

SCS Is Unique: Experts Live Close to Job

Principle of Big Business Is Employed in Soil Organization

In many respects the organization of the U. S. Soil Conservation Service, reaching from C. R. Hill, and his aides of the Holt Soil Conservation district, eastward to Washington, is unique. The Soil Conservation Service has borrowed a page from big business, and because of that fact, it has hung up a record for business efficiency.

In this region, including Nebraska, 92.1 percent of all Service funds are used in giving direct assistance to farmers on the land. Administrative overhead amounts to only 7.9 percent.

The secret of cutting overhead to the minimum, Soil Conservation Service officials point out, lies largely in regional administration, not of farmers nor of soil conservation districts over which the Soil Conservation Service has absolutely no control, but of its own employees.

The keynote of the entire program can be found in a statement made by Dr. Hugh H. Bennett, chief of the service.

"When I was asked to take charge of a nationwide program of soil erosion," he said, "I immediately made up my mind on several points which I considered fundamental. We would headquarter in Washington, but we would send our specialists out through the country to work with farmers cooperatively. We would treat the land according to its capability and needs and we would carry out a unified rather than a haphazard and piecemeal program."

For the last 14 years the U. S. Soil Conservation Service has operated on this basis, stationing the bulk of its technical men out over the country where they are needed and not in Washington.

The most valuable men in the entire Soil Conservation Service live in O'Neill and in local headquarters of the nation's other 2,000 soil conservation districts. These are the farm conservation planners and their assistants, the men who are in the front ranks of the nation's war on soil erosion, helping farmers get the job done out on the land, acre-by-acre.

In their home communities every one knows them as John, Bill, or Pete, the fellow who helps "our local soil conservation district." No plush offices for these fellows. They find headquarters where they can. Offices matter little because they are usually out in the field from morning to dark anyway, particularly during the crop season.

They wear hob-nailed boots which are no strangers to mud or barnyard manure and their working uniform may be denim or khaki work pants. They go to church, belong to the local commercial or Lions club, pay local taxes, since many of them own their homes, and vote in the town elections. Many of them in this state are native Nebraskans who are just as independent as their neighbors and who understand Nebraska's problems intimately because they were born here.

Few of their neighbors would call these men outsiders from "big government" in Washington, nor are they. For soil erosion must be whipped by the local farmer and his neighbors and although they are technicians they are also local citizens who understand local problems. If anyone tried to tell the farmers who supervise their own soil conservation district that this farm conservation planner was trying to regiment them and tell them how to run their business, he would be hooted out of the hall.

Yet these farm conservation planners and their aides are paid by the federal government. And the entire U. S. Soil Conservation Service, including its work group headquarters at Valentine, its state and regional headquarters at Lincoln, and its national headquarters in Washington, is focused in the work of C. R. Hill and his aides, and others like them.

The administration of the Soil Conservation Service concentrates on the job of securing men like Hill and training them, supplying them to soil districts which ask for help and then furnishing them the necessary supplies, equipment and technical supervision to keep them abreast of all new scientific developments.

From the work group and state headquarters they receive all necessary supplies and equipment. Matters of technical assistance are also handled by these two headquarters. The greater part of the technical help, however, comes to

these local men from the regional headquarters. The small staff at state headquarters is concerned largely with business management and administrative matters.

The Soil Conservation Service has stationed most of its specialized technical men at seven regional headquarters throughout the United States. This saves traveling back and forth to Washington. It also cuts costs tremendously and gives quicker service.

A. E. McClymonds is the regional director in Lincoln but neither this headquarters nor the one in Lincoln or Valentine has any authority over farmers in Holt Soil Conservation District or any other farmers. The Soil Conservation Service established these headquarters to administer the work of its own employees in helping Nebraska farmers.

By concentrating its technical men in a regional headquarters, the Service can provide Hill and other local men with technical help on any special problem, such as a matter involving advanced engineering, agronomic or range problems, which may come up.

In regional headquarters are engineering, agronomy, forestry, biology, soil and other technical divisions. These are headed by technical men who are specialists in their respective fields.

It might not be feasible or economical to hire a complement of highly advanced men of this type to help field men in just one state. But by regional administration, such specialists are available to all six states of this region which means a substantial economy, Soil Conservation Service officials point out.

Operating out of the regional headquarters, also, are other advanced men known as zone conservationists. The two who come to the Holt county district on special problems which Hill may encounter, are Joe Turell and D. R. Vollicott. Such zone teams include an engineer and an agronomist. Their area covers the northwestern Nebraska and western half of South Dakota and southeastern Wyoming where problems and their solutions are similar.

There are other features of regional administration which bring about a substantial saving in overhead. Office supplies, pick-up trucks and many other items necessary to keep Hill and his assistants working efficiently are bought at regional headquarters. Quantity purchasing saves money on such material.

All aerial maps and other photographic work necessary to the farm conservation planner's operations are made in one cartographic plant at the regional headquarters in Lincoln. Hence, one set of employees and one investment in equipment takes care of 6 states, which would otherwise have to be duplicated in each of the 6 states of the region.

National headquarters of the U. S. Soil Conservation Service in Washington are largely responsible for developing broad policies governing the technical work and coordinating the program throughout the United States. The staff there is small but adequate to do the job.

For C. R. Hill, the national office of Soil Conservation Service is a "far off" name which few farm conservation planners have time to visit. The typical farm conservation planner is aware he had to meet pretty rigid requirements to qualify for his job. He knows the Service will send him to a training school if he needs it and will keep him constantly informed on every new technical development which research may reveal. His checks, though usually smaller than private industry would pay him, come regularly and he seldom lacks the supplies he needs.

But neither Hill nor his assistants concern themselves greatly with the ins and outs of big scale operations elsewhere in the Soil Conservation Service which saves the taxpayers a great sum of money annually. They are more concerned over how soon they can get to the farmers who have applied to the district supervisors and help them get started on their conservation plan. For these are Nebraskans and the Service's local representatives, after all.

And the local job comes first.

Steers Gain 225-275 Pounds Per Acre —

At Lincoln, under normal rainfall, steers grazed on brome-grass-alfalfa pasture can be expected to gain from 225 to 275 pounds per acre per steer. At 20-cents per pound of gain, the return per acre of grass is equivalent to a corn yield of 50 bushels at \$1 per bushel. Considering cost of production, the pasture should give a greater net return than the corn. At the same time the grazed land would be improved in productivity, whereas the corn land would be reduced in productivity.

'NO QUITTING TIME' IN CONSERVATION

Evenings, Sundays Spent In Organizing Data For Edition

There is no phrase "quitting time" in soil conservation work. Of course, the same thing holds true in many industries and occupations.

After a cooperater has his farm laid out for conservation practices, the job is not completed.

There is still operation of the farm along conservation measures, and a maintenance of the various engineered projects, such as terraces, shelterbelts, waterways, etc.

Soil conservation is a full time job in the operation of your farm, day-by-day, week - by - week, year-by-year, and century-by-century.

The editor of The Frontier asked for our help in publishing the Holt Soil Conservation edition because of the realization that conservation is vital to the strength of our country. The conservation idea must be instilled in this generation, the next generation, the next, so that it automatically becomes a part of the farming operations for centuries to come—long after our time.

C. R. Hill believes this too, and took on the gigantic task of organizing and editing with the aid of L. F. Bredemeier.

They are both employees of the Soil Conservation Service, with a set salary and certain work to do. They are so much in earnest and sincere in their belief that conservation is vital and profitable that there was no "quitting time."

Mr. Hill gave the conservation practical application on farms by day, and by night gathered and assembled the material for this vital message to Holt county farmers. When it came press time, Hill did not declare a "quitting time." He spent his evenings, Sundays, and all available extra time helping The Frontier staff in properly presenting and organizing the material for publication.

There is no "quitting time" for the soil conservation practices.

As far as the conservation editors are concerned, there will be no "quitting time" for publicizing conservation and its value to the individual and the land.

"We have pledged before and we still pledge as much space

available in our regular paper for the "preaching of the gospel" of conservation and the "practicing of the preaching" of that gospel.

"We believe that the future of the county, towns, state, nation, and over the world lies basically in a productive agriculture. We are selfish in our beliefs—though in a round-about way.

"We feel as the Holt county farmers progress and pro-

duce, our county and our town will progress and prosper, and we will in turn reap some of the benefits of an economic stability.

"We believe that if the soil is held, we, too, will be able to hand something to our children, as will the farmer who practices approved methods.

"We feel that our own small part in publicizing conservation—while the actual application is

up to the farmer—will be felt and appreciated five hundred years hence.

"There is no 'quitting time' in conservation of resources."

Good dairy cattle make very efficient use of roughage and pasture. These can be grown as conservation crops.

Grass roots granulate the soil, thus making it easier to work and more receptive of water.

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HOLT SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT ANNUAL MEETING
 Preceding
 GRASSLAND LIVESTOCK DAY
STUART, FEB. 28
 9:30 A.M. — 10:15 A.M.
 ★ ★ ★
 — Program —
 Financil Report
 Tree Program
 Grass Program
 Machinery Rental
 Progress Report
 All cooperators are urged to attend the annual meeting and stay on for the remainder of the Grassland Livestock Day Program

Ranchers - Farmers
 YOUR
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O'Neill Livestock Market
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