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EC57-119 Planning and Conducting your School Conservation Day

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Planning and Conducting Your School Conservation Day

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Planning and Conducting Your School



Pupils of Elliott Elementary School, 6th grade, Lincoln study grass roots during conservation education tour.

Planning and Conducting Your School Conservation Day

Foreword

The purpose of this publication is to provide a definite plan by which agricultural leaders, educational leaders, and civic organizations may co-operate in making the stewardship of the land a reality to Nebraska boys and girls.

The first step in planning and carrying out a successful school conservation program is to have a definite set of objectives. The program should demonstrate that "Conservation is Everybody's Business." Objectives may include:

Giving elementary boys and girls actual contact with some of the phases of conservation.

Giving teachers in elementary rural, city, and parochial schools a background and a motive for stressing conservation education.

Helping parents better understand their responsibility to their children for the conservation of natural resources.

How Do You Get Started ?

The initiative for a conservation day program will probably come from the county extension agent or the Soil Conservation District. The county extension agent should invite the county superintendent of schools, city superintendent of schools, the work unit conservationist of the soil conservation service, and a representative of the soil conservation district board for a conference. This group will then carefully appraise the situation and plan the day to fit the particular needs of their county. During the planning meeting they should:

- I. Discuss the feasibility of such a program.
- II. Determine the best time of year to hold the program.
- III. Survey the resources available in the area.
- IV. Make a list of other persons or groups who might be interested in co-sponsoring. This list may include vocational agriculture and veterans on-the-job training instructors, and service clubs such as Rotary, Lions, Kiwanis, Chamber of Commerce.
- V. Appoint committees for:
 - A. Publicity
 - B. Program
 1. Arrange for speaker and films.
 2. Arrange for meeting place for morning session.
 3. Arrange with farmer for use of his farm.
 4. Arrange for special equipment--film, projectors, screens, public address system.
 - C. Transportation and routing.

What Is The Next Step ?

1. Decide how many grades should be invited.
 - A. Factors determining who will be invited are:
 1. Size of meeting place.
 2. Size of county.
 3. Transportation.
 4. How often conservation days are to be held.
 5. Other local problems:
 - B. Possibilities:
 1. Large populated counties--usually only rural 7th and 8th grades.
 2. Smaller populated counties--5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grades.

3. Others have invited all rural grades.
4. Some have included city and parochial grades in above groups.
5. Some counties plan on having rural students one year--city and parochial the next year.
6. Teachers
7. Parents
8. Press
9. Radio and TV

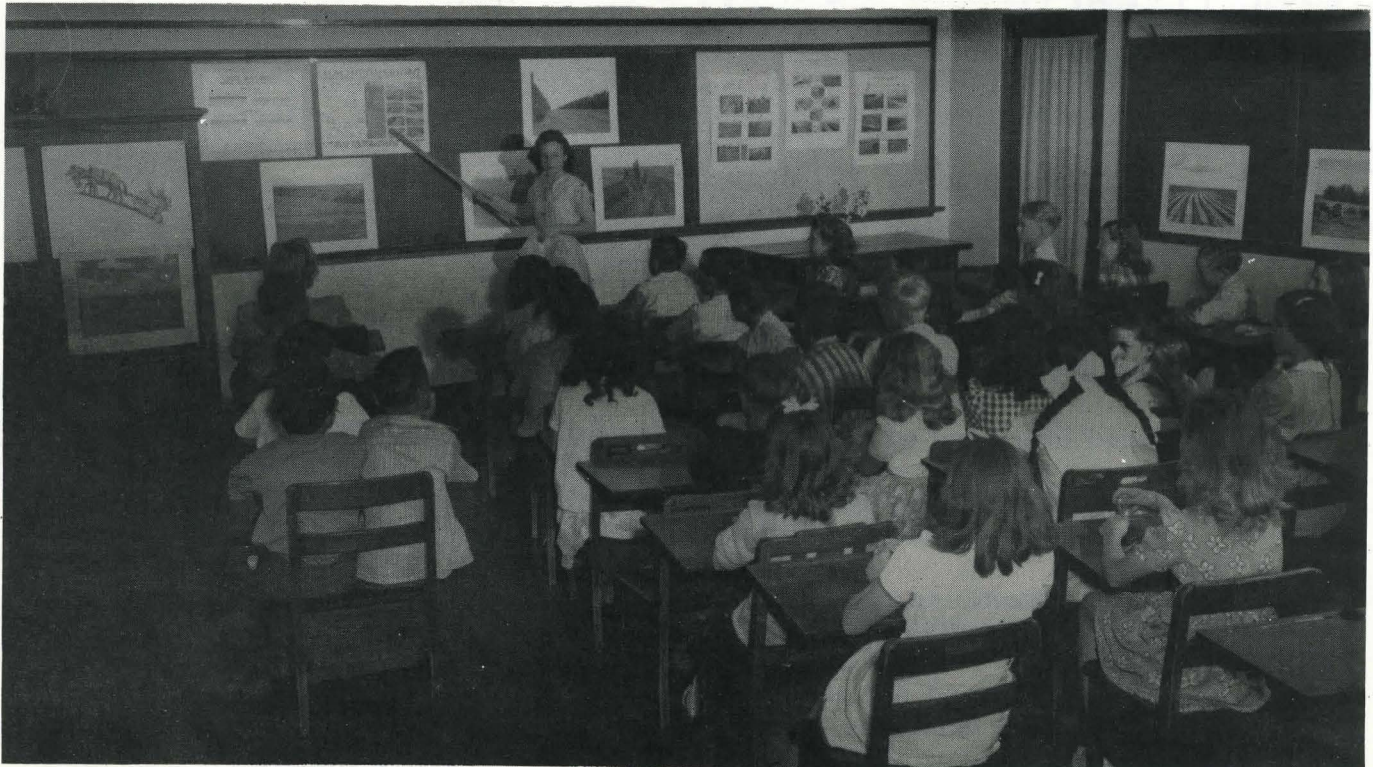
C. Who issues invitations:

1. To teachers, children and parents--County Superintendent.
2. All others--other sponsors.

HOW DO YOU PLAN THE DAYS ACTIVITIES?

I. Points to consider:

- A. Experience proves all-day programs are the most successful.
- B. Brief the speakers before the meeting.
- C. Do not have any speaker talk for more than 30 minutes. Better make it 15-20 minutes unless he has pictures or demonstrations.
- D. Talk their language. Many technicians become too technical when talking to elementary school children. Don't talk about Stadia, Azimuth,



Teacher Helen Hill explains a soil conservation chart to Huntington Grade School class.

infiltration, etc. Use words they can understand.

- E. Have a recess in the middle of the morning program.
- F. Break up speeches with colored slides, films, or demonstrations. Have plenty of illustrative material. Children don't like too much speech making.
- G. Make a special effort to have all teachers come to the Conversion Day. In the past some county superintendents have closed the rural schools so teachers could attend. Discipline will be better if teachers attend.
- H. Urge parents to attend.
- I. Be prepared for a rainy day. Have several films available. Use of engineering equipment, aerial maps, etc. could be explained indoors
- J. Let them go home by 3:30 p. m.
- K. Co-sponsors should have an opportunity to speak.
- L. County Agent or County Superintendent may act as master of ceremonies.

II. Planning the morning session

- A. Place--Decision to be based on size of crowd, facilities, whether it can be darkened to show films, location.
 - 1. City Auditorium
 - 2. High School Auditorium
 - 3. Fireman's Hall
 - 4. Theatre
 - 5. 4-H Club Building at Fair Grounds.

III. Planning the noon meal

- A. Possibilities
 - 1. Sack lunch
 - 2. Furnished by service club
 - 3. Go to a restaurant

IV. How to get started after lunch?

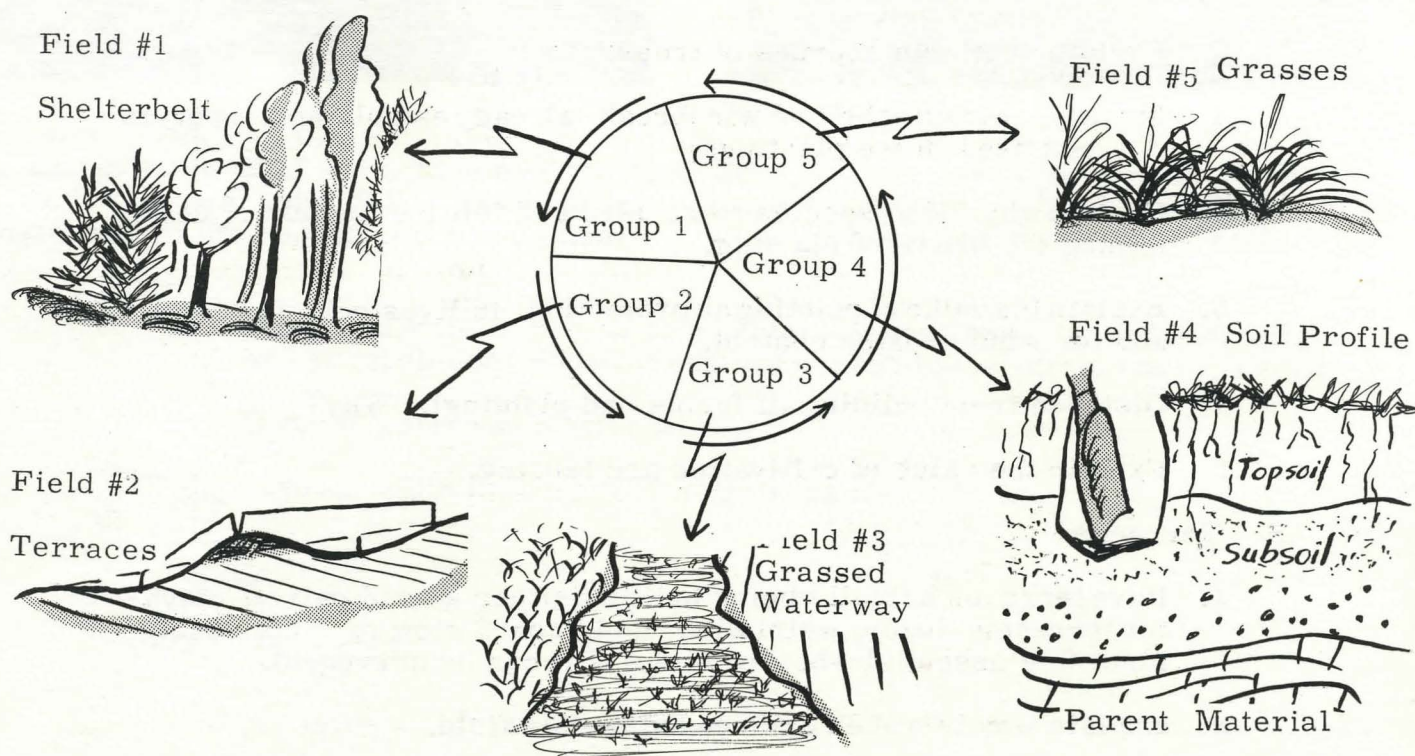
- A. A short film may be shown at the auditorium right after lunch (optional.)
- B. Load into cars or buses and drive in caravan to the farm.
- C. Ideal situation is to have all conservation practices to be shown or demonstrated on one farm and within walking distance of each other.
- D. When assembled at the farm, divide crowd into equal-sized groups--the same number of groups as you have stops or practices to be shown.
- E. If all stops are not on the same farm--divide the crowd into groups before you leave the auditorium or city park.

- F. Not more than five stops should be planned. Usually only four stops are scheduled.

V. System of conducting the afternoon program

- A. Have an instructor at each location or practice. He will remain at this one location all afternoon and will explain the practice to each group. Instructors usually are extension agents, SCS technicians, extension specialists, or SCD supervisors.
- B. Have a group leader for each group. He will lead his group from one location to the other. Group leaders are usually SCD supervisors or members of the sponsoring organizations.
- C. Rotate groups in same directions. Avoid meeting another group. This will eliminate traffic jams and confusion.

VI. Proposed system of handling a School Conservation Day



The above practices are for example only--use practices that are available in your county - such as those mentioned on pages 8 to 12.

- A. Send Group 1 to Field #1
Send Group 2 to Field #2
Send Group 3 to Field #3
Send Group 4 to Field #4
Send Group 5 to Field #5
- B. Then in 15-20 minutes (decide definitely how long per stop prior to the day of the program) rotate groups in the same direction.
- C. Group 1 will go to Field #2
Group 2 will go to Field #3
Group 3 will go to Field #4
Group 4 will go to Field #5
Group 5 will go to Field #1

D. Repeat until all groups have been to each field.

E. If all practices have been on the same farm, assemble for summary of the events of the day.

VII. What to show them?

Because of the wide range of conditions in Nebraska, a variety of practices are listed below. Use only four or five that are in your county. Each instructor should devise his own talk, however, a few general suggestions for each stop are as follows:

A. Farmstead windbreak or shelterbelt

1. If possible put on a demonstration with a soil conservation district tree planter. This need not be in the tree planting season. Use twigs to show how the machine is operated.
2. Tell how many trees can be planted in an hour with the machine.
3. Explain available sources of trees.
4. Identify, in shelterbelt or windbreak already established, species of trees used in the plantings.
5. Explain why these species were used and tell the method of determining the order of planting.
6. Explain the value of planting as protection to livestock, farmstead, and for wind erosion control.
7. Distance from building (if farmstead planting). Why?
8. Explain the value of cultivation and fencing.

B. Terraces

1. Have terraces actually being built by either a road patrol, elevator terracer, dozer, whirlwind, mold board plow or other equipment (not essential--but excellent if it can be arranged).
2. Explain why terraces are needed on this field.
3. Tell specifications of a good terrace.
4. Explain how you determine distance apart to make the terraces.
5. Explain how to farm and maintain terraces.

C. Waterways

1. If possible, actually have bulldozer, road patrol or ordinary farm equipment preparing a waterway. (Not essential --but excellent if it can be arranged).
2. Explain why grass waterways are needed.
3. Explain species of grasses used in this waterway.



A whirlwind terracing machine constructs a series of level terraces. The approximate cost to the cooperator was 3¢ a foot.



This 10-row, 5/8-mile long shelterbelt on the Albert Stuhr farm, east of Waco, York County, combines field, farm protection.

4. Have a sample of brome or wheatgrass sod, reed canary sod, alfalfa and sweet clover. Show the roots of each and show why grass is needed.
5. Discuss waterway maintenance.
6. Discuss width and depth of waterways and why.

D. Soils

1. Soil profile

- a. Have a soil profile already dug.
- b. Discuss formation of soil and point out topsoil, subsoil, parent material, how much erosion has taken place, etc.
- c. Briefly discuss meaning of organic matter, permeability, texture etc.

2. Infiltration tests

- a. Have infiltration rings already in ground on:
 1. eroded land
 2. native sod
- b. Observe time for equal amounts of water to soak into ground.



Picture shows a good grassed waterway near Fairmont, Nebraska

E. Grasses

1. Meet along a roadside, native hay land or native pasture.
2. Discuss how to identify common species of grass.
3. Discuss importance of deferred and restricted grazing.
4. Discuss importance of a good cover of grass at all times.

F. Dams

1. Discuss factors to be considered in locating a dam--such as soil, sub-soil, spillway, drainage area.
2. Storage or detention capacity. If the area where tubes in dams are necessary, explain.
3. Be ready to answer the one question always asked--' "How deep is the pond" ?
4. If fish are in pond--briefly discuss fish pond management.

G. Wildlife habitat areas

1. Discuss species of plantings in area.
2. Discuss value of such plantings.
3. Discuss type of wildlife intended to use the cover.

H. Stubble Mulch Tillage

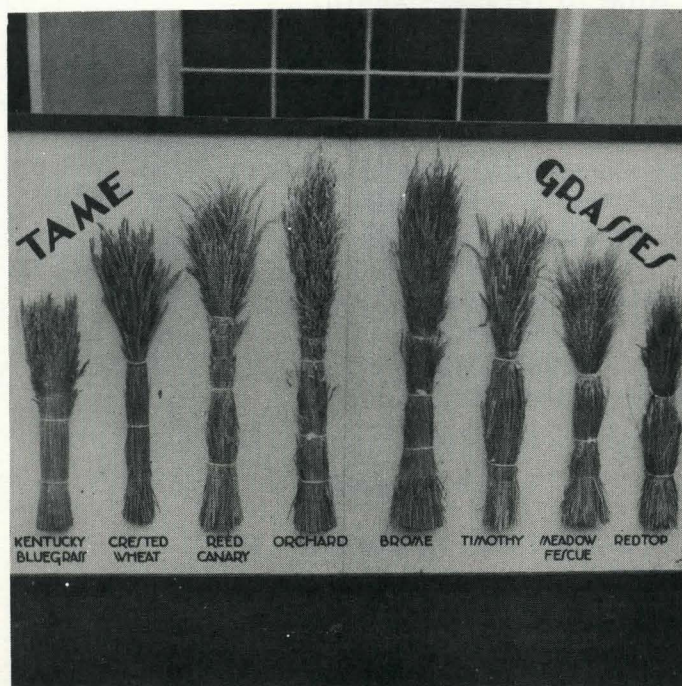
1. If possible have demonstration of some equipment.
2. Discuss why stubble mulch tillage is needed and theory of why it is advisable to use here.

I. Wind Strip Cropping

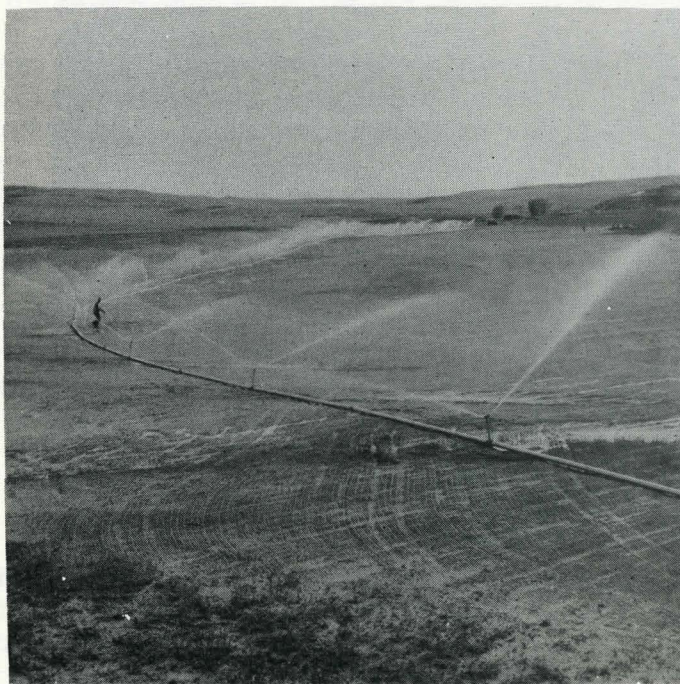
1. Tell why needed--theory of wind strip cropping.
2. Width of strips.
3. Crop rotations.

J. Tools you use in conservation

1. Use of engineers transit.
 - a. How you set it up.
 - b. How you read distance.
 - c. Have a stadia board and philadelphia rod--explain use.
 - d. Have transit set up low enough for smallest child to look through. Have it focused on an object 1/2-1 mile away.
2. Use of Planimeter



The above picture show an exhibit of tame grasses. Starting at the left are Kentucky Bluegrass, Crested Wheat, Reed Canary, Orchard, Brome, Timothy, Meadow Fescue and Redtop. A good grass cover is important.



This sprinkler irrigation system is from a 170-foot well with 51-feet lift. The cost of installation for 150 acres is estimated at \$9,000. The system is on the Dyer farm in Grant County, 6 miles south of Whitman.

- a. Show how you measure acres on a map.
3. Have aerial maps--Land Use and Soils--Explain each.
 - a. Have a ruler to show how you can measure feet and rods on aerial map.
 - b. Show them trees, roads, rivers, buildings on the maps.
4. Slope Level, Auger, Probe, PH meter or Kit
 - a. Demonstrate and explain their use.
5. Plane table and Alidade
 - a. Explain use.

K. Irrigation Systems-Gravity, Sprinkler

- a. Explain topographic map used in planning system.
- b. Explain depth of well and approximate cost.
- c. Explain how much water is being pumped per minute.
- d. Discuss length of runs.
- e. Discuss water holding capacity of ground being irrigated.
- f. Explain how you tell when its time to irrigate again.

L. Drainage System--Open Ditch or Tile

1. Explain factors in determining system.
2. Explain general cost of system.
3. Explain grade of ditch.

M. Blow-Out Control

1. Discuss how blow-outs get started.
2. Explain methods of control

N. Complete Conservation Program

1. Sometimes an observation point may be found where a complete conservation program for a farm or ranch, or a sub-watershed can be viewed. This is an excellent way to point out the actual value of conservation.

VII. Suggested List of Speakers

A. Soil Conservation Service

Area Conservationist
Work Unit Conservationist
Area Soil Scientist
Area Engineer
Engineers or Engineering Aids (Watershed Counties)

B. Soil Conservation Districts

Chairman--Board of Supervisors (or any other member)
Officers--Nebraska Association of Soil Conservation Districts

C. Nebraska State Soil & Water Conservation Committee, Executive Secretary--State Capitol Building--Lincoln

D. State Department of Education

Specialists in Conservation--State Capital--Lincoln

E. Nebraska, Game, Forestation & Parks Commission

Area specialists

Hunting & Fishing rules &
regulations

Gun safety
Game management

F. Extension Service

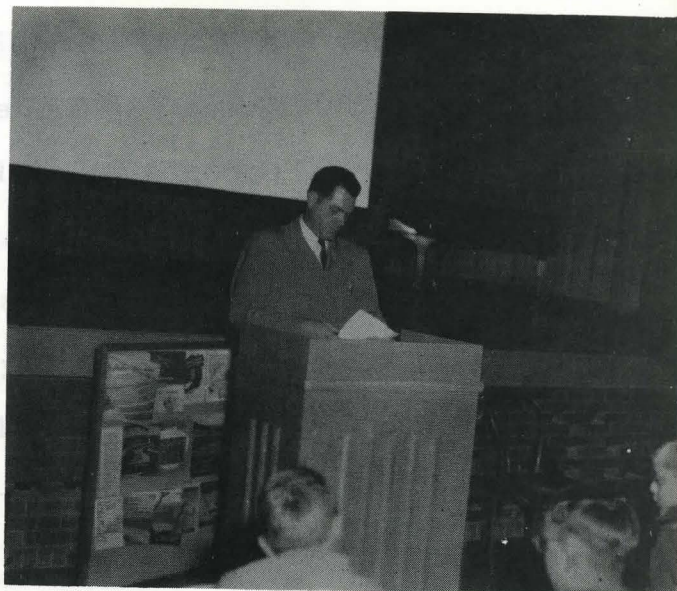
County Extension Agent
Extension Supervisor
Extension specialists on
Soils
Pasture & range
Forestry
Irrigation
Soil Conservation

G. Vocational Agriculture Instructors

H. Veterans On-the-job Training Instructors

I. Miscellaneous

Some counties may have outstanding conservation farmers.
Outstanding contractors may be available.



Lester Reid, Gage County Superintendent of Schools spoke at 1956 Beatrice School Day.

IX. Successful Programs that have been used.

Type A

COUNTY CONSERVATION DAY

	Agricultural Agent	Master of Ceremonies
9:30-9:40	Purpose of Meeting and Announcements	County Superintendent
9:40-10:20	Conservation Demonstrations	Extension Conservationist
10:20-10:30	Recess	
10:30-11:00	Wildlife in Nebraska	State Game Commission
11:00-11:30	Trees in Conservation	Soil Conservation Service
11:30-12:00	Soils in the County	Soil Scientist, SCS

NOON

1:00-1:15 Town children assemble at theatre
to board buses. Others drive in caravan
directly to farm.

1:30-3:10 At Farm--divide into groups

Group 1 at Shelterbelt	_____	Instructor
Group 2 at Soil Profile	_____	Instructor
Group 3 on terraced field	_____	Instructor
Group 4 Grasses & Legumes	_____	Instructor
Group 5 Working tools of our profession	_____	Instructor

General meeting of all groups--summary of
things we have seen today

_____ Work Unit
Conservationist

ADJOURN

In case of a bad day, the following program will be substituted for
the field trip:

1:15-2:00 Colored slides of Conservation work in the county.

2:00-3:00 State Safety Patrol

3:00-3:30 Film

Type B

COUNTY RURAL SCHOOLS CONSERVATION DAY

Master of ceremonies	County Superintendent
9:30 Introductory remarks	Pres., sponsoring organization
9:40 _____ County Soil Cons. District Chairman	SCD
9:50 Conserv. Education & Orientation,	State Dept. of Educ.
10:05 Soils	SCS
10:20 RECESS	
10:50 Watersheds	SCS area Conserv.
11:10 Film	
Remarks by Sponsors	

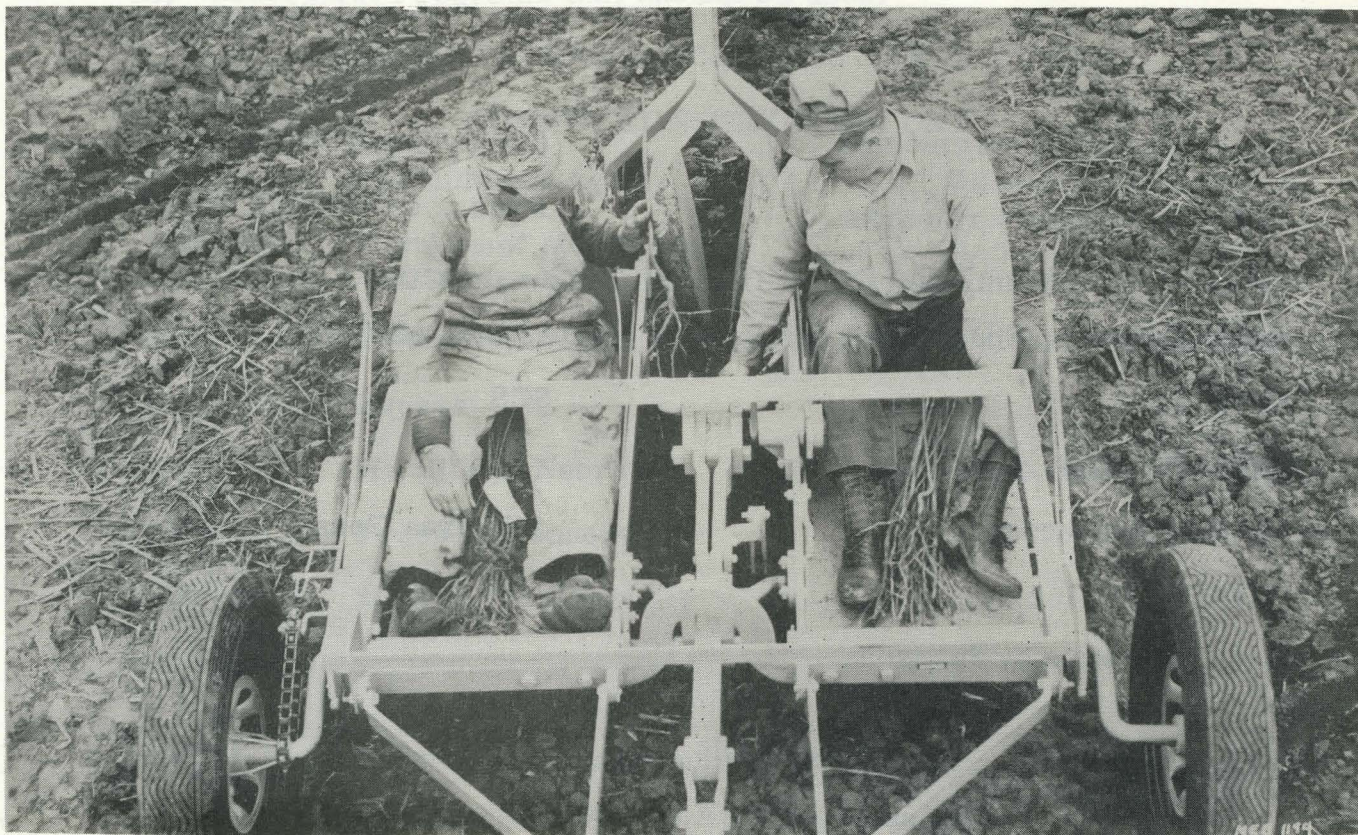
NOON

(Basement City Auditorium)

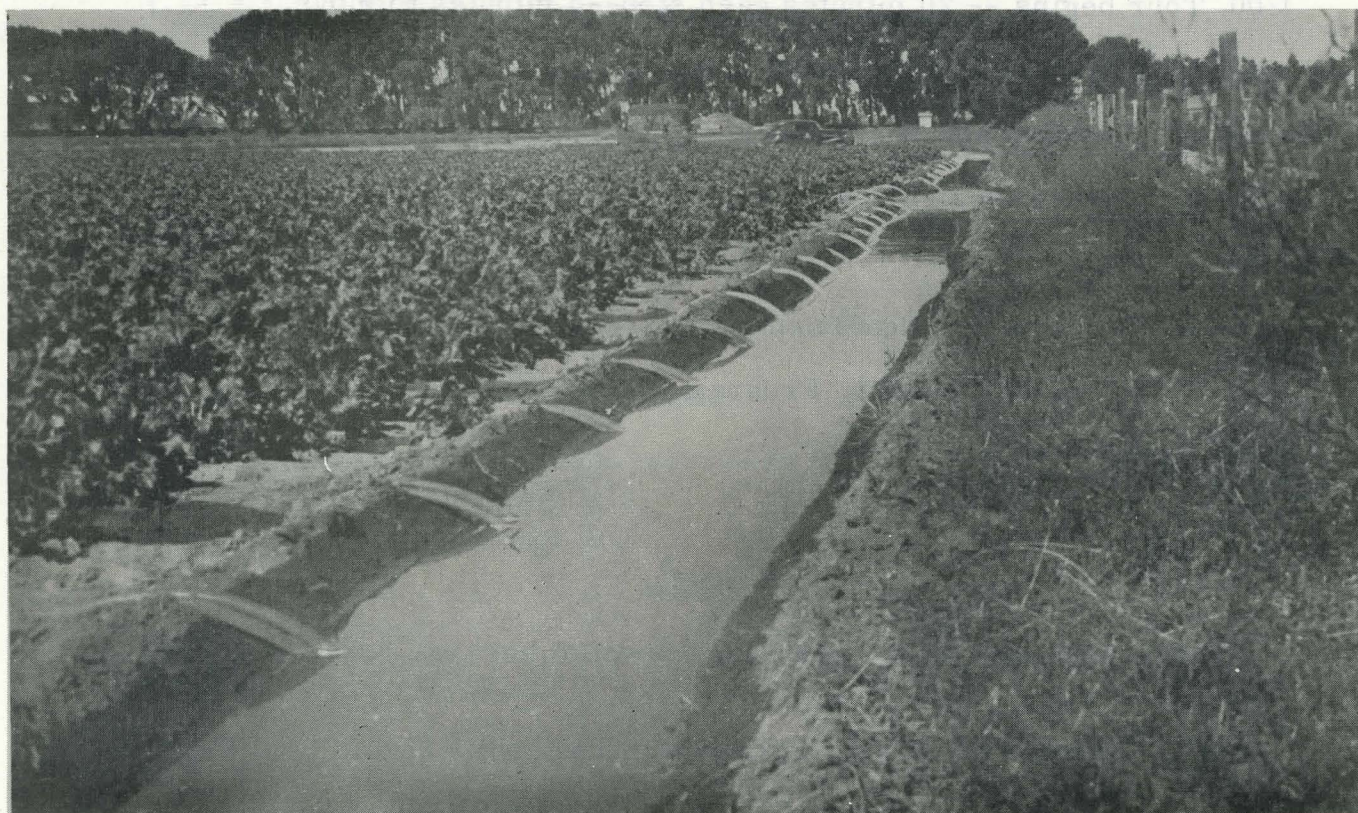
12:30 Leave Auditorium for country

1:00 Tour begins -- 20 minutes each stop--5 minutes to move.

1. Pasture and farm ponds	Extension Service
2. Forestry and Windbreaks	Extension Service
3. Watershed structures	SCS
4. Soils	SCS
5. Conservation Equipment	SCS
6. Complete Conserv. Program	SCS
3:30 Adjournment	



This tree planting machine was developed and built by the Soil Conservation Service for use in establishing farmstead and field windbreaks; can plant 1,000 trees in hour.



Irrigation of Nebraska farmlands is increasing rapidly each year.