

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE**  
**ACTIVITY REPORT *within the P-MRNRD***  
**JUNE 2006**

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**CONSERVATION PLANNING/APPLICATION**

- Blair field office (FO) has 5 conservation applications for summer construction; 1 grade stabilization structure, 1 toe wall structure and 3 terrace systems.
- Blair FO received 72 miscellaneous NRD cost-share applications for FY2006; 55 were completed and paid \$34,793. These applications included Continuous Conservation Reserve Program/Conservation Reserve Program (CCRP/CRP) seeding, pasture renovations, tree plantings, Pheasants Forever (PFE) wildlife habitat seedings and cropland conversions.
- Blair FO rented the NRD grass drill to 12 landowners for seeding this spring. This does not include the PFE drill.
- Blair FO staff completed 3 compliance reviews; all the producers were considered “actively applying” conservation systems.
- Blair FO staff wrote 5 conservation plans for compliance/CRP.
- Neil Jensen, NRCS Blair, completed a wetland appeal in Burt County.
- Omaha FO completed a payment for a grass waterway.
- Omaha FO completed 20 field visits for 2006 Food Security Act (FSA) status reviews; paperwork is pending.
- Three NRD CAP payments have been processed and paid for conservation projects completed this spring in Burt County.
- Burt County completed 18 FSA compliance reviews and the letters mailed out. All producers checked were meeting the residue requirements of an approved conservation system. An increase in the number of farms using continuous no-till was observed.
- Burt County returned 28 Highly Erodible Land/Wetland determinations to the Farm Service Agency and the respective landowners.
- Dakota County has nearly completed documentation on 18 FSA status reviews.

**ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM (EQIP)**

- Blair FO completed a payment for 149 acres of no-till.
- Omaha FO processed payments for a rock drop structure.
- Five EQIP/NRD payments have been made for terrace projects finished this spring in Burt County and 1 is pending.
- One EQIP livestock pipeline and tank system is currently being installed in Burt County; the construction inspection is being completed by Andy Bohnenkamp, Soil Conservation Technician in Tekamah.
- Dakota City FO certified payment on a completed pasture improvement project.

**WETLAND RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (WREP)**

**WETLAND RESERVE PROGRAM (WRP)**

- Ten WRP applications were processed in Burt County and have been sent to the Wetlands Team in Syracuse; 1 WRP application was cancelled by the applicant that was for 75 acres.
- Dakota City FO assisted with development of a wetland restoration plan for a 55-acre WRP site.

## **CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CRP)**

### **CONTINUOUS CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CCRP)**

- Blair FO staff wrote 1 CCRP contract for a grassed waterway and made payments on 6 general CRP applications and 4 CCRP (2 filter strips, 1 wetland and 1 field border).
- Omaha FO completed and reported 2 CRP seedings.
- One CRP revision was completed in Burt County to allow cost share for inter-seeding grass and legumes.
- Dakota County has 4 new general CRP applications accepted.

### **PIGEON/JONES CREEK WATERSHED**

- Dakota County staff completed a land treatment analysis for the Site 15 watershed; results show that 90% of watershed has soil erosion rates controlled to “T” or less.
- A June 16, rainstorm dumped 3 inches of rain in 2 hours on the P/J watershed area. Sites 3, 4, 5 and 14 all performed as designed. These structures plus land treatment in the watershed helped keep runoff to a minimum.
- Planning for Site 18 is underway, with recent landowner concurrence to proceed with the structure.

### **SILVER CREEK**

- Silver Creek structures 6, 30 and 31 are completed; the sites will be seeded and fenced the beginning of July.

### **INFORMATION/EDUCATION**

- Blair FO completed the Conservation Tillage Survey for Washington County; 65% of the corn acres was no-tilled into existing residue; 50% of the soybean acres was no-till planted into existing residue. An additional 35% of the soybeans was till planted into existing residue, maintaining 30% or greater residue cover.
- The Dakota County FO staff provided news items for the NRD share page published in the Dakota County Star for the month of June. Article topics included: New CSP Contracts Awarded; Pesticide Container Recycling Continues Through July; Cultural Resources Important Link to Past; and NRCS Receives Funds to Study Thurston County Stream Erosion. Photos with captions were included of Dakota County Commissioners Participating in a Tour of the Pigeon/Jones Watershed; Crystal Cove Renovation Project Ribbon Cutting; and Installation of Waterway Silt Barriers near Pigeon Jones Site 5.
- Dakota City FO staff completed an analysis of no-till land treatment practice trends over the past 3 years in Dakota County. Two years of Conservation Tillage Survey data and 3 years of conservation compliance residue count data were compiled to show that no-till planting acres continue to increase and that residue levels on no-till fields are steadily increasing. Current information shows that 77% of fields are no-till planted. Residue levels after planting average 52% on soybean stubble and 64% on corn stalks across all tillage practices.

### **TRAINING/MEETINGS**

- USDA Security Literacy and Basics (computer security training) is being completed by all FO staff including both NRCS and NRD employees.
- Blair FO staff, Neil Jensen, attended At-Risk Plants and Animals training in Denton, NE.
- NRCS staff, Neil Jensen, Verlon Barnes, Don Atkinson, Robert Hall, Mitch Keebler, and Chuck Leinen, attended Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan training in Omaha.

- Justin Linder, RC at Tekamah, attended the Conservation Security Program (CSP) debriefing held in Hastings for employees involved in the 2006 CSP sign up. He also attended the week-long Range Short Course held in Chadron, Nebraska.
- Kelly Fravel represented the P-MRNRD at a ribbon cutting event recognizing the Crystal Cove Lake renovation project recently completed by the US Army Corps of Engineers. The P-MRNRD, the City of South Sioux City and the Nebraska Environmental Trust contributed to the costs of the restoration project.

Reported by: Robert Hall, Resource Conservationist, NRCS, Omaha, July 12, 2006