

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

Washington 25, D. C.
March 10, 1944

Mr. Lewis E. Davidson
Chairman, Board of Supervisors
Noble County Soil Conservation District
Sarahsville, Ohio

Dear Mr. Davidson:

We are glad to have your 1943 annual report of the Noble County Soil Conservation District.


Organized a little over a year, the district governing body has apparently solved some of its initial problems, such as working out a program and a plan, arranging for the assistance of a few agencies, and making a start toward actual conservation on the land. Of course, you face other problems. Arousing more landowners and operators to action, finding ways of helping farmers to overcome shortages of labor, equipment, and materials--problems such as these may limit progress temporarily. Certainly, they are a challenge to you ingenuity. In this world emergency we must of course face these problems with courage and our best efforts.

You and the other members of the District Board may be interested in one or two of the trends shown by reports of districts this year. It seems to me the educational work conducted in districts is becoming more effective. Perhaps it is due to the cumulative effect of past educational work. But I believe it may also be due to the improvement of educational methods which are now being used. Small neighborhood group meetings with practical, round-the-kitchen-table discussions are replacing large community meetings called to hear a lecturer.

These trends are highly encouraging. They indicate, it seems to me, growing strength in the administration of district affairs by their governing bodies. Surely good administration, together with the good work that will result from it, is the key to the success of soil conservation districts and to the permanency of our productive land.

I congratulate you and the members of the governing body of the Noble County Soil Conservation District on your great opportunity to contribute to the welfare of people locally, in your State, and in the Nation. I wish you would please express to your coworkers my good wishes for themselves and their work in the district.

Sincerely,


H. H. Bennett
Chief

L. E. Hedge, Secretary

Lewis E. Davidson, Chairman

Emory O. Bond, Treasurer

W. H. Callend

J. D. Law

NOBLE SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Office of the
DISTRICT SUPERVISOR
Caldwell, Ohio

January 29, 1944

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Gentlemen:

I have the pleasure of presenting herewith the second annual report of the Noble Soil Conservation District with headquarters at Caldwell, Noble County, Ohio.

Very truly yours,

NOBLE SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

By L. E. Hedge
Secretary

SECOND ANNUAL REPORT

NOBLE SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

CALDWELL, OHIO

FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1943

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REPORT OF EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES
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SECOND ANNUAL REPORT
NOBLE SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT
CALDWELL, OHIO
FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1943

NARRATIVE REPORT

I. Progress for the Year

Interest in the Soil Conservation District Program in Noble County had a moderate but a healthy growth in 1943.

Interest in how better pastures and meadows can be established and maintained on these hills without plowing is universal in this county, and on August 2 seventy local farmers made a forty-mile trip to the Experiment Farm at Zanesville, Ohio, and saw with their own eyes that this can and is being done and made to pay dividends on land such as they have to farm in Noble County, much of which is covered with broomsedge. All the local agricultural agencies and county officials assisted the district supervisors in making this a big and very worthwhile day for Noble County farmers. Practical results are seen in that nearly a score of farmers are making seedings as soon demonstrated at the experiment station.

Twenty-four requests for assistance in laying out contour strips were received and interest in this practice is growing. Interest in the program is spread over the entire county and one or more requests for assistance from each of the fifteen townships are on file. Conservation surveys have been completed on 217 farms and 22,460 acres.

II. Farmer Attitude

The attitude of the farmers toward the district program is good; they feel that there is a very definite need for the district and the service it can render. However, we do find that a considerable number of our most enthusiastic supporters are somewhat reluctant to actively participate in the district program at this time due to the lack of farm labor. (This county has lost more of its man-power to the Army and industry than any other county in the state). They feel that farm plans would involve changes that they would be unable to make at this time.

III. Cooperating Agencies

1. The Extension Service

The Extension agent has taken part in all group planning meetings, attended most of the meetings of the district governing body, helped to promote and conduct tours, and arranged for several pasture demonstrations. Extension specialists have taken part in several meetings promoting the conservation program.

2. Farm Security Administration

The Farm Security supervisor has encouraged all of his clients to take an active part in the district program.

3. Agricultural Adjustment Administration

The county Agricultural Adjustment Administration committee held a joint meeting for all local committeemen and the district governing

body. At this meeting the district program was discussed and an attempt made to coordinate insofar as possible the activities of the two programs.

4. The School System

The county superintendent of schools arranged with the local superintendents of all the county schools for a period of one hour at which soil conservation pictures were shown and the district program explained. Pupils in numerous schools also cooperated in the collection of milkweed pods for floss.

5. The Farm Bureau

The two Farm Bureau councils of the county at several meetings devoted the major portion of their program time to the doings of the district. Their active participation has been very helpful.

6. The Grange

The Granges have participated by making a place on their program for soil conservation pictures and talks.

7. The Press

The attitude of the press is fair, we have two local papers that are not actively interested in promoting a better agriculture program but will publish articles of a distinctly local color.

8. The Banks

The banks (two in number) are definitely interested in the program

and one of the banks has a movement on foot to promote a better livestock program in the county. Such a program would be of considerable assistance in the promotion of the conservation and better land use program.

9. The Merchants

The merchants as a whole are very interested and feel that they have a definite stake in the program and have expressed a willingness to cooperate in every way possible.

10. The Soil Conservation Service

The service of H. E. Gatwood as farm planner has been made available to the district for the entire year. Charlie B. Shackles has assisted on a part-time basis. In March, William H. Bender was assigned to the district in response to the request of the district supervisors for conservation mapping. The assignment also covers Coshocton and Monroes Districts, so that approximately one-third of his time is available to the Noble District. Other Service personnel were used by the district, including technical specialists, district conservationist, state and regional personnel.

Appraisal of farm woodland by forestry specialist was requested by some forty-five farmers. The specialist was able to meet one-half the requests, going over the woods in company with the farmer, and advising him as to procedures of correct woodland management.

The Service also will furnish whatever trees may be necessary in promoting the program of the district. Equipment was made available to the district.

IV. Meetings of Governing Body

Nine meetings of the district governing body were held during the year. An Equipment Usage Plan was adopted January 25 and request made for loan of equipment from the Soil Conservation Service.

Responsibility for servicing the unexpired terms of Government-Farmer Cooperative agreements in the Seneca Fork watershed was accepted by the district on June 28.

It was decided that the best interest of the district would be served if all trees desired by cooperators would be furnished by the district providing the cooperators set and take care of them in a workmanlike manner.

V. A New Crop - Sericea

The growing of sericea lespedeza is being sponsored in a demonstration way. Sericea has been grown in the county for more than ten years without reseeding. On the farm on which it was first grown there is now twenty-five acres. This crop is utilized for grazing, hay, and seed production. Sericea grows better on good land than on poor, but thrives well on thin land, and is a soil builder. Steep land, up to 50% slope, is held in place by sericea even while being grazed.

It is sufficiently palatable that beef cattle thrive on it, especially during late summer and fall. Sericea was seeded on several new farms last spring and satisfactory stands secured.

VI. Applications for Technical Services

A total of ninety-six requests for technical services have been

received, this figure includes requests for complete farm plans, strip crop layout and surveys for diversion ditches, etc. The distribution of the applications and the area in which work has been done is shown on Map No. 1.

VII. Equipment on Loan

This district has five units of equipment on loan from the Soil Conservation Service. The equipment consists of two lime spreaders, one eight-foot and one trailer spreader, one rotary scraper, one slip scraper, and one Corsicana terracer.

VIII. The District and Increased Production

Even maintenance of production with the high loss of manpower in the county must mean increased production per farmer. There has been such an increase; and due to a united effort of all agencies. The following table presents an estimate as to the extent of some of the conservation practices which contributed toward that increase. The district does not claim exclusive credit for these practices.

Practice	Farms	Acres
Strip Cropping	56	417
Liming	952	5,000
Fertilizing	988	6,158
Sod Waterways	432	19,260 (feet)

The production of timber for the war effort has been promoted by personnel assigned to the district. Assistance has been given wood lot owners in scaling, estimating, and in finding buyers for timber.

An indirect assistance to farmers in the production of lumber has been that given sawmill operators as part of the Timber Production War Project. It is believed that this work will result in a more active support of a sound farm forestry program on the part of timber buyers.

Efforts have been made to further the production of pulpwood by farmers, and a number plan to dispose of species and trees whose removal, aside from the revenue obtained, will benefit the farm property, including present woods.

Personnel assigned to the district have also cooperated in the marketing of a new product, millerweed floss. Seven hundred and fifty pounds of pods were collected. It is estimated that from ten thousand to fifteen thousand pounds can be marketed in 1944. The importance of this product is indicated by the fact that it is necessary to replace Kapok in life preservers, and in garments for insulation against cold. Four and a half ounces in an eight and a half ounce jacket provides enough warmth for flying in the stratosphere.

IX. Problems

The loss of men to the armed forces and to industry represents a major problem in conservation programs of the county.

Limestone is badly needed on all the farm land of the county. The availability of limestone when and where needed and the difficulty in getting it spread with shortage of labor makes the limestone problem one of the most serious of the county.

Drainage which is needed in limited areas is another reflection of the labor problem in which equipment is also involved.

X. Post War Opportunities

The low cost production of limestone should be considered in post war planning.

Fencing is essential to a complete conservation program. Fencing is needed for the protection of present woodland and for land that may be set to trees. New and rearranged fence is essential to advantageous strip cropping.

A relatively small amount of the farm land of the county is being used effectively. According to recent research, much that is not now used effectively is suitable for the production of alfalfa. Even so, there still remains considerable acreage that should be set to trees. Every farm should have at least a few acres of thrifty, well protected woodland.

XI. Why the District was Organized

A transcript of the hearing was inadvertently omitted from the first annual report. Since it gives the thinking of the people who cooperated in inaugurating the district, it is attached.