bylaws and articles for service organizations and organizational help. RC&D is currently working on various area-wide projects that will have an impact in Fayette County, as well as the other five counties in the RC&D area, such as, a Northeast Iowa Tourism Web Site, Statewide Composting Survey project, and working with area agencies on day-care issues.

If you need assistance feel free to call the office at 319-864-7112 or email jf Frederi@terra.ia.nrcs.usda.gov.

RC&D PROJECT



A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE, WORK & PLAY

1998 Tree Seedling & Transplant Sale

Name: _____
Address: _____
City, State, Zip: _____
Telephone: _____ (home) _____ (work)

The Fayette SWCD (Soil & Water Conservation District) is once again sponsoring a tree seedling and transplant sale. The trees are hardy, bare root seedlings with healthy root systems from Cascade Forestry Service, Inc. Prices shown are per bundle of 25, except the evergreen, nut tree, shade tree packages, and the individual trees. No guarantee is given for seedlings or transplants sold at these prices, except that the trees are in good condition when they are shipped.

The sale is open to anyone interested in planting trees. All orders must be received in our office not later than April 1, 1998. We will notify you in mid-April as to when your order can be picked up. Trees must be paid for when ordered. We do encourage early ordering, as we do sell out of the more popular species.

Species	Cost Per Bundle		Number Of Bundles	Total Cost
American Arborvitae (12-18")	\$35.00	x	_____	= _____
American Arborvitae (18-24")	\$45.00	x	_____	= _____
Black Hills Spruce (12-18")	\$35.00	x	_____	= _____
Blue Spruce (12-18")	\$35.00	x	_____	= _____
Cranberry Highbush (6-18")	\$35.00	x	_____	= _____
Red Osier Dogwood (18-24")	\$35.00	x	_____	= _____
Honeysuckle (18-24")	\$35.00	x	_____	= _____
(Arnold's Red aphid resistant)				
Lilac (2-3')	\$35.00	x	_____	= _____
Sugar Maple (2-3')	\$60.00	x	_____	= _____
Norway Spruce (12-18")	\$35.00	x	_____	= _____
Red Oak (2-3')	\$35.00	x	_____	= _____
Scotch Pine (12-18")	\$35.00	x	_____	= _____
White Pine (12-18")	\$35.00	x	_____	= _____

	Cost Per Package		Number Of Packages	Total Cost
Native Nut-Tree Package	\$40.00	x	_____	= _____
3 Butternut (18-24")				
3 American Hazelnut (12-18")				
3 Black Walnut (2-3')				
3 American Chestnut (18-24")				
3 Northern Pecan (6-12")				
Evergreen Package	\$35.00	x	_____	= _____
4 White Pine (12-18")				
4 Blue Spruce (12-18")				
4 Norway Spruce (12-18")				
Shade Tree Package	\$40.00	x	_____	= _____
3 Green Ash (2-3')				
3 Sugar Maple (2-3')				
3 Red Oak, (2-3')				
3 Bur Oak (2-3')				
3 Swamp White Oak (2-3')				

Individual Trees	Cost Per Tree		Number Of Trees	Total Cost
Blue Spruce (18-36")	\$6.00	x	_____	= _____
Norway Spruce (18-36")	\$6.00	x	_____	= _____
White Pine (18-36")	\$6.00	x	_____	= _____

Total of Above. = _____
Add 6% Sales Tax. = _____
TOTAL AMOUNT DUE. = _____

Please make checks payable to **Fayette SWCD** and return it with your order to 120 North Industrial Pkwy #2, West Union, IA 52175-1612. Thank you for your order!

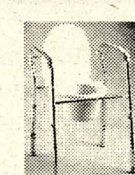


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Think native for buffers and continuous CRP

By Dan Burkhardt

Fayette County Extension Education Director

Switchgrass, Big Blue Stem, and Indiangrass are excellent native warm season grasses for wildlife habitat, critical area seeding, and erosion-control filter-strips and/or bufferstrips.

In order to successfully establish the native grasses you need to be aware of the differences between warm and cool season grasses.

Native grasses often possess seed dormancy which results in low germination percentages for freshly harvested seed or for seed less than a year old. Maximum germination usually occurs one to two years after harvest. Germination percentages of 80% or more in native warm-season grasses are desirable, but sometimes difficult to obtain. Thus, germination and purity variation between seedlots requires that marketing of seed and seeding rate recommendations be based on a percentage of pure live seed (PLS).

Recommended seeding rates for adequate stands range from a minimum of 20 PLS per square foot to around 40 PLS per square foot. This converts to a seeding rate of about 5-10 lbs. PLS per acre for big bluestem and indian-grass, and three to five pounds per acre for switchgrass. Iowa studies concluded that when weeds are successfully controlled, a seeding rate of three pounds PLS per acre of switchgrass is adequate for high forage yields, but six pounds PLS per acre was probably needed for good stand establishment under stress conditions or when inadequate equip-

ment is used for seeding. Other researchers, however, disagree saying that excessive seeding rates will not compensate for poor seeding procedures.

Traditionally, seeding dates for warm-season grasses have been June or early July. The primary reason for these relatively late seeding dates is that acceptable weed control requires several sequential tillage passes prior to seeding.

Studies in Missouri and in Iowa indicate that warm-season grasses, which are seeded in late April, germinate at a relatively high percentage. The generally favorable growing conditions and available moisture which occurs during May and early June contributes to accelerated vegetative growth.

Warm season grass seedlings extend their permanent root system quickly, but at a relatively shallow depth. Those seedlings which can exploit available soil moisture and nutrients early, before the soil surface dries, normally become better established and are more competitive than seedlings which emerge later.

One of the major reasons for slow establishment of warm-season grasses is their inability to successfully compete with cool and warm-season weed species. Warm-season grass plants which grow where weed competition exists are typically smaller, suffer more from water stress, and produce two-thirds fewer tillers than seedlings which grow in weed-free areas.

Historically, weed control for

late spring (June or later) seeding dates was done by clipping. This practice is still the only viable and the most practical alternative when mixtures of warm-season grasses and prairie forbs are being established. Broadleaf and uncontrolled grassy weeds should be clipped above the height of warm-season grass seedlings. The recommended height is approximately 4-6 inches.

Atrazine has provided excellent weed control and shows little seedling injury to switchgrass and big bluestem when applied as a pre-emergence treatment. Indian-grass shows some tolerance to atrazine but stand reductions can be substantial even at low rates. Currently, the major restriction for atrazine for native grass establishment is it cannot be used within 66 feet of streams or sinkholes.

Seeding methods which rely on tillage currently are the only method for warm-season grass establishment next to streams and sinkholes.

Equipment for seeding warm-season grasses is similar to that needed for cool-season forages; it must be capable of distributing the seed evenly, placing it at 1/4 to 1/2 inch depth, and providing an accurate seeding rate. Switchgrass seed has a hard, slick seed coat, and can be seeded with most forage seeding equipment. Seed of the bluestems and indian-grass has awns and appendages with fine hair that causes the seed to bridge over in most seeding equipment. Very successful stands have been established by

using grain drills, no-till drills, and broadcast seedings of switchgrass and mechanically de-bearded chaffey-seeded species.

Seedbed preparation is as important with tilled seedbed seeding of warm-season grasses as it is with all other forage seedings. The seedbed should be free of weed competition, be fine-textured, and firm. Some type of cultipacker must be used to produce a quality seedbed, regardless of the type of seeding equipment.

Rapid advances in no-till establishment and interseeding of cool-season grasses and legumes have been made in the past 20 years. The sod-seeding drills (interseeders) now are successfully being used to establish warm-season grasses.

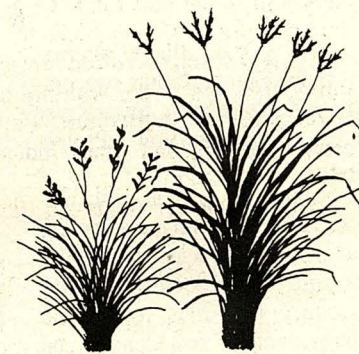
Seeding corn and warm-season grasses together has been used successfully where no atrazine restrictions apply. Switchgrass or big bluestem are seeded into a clean-tilled seedbed followed immediately with no-till planted corn. Atrazine is then applied to the surface at the labeled rate for corn. An Iowa State University study found that corn population did not significantly affect the seeding survival in the establishment year. Fertilizer is applied for a corn yield goal of 80 to 100 bu/A. The corn is usually removed in late August as a silage crop or can be used as a wildlife food plot.

The reason corn works so well is that the corn acts as a companion crop. The corn provides control of early to mid-season weeds and shades the soil

surface during the later part of the growing season. This provides season long weed control that is not available in the traditional method of establishment.

This companion crop method has already been used by ISU researchers to establish field size pastures of switchgrass, big bluestem and eastern gamagrass. This method has also been used for many years by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and the USDA Natural Resource Service to establish warm-season grasses on state and privately owned properties. Remember atrazine cannot be used within 66 feet of streams. The 66 foot restriction has been removed around tile inlets as long as the field is no-tilled or the atrazine is incorporated prior to planting.

It will take until at least the second season to really see how successful your seeding is. The big word is "patience". For more details relating to establishment of the natives, call me at the Fayette County Extension Office at (319) 425-3331.



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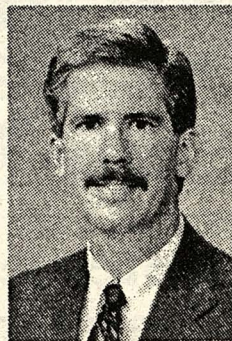
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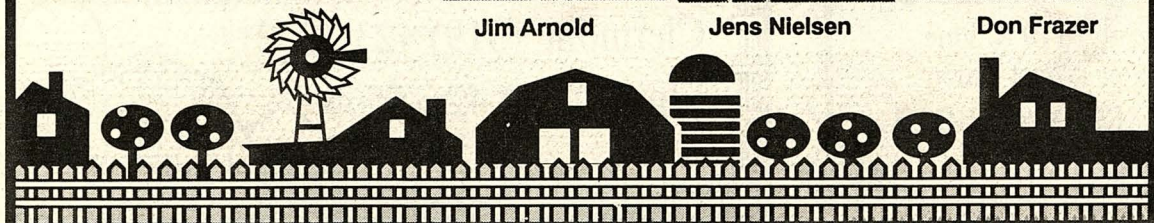
Jim Arnold



Jens Nielsen



Don Frazer



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Watershed achievement award

To be given to Nelson family of Clermont

Mark Nelson, Clermont, is the watershed achievement award winner for 1997, as named by the Fayette SWCD. Mark is in the Northeast Iowa Demonstration Project Watershed. He has set a fine example of upland treatment by incorporating integrated crop management, minimum tillage and terracing into his farm operation. He farms approximately 1,800 acres of land and has a hog confinement operation with 1000 sows and finishes 15,000 pigs each year.

Mark is a member of the Fayette County Zoning board and the Fayette County Extension Council.

Mark was a tillage alternatives field demonstration cooperator with the Northeast Iowa River Basins Demonstration Project (USDA) from 1992-1996 on a corn-bean rotation field with replicated conventional and no-till plots. The site was utilized by staff from the National Soil Tilth Laboratory in Ames for annual measurements of soil density and water infiltration. He was also a cooperator in the Water Quality Incentives Program (WQIP) that was USDA funded to introduce producers to multiple water quality enhancement alternatives including non-point source issues addressed with Integrated Crop Management (ICM). An on going Timber Stand Improvement (TSI) and three planting program is a planned initiative of the Nelson family to enhance the cover for wildlife and improve productivity of hardwoods and conifers on acres not suitable for corn-soybean rotation crop production.



The Mark Nelson family is pictured at home. The Nelsons are the winners of the Watershed award given by the Fayette SWCD. Pictured, from left- Denise, Kirsten, Bridget, Chad and Mark.

Project staff on refinement and application of this technology not only to his farm but with information to other producers.



Buildings and manure storage structures have been constructed utilizing NRCS design specifications to protect surface and groundwater

son family to enhance the cover for wildlife and improve productivity of hardwoods and conifers on acres not suitable for corn-soybean rotation crop production.

As Mark's hog operation expanded, buildings and manure storage structures have been constructed utilizing NRCS design specifications to protect surface and groundwater. Manure management plans have been developed that include transport of

manure several miles in some cases. Separation of sites has been planned for swine health and manure utilization reasons.

Mark has regularly attended manure management seminars and workshops sponsored by ISU Extension and the Demonstration Project to increase his knowledge and management skills in utilizing the manure nutrient resource in his crop production program. He is also an early adopter of GIS (Geographic Information Systems) and GPS (Global Positioning System) technology. He cooperates with the Demonstration

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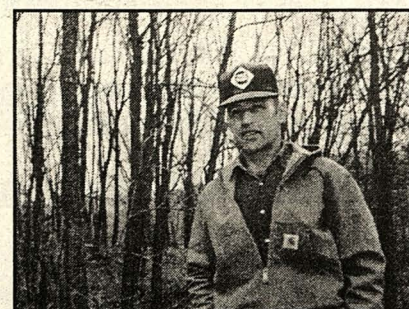


Congratulations Mark Nelson & Louis Christen Watershed Achievement Award Winner



Denise, Kirsten, Bridget, Chad and Mark Nelson.

Woodland Owner of the Year

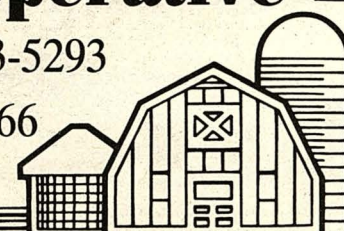


Louis Christen

We salute all farmers for their continuing soil conservation efforts.

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Elgin (319) 426-5566



Terrace maintenance

By LaVonne Koch
Soil Conservation Technician

We would like to remind landowners that it is far cheaper to maintain existing terraces than to neglect the maintenance until they need to be rebuilt.

Different types of terraces have different maintenance requirements. Broadbase terraces require plowing of the front and back slopes of the terrace. An additional pass or two is recommended on the back slope or downhill side. They should be plowed every other year to prevent deterioration in height. Always till and plant the ground on broadbase terraces going to the same direction as what the terrace is laid out. Do not farm across the terrace. Grassedback terraces also require plowing on the front slope only. The terrace should be checked for trees and rodent holes.

The trees should be removed and rodents caught and holes filled in. Narrowbase terraces have potential problems with rodent holes and trees. Since narrowbase terraces have less dirt in their construction, it is very important to remove trees and control rodents.

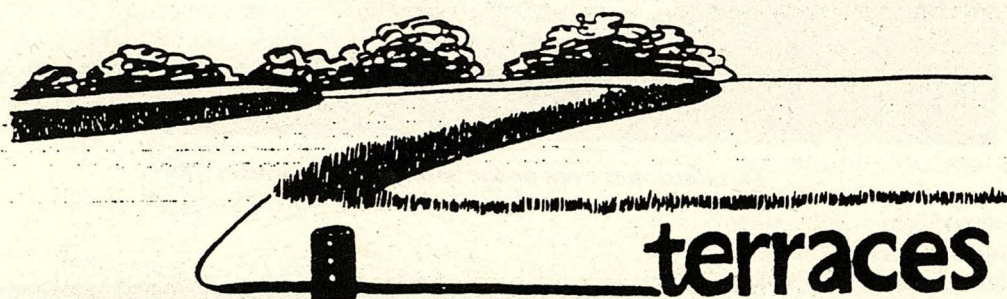
One of the most important maintenance factors is the seeding. A well-established grass seeding protects the terraces from wind and erosion and the grass roots also lend strength to the terraces. Control weeds, brush and trees by mechanical methods or chemicals. Maintain a good brome grass seeding on all grass-back and narrowbase terraces.

Maintenance of tile outlet terraces also requires additional care. Remove sediment build-up in the terrace channel to maintain the required capacity. Repair or replace any damaged tile intakes

that was broken by farm equipment and remove trash from around and in the tile intakes.

One simple practice to help maintain a good working terrace would be to use limited tillage in the terraced fields. This reduces the soil loss and prevents erosion in the channel of the terrace.

Maintenance costs are small compared to the initial costs of terraces and tile. Take a good look at the terraces on your farm today, if they need work, do it now, it will save you dollars later.



Bennett serves SWCD

Bill was first elected a commissioner in the November 1983 general election. He and his wife Judy live on their farm southwest of Elgin in Pleasant Valley Township. They have a son, Craig in California, a daughter, Mrs. Dan (Teresa) Burrack, and two grandchildren, Garrett and Mallory Burrack in Wadena. Judy is office manager of an auto dealership in Elgin.

Bill currently serves as chair of the district, is a representative to the board of RC&D for Northeast Iowa, vice-president of the Conservation Districts of Iowa and alternate director for Iowa on the National Association of Conservation Districts Board of Directors. He is a member of the Northeast Iowa Forestry Advisory

Committee, and a member of the Elgin Lions Club. He was re-



Bill Bennett

cently elected secretary of the Illyria Community Church Board. For three years, he has served as education chair of Conservation Districts of Iowa.

In 1991 Bill was selected as outstanding commissioner for Northeast Iowa. In 1968 the Bennett's were selected as the Fayette Soil Conservation District - Des Moines Register Conservation Farmer of the Year.



Pictured from left - Glen Bennington, Fayette; Harold Strong, Elgin; and Herbert Meisgeier, Arlington.

Soil Conservation District celebrates 51 years

By Bill Bennett
SWCD Chairman

April 11, 1946, Harold Strong of Elgin, Glen Bennington of Fayette, and Herbert Meisgeier of Arlington organized the Fayette Soil Conservation District and started to aid the people of Fayette County in protecting one of their greatest natural resources. Now, over 51 years later, we are still trying to teach people that it is everyone's responsibility to wisely use our resources. If we do not, we could all be affected. Food, water, clothing, and shelter are necessities that are based on our natural

resources, which we all need to be concerned about saving.

I began thinking about this after speaking to some people from Australia and found that in nine years their program called "Land Care" has one third of the Australian farmers actively participating and that 70-80% of the public is aware of the program and it's work. I now have an Australian "Land Care" pin to remind me of the work we have to do and they have a "Conservation District of Iowa" pin to remember we are all working to make this a better world.

CONGRATULATIONS MARK NELSON AND PHYLLIS AND WAYNE QUASS

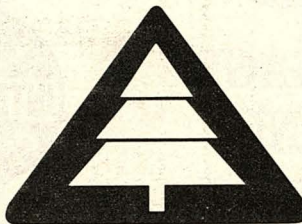


Denise, Kirsten, Bridget, Chad & Mark Nelson
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Earthen storage basin meets need for greater manure output

Submitted by Brad Brownell

As the farming industry changes many farmers are challenged with the idea of what to do. Gary and Brad Brownell of Westgate were faced with this challenge a year and a half ago with their dairy enterprise. They needed to become more efficient or face the idea of getting out of the dairy business. Having enjoyed milking cows since childhood, both Gary and Brad wanted to continue with the dairy - - but how?

The Brownells spent a lot of time planning and studying how to accomplish this goal. They decided to build a new 120 cow freestall barn with indoor feeding. Their existing freestall barn would then be used for dry cows and bred heifers.

To complete the plans there were many questions to be answered about the new building and the manure system. Would they use sand bedding and haul the manure daily like before or would they use mattresses and build a liquid manure storage unit and haul manure once a year? Having more cows to milk and wanting to be more efficient, they decided a liquid manure system would work the best.

There were still several questions left though. What type of storage unit would they build - - earthen or concrete? How would they get the manure from the building to the storage unit?

The idea of the new freestall barn and manure storage being built the same year worked out good together. The freestall barn would need about 6-7 feet of fill at one end and an earthen storage basin would need dirt hauled away from the site. After core samples were taken from the ground and tested, the site was approved for an earthen storage basin. The dirt at the manure storage site would be hauled with a scraper to the building site and layered down six

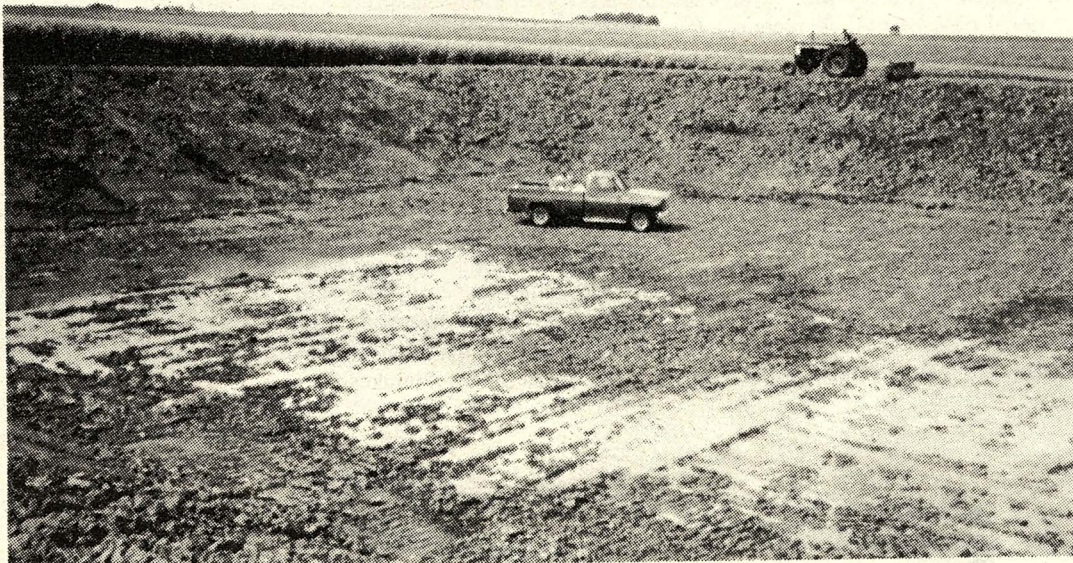
inches at a time. This dirt eliminated having to haul fill dirt in from another site.

The building was built at a 2% slope with a four foot deep by four foot wide and 94 foot long reception pit at the lower end. The manure in the building is scraped twice a day into the reception pit. When the reception pit is full, a steel plate at the one end is lifted. The manure is then

gravity fed through a 24 inch line to the earthen storage basin. The Brownells also put in a 5'6" x 5'6" x 8" deep reception pit in their heifer lot. This allows the manure from the dry cow/bred heifer lot and the open heifer lot to also be stored in the earthen storage basin.

The Brownells are now enjoying not having to haul manure every day. The earthen storage

basin was built to store a 15 month manure supply for 150 milk cows. They plan to pump the system out every fall and chisel the manure into the soil. There is no more fighting mother nature to get the manure hauled. The manure is now applied where needed and when the ground and conditions are suitable.

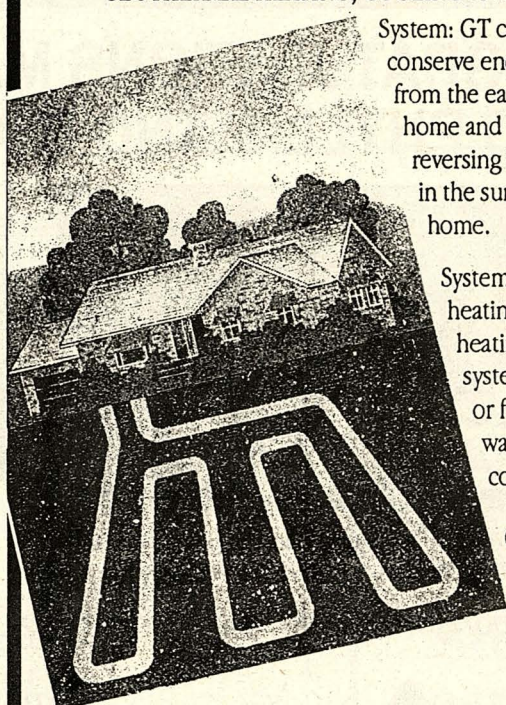


This illustrates work on the basin at the Brownell farms.



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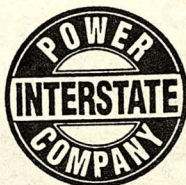
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Connection between tillage, CO2 loss studied

Does soil lose carbon dioxide (CO₂) every time it's tilled? That's one of the questions Don Reicosky, a soil scientist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's research station (ARS) at Morris, Minn., is looking at as part of a long-term study.

Reicosky and two ARS staff technicians were at the Bill Eno farm, Luana, last fall to gather data on CO₂ loss from alfalfa and corn fields to add to their growing information base.

The Eno study is a cooperative effort involving Reicosky, Eno and the Northeast Iowa Demonstration Project. Eno became involved because of his interest in the economic consequences of using different tillage practices.

Reicosky has demonstrated that the CO₂ lost following tillage is significant, but varies widely depending on the tillage

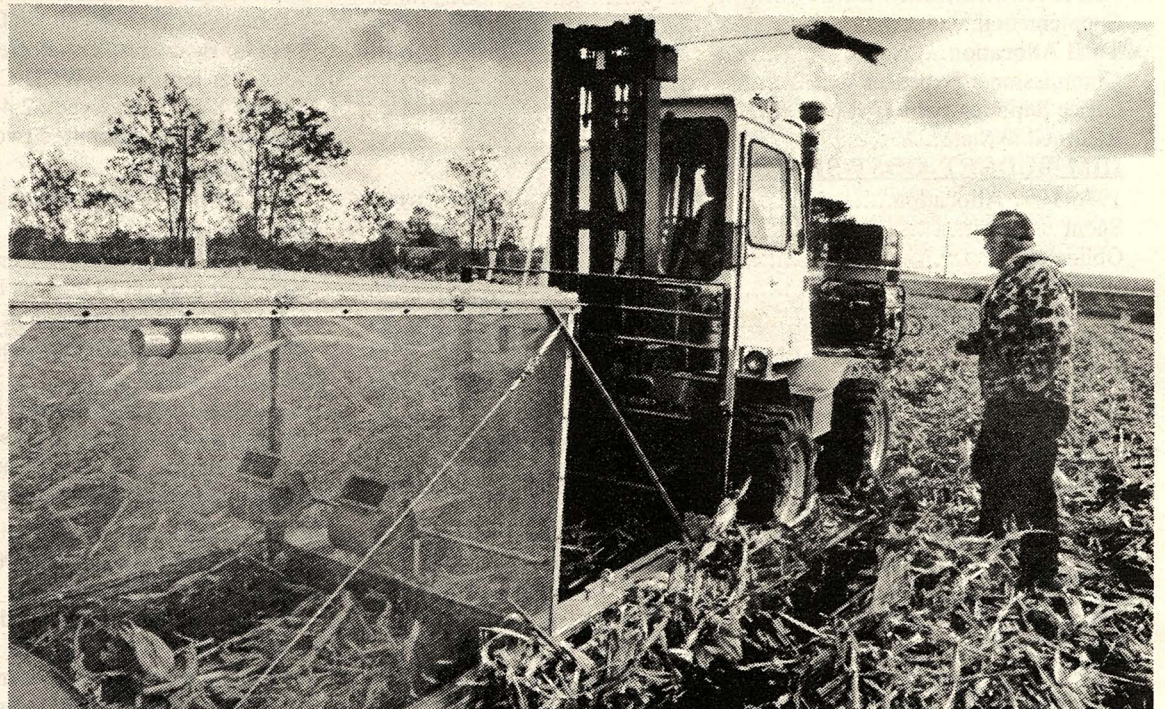
tools used, and it leads to the loss of organic matter in the soil.

Don and the technicians wanted to see if the results from soils on the Eno farm, which are lower in organic matter and pH than those he's tested in Minnesota, differed from other test areas.

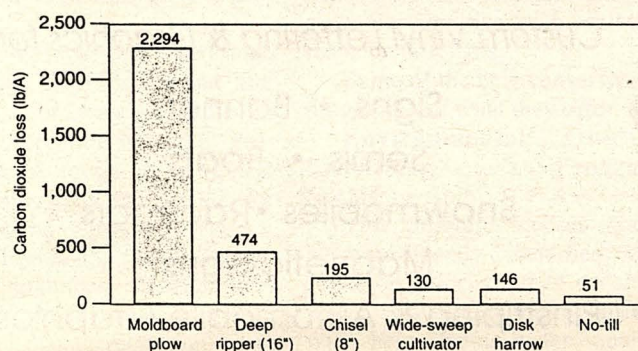
Apparently they didn't. After seeing the initial data, Reicosky said CO₂ loss was the same as at Morris.

Reicosky explains that moldboard plowing and some deep tillage implements open the soil and allow stored CO₂ to escape from pore spaces in the soil. Oxygen then fills the large pores in the freshly-tilled soil and with the incorporated organic matter works to create an explosion in the population and activity of soil microorganisms.

At the Eno farm, Reicosky and the technicians took meas-



Don Reicosky, right, watched as Chris Wente, in the cab of MR GEM, takes carbon dioxide readings from a corn plot at the Eno farm.



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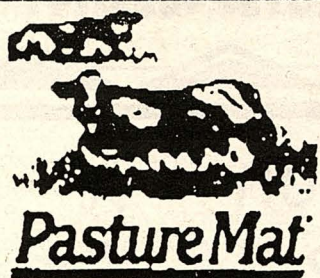
"What we found in the studies is that we get a tremendous burp of CO₂ (when the soil is tilled)," says Don. The most gas is released from soil tilled with the moldboard plow, and the least from no-till. He compares it to stirring the coals of a fire, and thanks there's a direct relationship between the volume of soil disturbed and the amount of CO₂

lost.

Reicosky isn't critical of producers who use moldboard plows. Instead, he would rather talk about conservation tillage, then let producers decide which to use.

"If you have to plow the soil, OK, but understand the consequences. It's a delicate balance between burning up organic matter and aerating the soil," he says.

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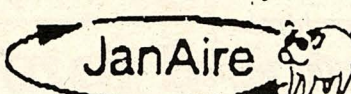
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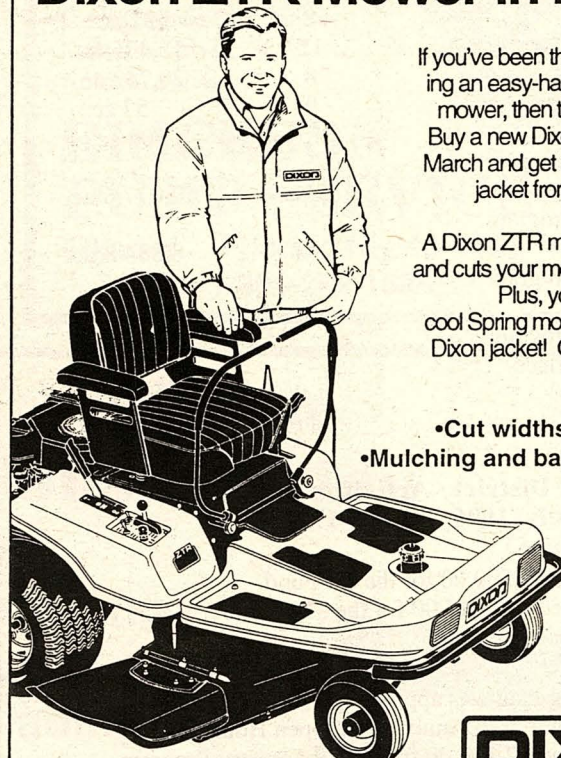
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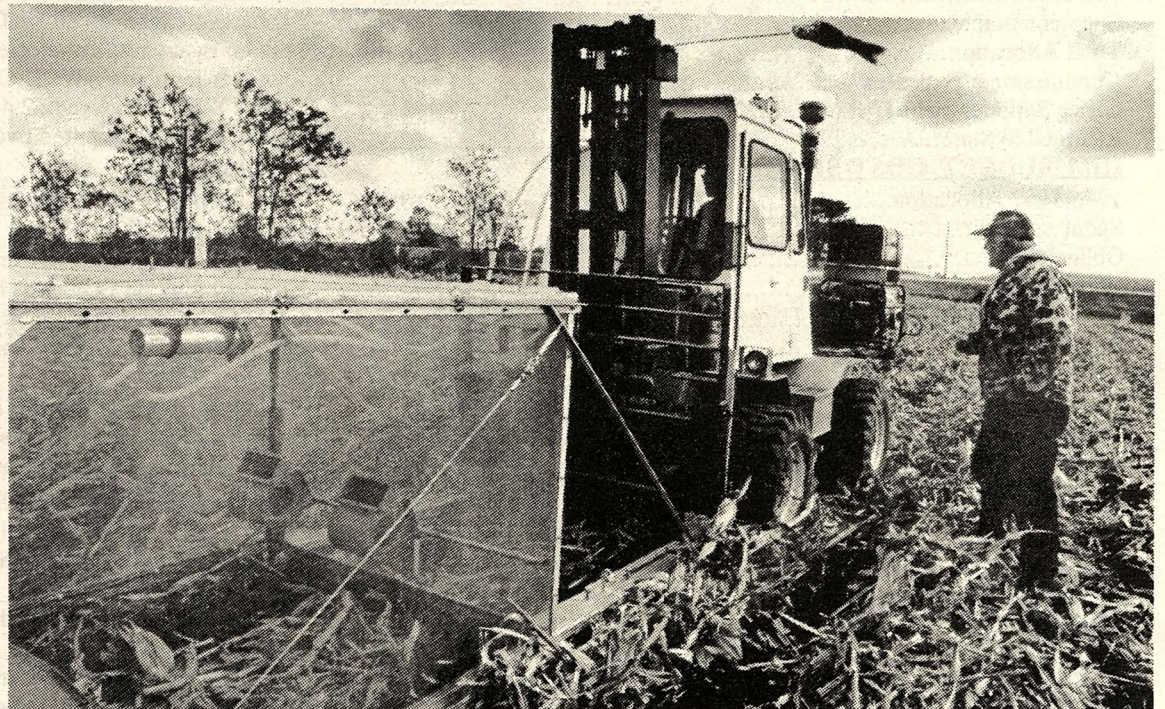
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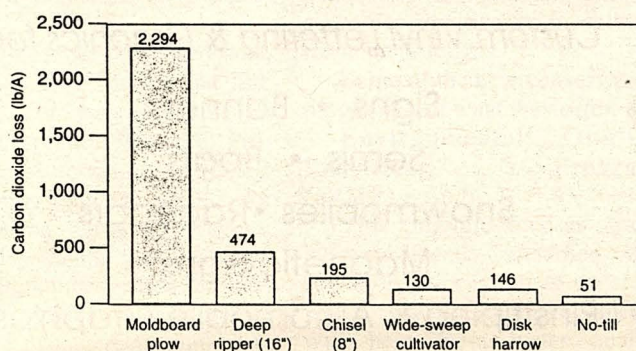
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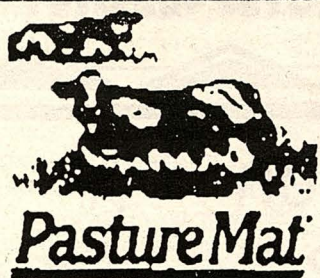
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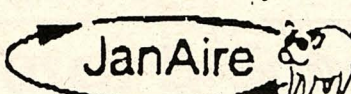
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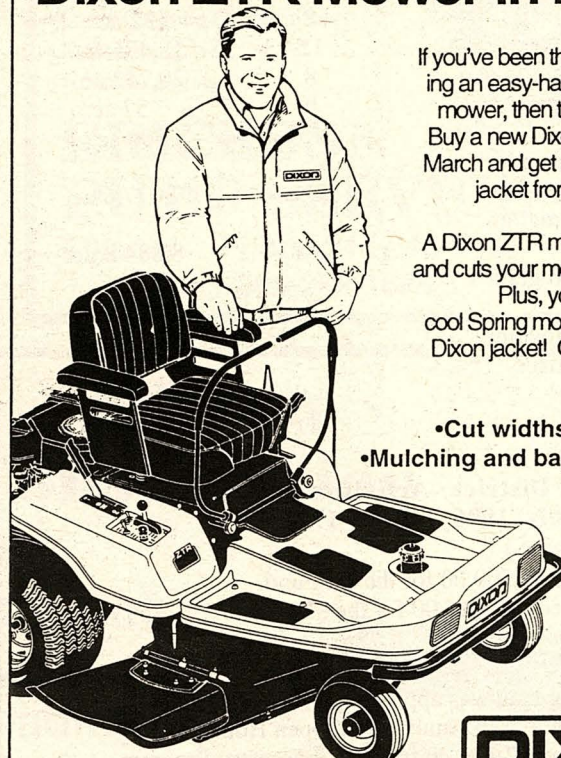
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Financial Statement July 1, 1996 to June 30, 1997

IM BUDGET

Allocation.....	\$2,500.00
Supplemental.....	1,710.00
Total Allocation.....	4,210.00
Commissioner Expenses.....	1,882.52
Office Supplies and Expenses.....	2,324.95
Returned to State.....	\$2.53

IIM BUDGET COST-SHARE PROGRAM

1996-1997 Allocation.....	\$37,616.00
Spent.....	17,441.17
Obligated.....	14,342.33
Unobligated.....	\$5,832.50
1995-1996 Allocation.....	\$37,363.00
Supplemental.....	24,270.00
Total Allocation.....	61,633.00
Spent.....	33,542.11
Obligated.....	28,090.89
1994-1995 Allocation.....	\$34,453.00
Supplemental.....	17,330.50
Total Allocation.....	51,783.50
Spent.....	45,021.16
Obligated.....	6,762.34

REAP PRACTICES

1997 Allocation.....	\$9,345.00
Spent.....	6,972.70
Returned To State.....	2,372.30

REAP FORESTRY/NATIVE GRASSES

1997 Allocation.....	\$4,603.85
Spent.....	1,989.60
Returned To State.....	\$2,614.25

ORGANIC NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

1997 Allocation.....	\$15,000.00
Obligated.....	\$15,000.00

Conservation Accomplishments 1997 Fiscal Year

PRACTICE	NUMBER	ACRES (ac) FEET (ft)
Waste Management System	1	
Conservation Crop Rotation	124	2,654 ac.
Conservation Planned Systems	451	15,191 ac.
Conservation Tillage	62	1,569 ac.
Contour Farming	77	1,976 ac.
Critical Area Planting	21	49 ac.
Pond	1	
Field Border	53	58,060 ft.
Filter Strip	22	51 ac.
Grassed Waterway	9	9 ac.
Use Exclusion	26	91 ac.
Forest Site Preparation	4	39 ac.
Pasture & Hayland Management	130	1,514 ac.
Proper Grazing Use	12	202 ac.
Contour Stripcropping	35	718 ac.
Nutrient Management	8	132 ac.
Terraces	11	18,476 ft.
Subsurface Drain	8	20,742 ac.
Tree/Shrub Establishment	9	57 ac.
Waste Utilization	15	600 ac.
Current Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) 1-15 Sign-Up	234	7,077.6 ac.
Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Expired	254	8,884.8 ac.
Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Early Released	3	133.3 ac.
Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Continuous Practices		
CRP 14	148	1,021.3 ac.
CRP 17	11	113.9 ac.

District Activities July 1996 - June 1997

July 1996

- Fayette SWCD received \$2,500.00 for the IM Fund.
- Fayette SWCD received \$37,616.00 for the 3M Fund.
- Workload Analysis was reviewed.

August 1996

- IM Budget & Spending Plan was approved.
- Fayette SWCD held their 50th Anniversary Open House.
- Fayette SWCD received \$2,162.00 for REAP Forestry Program.
- Fayette SWCD received \$9,345.00 for REAP Practices Program.
- Fayette SWCD received \$15,000 for the Organic Nutrient Management Program.
- Four candidates filed nomination papers for Commissioner Election.

September 1996

- Annual Conference was held in Des Moines.
- Fayette SWCD received \$15,000 in supplemental Organic Nutrient Management Funds.
- Mutual Agreement & Cooperative Working Agreement was reviewed.

- 5th Annual Conservation Education Field Day for 550 third grade students from 13 schools was held at the Richard Jensen farm.

November 1996

- Scholarship Award information was sent to schools.
- Poster Contest information was sent to schools.
- Fayette SWCD received \$960 in supplemental IM Funds.
- William Bennett was re-elected and John Grafenberg newly elected for a four year term as a SWCD Commissioner.
- Fayette SWCD received \$2,441.85 in supplemental Forestry funds.
- Fayette SWCD submitted two resolutions for the Annual Conference.

December 1996

- Fall Regional meeting was held at Dyersville.

January 1997

- Organizational commissioner meeting was held.
- ICN downlink on EQIP was held in Elkader.
- Julie McCready was hired as a District Employee.
- Fayette SWCD held their Annual Tree Sales Program.

February 1997

- Annual Awards Banquet was held.
- Multi-county Contractor meeting was held.
- Jim Frederick, RC & D Coordinator, gave the SWCD an update on projects completed in the five county area.

March 1997

- Fayette SWCD received \$500 in supplemental IM funds.
- Spring Regional was held at Lamont.

- Stephanie Menne was chosen as the 1997 Scholarship Award Winner for Fayette County.
- Supporter Club letter was mailed out.

April 1997

- Fayette SWCD purchased switchgrass for CRP seedings.

May 1997

- Fayette SWCD signed a Memo of Understanding to use the USDA postage meter.
- Conservation Awards were selected.

- Fayette County was one of 25 designated counties to receive Forestry Incentive Program funding.

June 1997

- IM Budget & Spending Plan was approved for fiscal year 1998.
- Fayette SWCD hired Melisa Lenth as a District Employee.

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Look to Us!



Farmers, conservation groups team for conservation

By Leroy Brown, State Conservationist

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Des Moines, Iowa

An excellent partnership not exists between Iowa's landowners and conservation groups and agencies. It's one that has great potential to protect and enhance natural resources on private lands in the state.

There was a tendency in the past to go to one program for the technical or financial help for a resource problem. But with the federal, state and private programs available now to protect natural resources, producers have an opportunity to look at many options as they plan resource improvements on the farm.

We ask our field office conservationists to look at all these programs, including the 1996 farm bill conservation programs, and use a mix of them to help a producer.

For instance, very steep land, waterways, field borders and land along a stream may be enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program; some tough to farm, wet land nearby may be eligible for the Wetland Reserve Program; the Environmental Quality Incentives Program cost-share program or state cost-share may help with a manure management plan or to build terraces; and the new (WHIP) wildlife habitat program of USDA may boost wildlife habitat on the farm at little cost to the producer.

"The flexibility in programs and in the conservation rules of the 1996 farm bill is what farmers wanted. Each farmer's challenge now is to take the new conservation programs and make the most of them to voluntarily build the resources on their land to make them the best they can.

We are asking people to get involved locally in looking at priorities and programs to make the most of federal, state and private funds. It's called locally led conservation. Conservation district leaders are holding meetings and trying to get people together at the local level.



Leroy Brown

The thought is to get as much input as possible from local residents, both farm and non-farm, to guide conservationists in solving resource problems.

Some of the new conservation programs and what they offer:

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

This program focuses assistance to locally-identified conservation priority areas or areas where agricultural improvements will help meet water quality goals. High priority is given to areas where state or local governments offer financial or technical assistance and where agricultural improvements will help meet water quality and other environmental objects. All EQIP activities must be carried out according to a conservation plan.

EQIP offers 5- to 10-year contracts that provide incentive payments and cost-sharing for conservation practices. Cost sharing may pay up to 75 percent of the costs of certain conservation practices, such as grassed waterways, filter strips, manure management facilities, capping abandoned wells, and other practice tant to improving and ing the health of natu in the area.

Incentive payments may be made to encourage a producer to perform land management practices such as nutrient management, manure management, integrated pest management, and wildlife habitat management. Incentive payments can be up to 100 percent of the producer's cost, for up to three years. These are paid at a flat rate.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

The farm bill allows up to 36.4 million acres to be enrolled at any one time in CRP. New enrollments can replace expired or terminated contracts, and contracts that have been in effect for at least five years and made before 1995 may be terminated on certain acres after giving written notice. Lands with high environmental values are not eligible for early release.

There is also a continuous sign-up on land that will contain conservation buffer practices. USDA is leading a conservation buffer initiative to encourage use of grass and tree buffer.

A conservation buffer strip is a strip of land maintained in permanent vegetation to control pollutants and other environmental problems. Examples of conservation practices that serve as buffer strips, forest buffer strips, field and shelterbelts, and associated practices.

share agreements.

You can choose the category to enter. No new permanent easements may be enrolled until at least 75,000 acres of temporary easements have entered the program.

In addition to purchasing easements for the land, the WRP provides landowners with 75 percent to 100 percent cost-sharing for permanent easements, 50 percent to 75 percent for 30-year easements, and 50 percent to 75 percent for restoration cost-share agreements. Cost-sharing will help pay for restoration.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)

USDA provides technical and financial assistance for the initial planning and establishment of wildlife habitat development practices. In addition, if the landowner agrees, state wildlife agencies or private organizations may also provide expertise or additional funding to help complete a project.

The plan, made in cooperation

with the local conservation district, describes the landowner's goals for improving wildlife habitat, includes a list of practices and schedule for installing them, and details the steps necessary to maintain the habitat for the life of the agreement.

Under a cost-share agreement, the landowner agrees to maintain the practices and allow USDA or its agent access to monitor the effectiveness of the practices. USDA agrees to provide technical assistance and pay up to 75 percent of the cost of installing the wildlife habitat practices.

Conservation Compliance and Wetland Conservation (Swampbuster)

These provisions from the 1985 and 1990 farm bills are still in effect, but have been revised to give more flexibility to producers in complying while protecting natural resources.

The wetlands provision expands areas where mitigation can be used, and encourages effective and timely use of "minimal effect" determinations.

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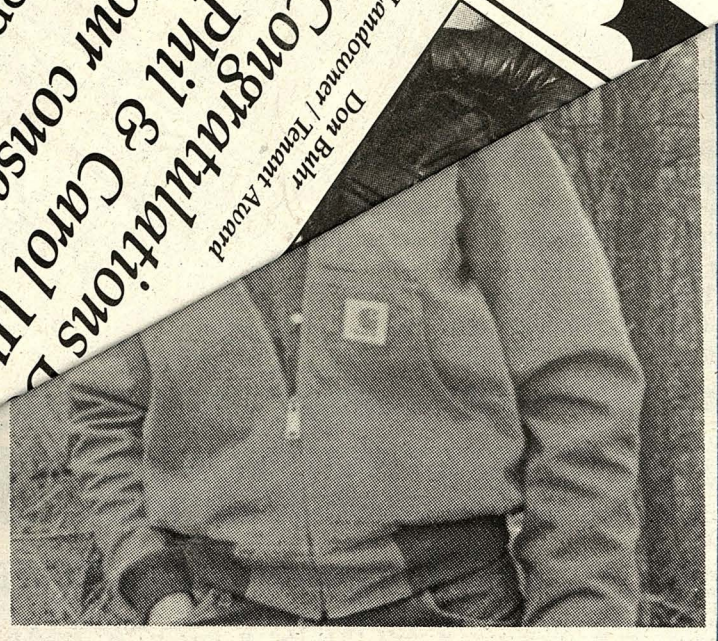
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Published by Newspapers of Fayette Co. Inc.
February 1998

Two Winneshiek farms will host 1998 pasture walk series

Two pasture walk series, one for beginners and one for established graziers, are planned for the 1998 season by the Northeast Iowa Graziers. The series will be hosted by Winneshiek County producers, Don Baker of Festina, (for beginners) and Dan and Bonnie Beard of Decorah.

Multiple visits to a single farm were part of 1997's schedule, with Don Baker's operation in southern Winneshiek County featured. The Beards hosted a pasture walk in 1996 at their farm northeast of Decorah. They started grazing in 1994 and now have their dairy herd on 121 acres.

A grazing conference is also in the planning stages for the 1998 pasture walk season. A pasture walk at Jim Hagemann's farm, near Calmar, is planned as part of the conference, which will likely be held in late June.

These and other plans were discussed at a meeting of a core group of Northeast Iowa Graziers held Jan. 5. The 1998 pasture walk schedule will be announced later this winter.

Don Baker's four pasture walks during the 1997 season (May 7, July 9, Sept. 3, and Nov. 5) were intended to give visitors an opportunity to see how changes in pasture management, as well as weather and other conditions, affected a single grazing operation through the season.

Comments made by those attending the pasture walks indicated that the concept was successful. Don said he also benefited from the series, by knowing that the "inspectors" would be

visiting his farm on a regular basis.

Baker likes to experiment with forages, and he also switched to seasonal calving last year. First calves were born in April and calving was completed in early June. He started his herd grazing April 25, and the year's program included regular pasture, corn, exotic grass, and turnips.

Following are some of the highlights from the grazing season at Baker's farm, noted at the pasture walks:

* A big change for Don was increased paddock size, which he said gave him more flexibility and better results. Instead of 1-2 acre paddocks, Don used paddocks as big as 5-10 acres. If he had a surplus of forage, he simply reduced paddock size. He increased paddock size towards the end of the season.

* Baker uses a break wire to control the cows, starting them at the far end of the paddock with a 2 to 2-1/2 acre section. He doesn't use a backwire, but said the cows weren't interested in re-grazing old areas.

* Don made the switch to seasonal calving over two years, 1996-97. All cows were dried up on Feb. 7 of last year, and five weeks later the first calves were born - a set of twins. Later in March, three more were born.

Most of the herd had calved in April, and Don said it took 21 days to get 70 percent of the herd freshened. By early May, only 12 cows remained to freshen.

"I figure if I want to be seasonal, I should get that window as tight as possible," Don said. The window, as he defines it, is three weeks long, during which he plans to have 80 percent of his herd pregnant, with an April 2 target date for the arrival of the first calves.

Don's target date is tongue in cheek; he mostly wants to avoid calving in March, when it's too cold and there are too many associated problems.

Don is single-minded about his farm: "I like the idea of doing one thing, like calving and raising calves, and being done with it," he explains. He is aiming for a 85-90 cow milking herd next year, with an ideal herd size of 100.

* Baker planted two five-acre fields of corn on June 11 and 27. July 20, he let his cows graze the first field when the corn was about four feet tall. The cows were given 1/3-acre per day, spending the nights on grass paddocks. It took two weeks for the cows to get through each field, Don explained, and the corn was about six feet tall by the end of

grazing. During the time the cows were on the corn, milk production stayed pretty steady, he said.

Aug. 16, the day was the cows finished, the corn acres were disked and planted with turnips and two bushels to the acre of oats.

Don tried yet another variety of turnip last year, on that was ready for grazing in 60-90 days after planting. The oats were the result of an accidental seeding the previous year. Don decided to try the combination again when he discovered the oats didn't slow the growth of the turnips. At the September pasture walk, both were about ankle high.

Oct. 18, Baker opened up his 10-acre turnip-oats field to the milking herd for grazing. The herd gets one-third acre a day, and regular pasture at night. Milk

production increased some 3-4 pounds daily per cow on the turnips, he said, and though both the turnips and leaves seemed smaller this year, he's pleased with the results.

Don said he will consider planting a field in oats this spring, then to corn for summer grazing, followed by late-summer planting of turnips and oats for fall grazing.

* Baker tried five acres of the Australian grass Nutrifeed. The fast growing Nutrifeed was planted July 16 and grazed a month later, when 18 inches tall.

Although Nutrifeed could have given him four grazings, Don let the grass grow back, then chopped and placed it in a silage clamp for winter feeding. Seeding cost was \$40 an acre, he said.

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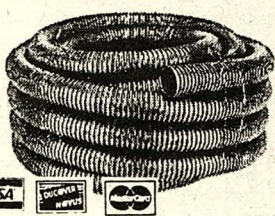
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Buffer initiative - taking hold in Fayette County

By Jerry Muff, Dist. Cons. NRCS

Throughout the past few years, conservationists have mourned the loss of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres, and with good reason. With the loss of over 10,000 acres of CRP in this time frame, we've lost significant grass cover on erosive cropland fields and excellent wildlife habitat not to mention associated water quality benefits. However, all is not lost. Fayette County landowners are taking advantage of a relatively new program entitled "National Conservation Buffer Initiative", which is very encouraging.

Conservation buffers have been around for quite some time, but have not gained national attention until the enactment of the 1996 Farm Bill. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) started the buffer initiative, but is working with other governmental agencies, farm or-

ganizations such as the Natl. Corn Growers Assn. and even private industry.

A conservation buffer strip is an area or strip of land maintained in permanent vegetation to help control pollutants and manage other environmental problems. Examples of conservation practices that serve as buffers include filter strips, riparian (streamside) forest buffers, contour buffer strips, field borders, windbreaks and shelterbelts, waterways and others.

The initiative is an effort to use grasses and trees to protect and enhance all the resources on a farm. Buffers improve the environment in many ways. They reduce erosion by slowing water runoff, trap sediment and enhancing infiltration within the buffer. They trap fertilizers, pesticides, bacterial viral pathogens, and heavy metals. Research has

found that for buffers along streams or rivers, much of this filtration occurs below ground, due to the deep roots of trees and native grasses. They can also help trap snow and cut down on blowing soil in areas with strong winds. They can protect livestock and wildlife from harsh weather and can protect buildings from wind damage. They may be the primary source of food, nesting cover, and shelter for many wildlife species. Buffers can help stabilize a stream and reduce its water temperature. Buffers offer a setback distance of ag chemical use from water sources.

A system of buffers gives some diversity to the landscape. Contour strips are usually a part of a conservation system on a farm, making good use of areas that shouldn't be cropped.

The continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), is the primary incentive program available to landowners which pays according to the productivity of the soil types on an annual basis plus offers cost share for the establishment of the conservation cover. This program has great merit to not only the environment but to the landowner is compensated quite well for the acres enrolled. Many producers who rent farm land feel this is a

good program and does not compete substantially with them as renters because most projects do not involve large numbers of acres.

The range of CRP rental payments for Fayette County is \$63 to \$167 per acre depending on the soil type. Vegetative filter strips and riparian buffers are strips of vegetation along streams or rivers have a respectable rental payments for approved projects. Typically alluvial soils (commonly found along drainways) are quite productive and therefore have some of the highest rental rates PLUS these practices have an annual 20% bonus added, PLUS \$5 is added for annual maintenance. For example, if a landowner is approved for one of these practices along the Turkey River, with Dorchester silt loam soil type (158), the rental payment is \$155 per acre. The

owner would expect to receive an additional 20% or \$186 per acre, plus \$5 for maintenance or \$191 per acre. This owner would also be eligible to receive up to 50% cost-share for cover establishment. Obviously most soil types are in a lesser payment category, but nevertheless are generally quite fair.

Other priority buffer practices which have the 20% bonus payments are field windbreaks, and farmstead windbreaks or shelterbelts. These practices offer another nice feature, an option to sign up for a minimum of ten years and up to 15 years.

Buffer practices which are very effective but are only for ten years without the bonus are contour strips and grassed waterways. If you are interested in applying for the continuous CRP, contact NRCS or FSA at the USDA Service Center.

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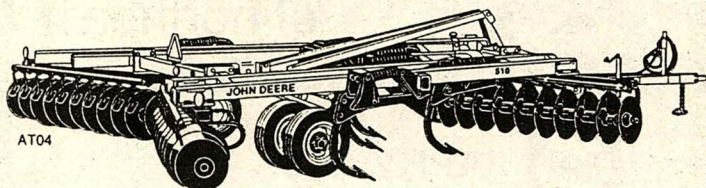
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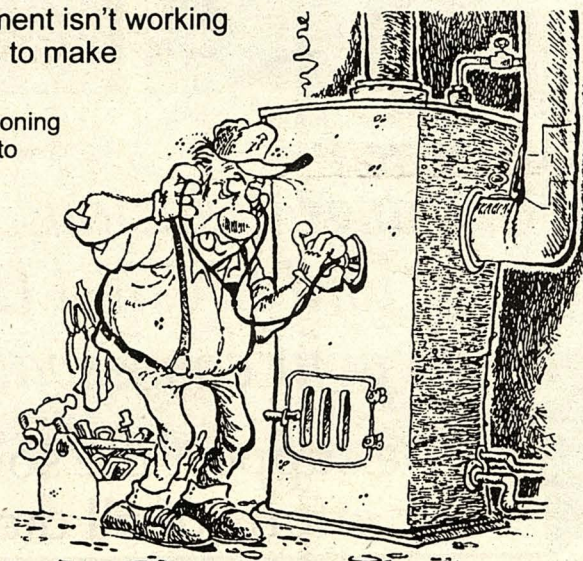
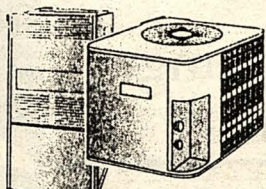
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Using the Internet as a tool

By Dan Burkhardt

Fayette Co. Extension Education Director

The World Wide Web is the part of the Internet that allows users on a computer to access information stored on "servers" throughout the world. These servers store specially formatted documents that may contain text, graphics, sound, and/or video. How can the internet help you as a farmer get ag information?

The internet has strengths and weaknesses as a tool for helping us solve problems. The internet is not a substitute for more traditional research tools, such as Extension bulletins, textbooks, commercial databases, journals, libraries, Extension specialists, and the telephone. The internet is a tool that compliments rather than replaces the others. It has the ability to expand our knowledge-base beyond conventional resources.



To put the internet's abilities and value in perspective, think of the internet as a museum as contrasted to an encyclopedia. The internet is not organized as well as an encyclopedia. There is no single, comprehensive table of contents or index, or card catalog. It really isn't organized very well at all. The internet doesn't have all the information you want and need; and what it does have may

not be in an easy-to-find location.

The internet is more like a museum. You normally don't go to a museum expecting to find a lot of answers to specific questions. You're to wander around and see what's there that interests you. Generally, you'll pick up a few bits and pieces of information that you didn't have before. You store what you see in your head (on paper or by setting a bookmark) and some day it might come in handy to help answer one of life's questions. Your wandering through the museum (or the internet) keeps you generally informed about certain topics. You can set "bookmarks" in the various internet tools so you can find your way back when the need arises. This experienced wandering helps you know what room to start looking in the next time you go the museum.

There is no unified card catalog to cyberspace, but if you're willing to put in some time to learn about the resource discovery process, the internet can be used quite successfully to make your job searches more efficient.

The important point is this -- The internet is probably not the tool of choice for solving a specific problem while the tractor is running (although this may be possible). The internet is a very good tool to use to explore, gather background information, and generally increase your knowledge of a subject. You can, in fact, often find answers to specific questions, but it may take some time wandering and

turning over rocks.

Before you forge ahead, here are two important cautions. 1) **Accuracy of content.** Anyone can put information on the internet. Some of the information is solidly researched-based and 100 percent accurate. Some of the information is questionable, and some just plain wrong. 2) **Up-to-Date Content.** Information that was accurate ten years ago may be wrong now. Look for a date on the document. Read the document carefully to see when the research was conducted.

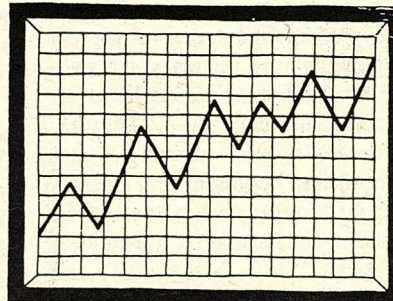
You can get some feel for the reliability of the information on the internet if you carefully consider the source of the information. Where did it come from? Look for the 3-letter code that shows where the information originated. Is it a university-education (edu), government (gov), or a commercial (com) site? Does the document cite references? Is the author's name on the document? Can you contact the author (e-mail or phone) and talk with him/her about the document?

As a general rule, if you don't know if the information found on the internet is 100 percent accurate, don't use it until you check it out with an unbiased sources, such as an Extension specialist.

A good place to start looking for ag information is the Iowa State University Extension homepage. It's internet address is <http://www.exnet@iastate.edu>. From there you can link up with

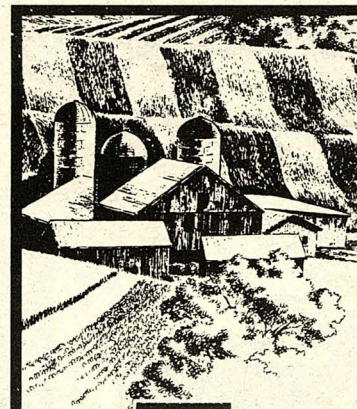
ISU's Integrated Crop Management homepage (weed and insect control information) or Oklahoma State's Virtual Livestock Library (information on all breeds of livestock all over the world). You can go to the ISU Ag Engineering Biosystems homepage for information on tillage equipment; or to Net Vet, a reference on livestock health.

Just don't forget to set your bookmarks so you can find the sites you might want to come back to. Happy surfing!



Progress

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We salute the conservation efforts of farmers of northeast Iowa.



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