

1957

ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT
OF THE
MADISON COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT
1951

The Board of Supervisors of the Madison County Soil Conservation District publishes this report so that the public might better understand what the district strives to do and to point out some of the work which it has been responsible for. The Tennessee Department of Agriculture has made this report possible by helping to finance the publishing.

The district was organized in 1942 by popular vote of farmers because of the need for assistance in controlling erosion and conserving our most important natural resource. Soils were becoming depleted, eroded and farm income declining for the lack of someone to give on-the-farm assistance in applying soil conserving practices. To supervise the district program a board of five farmers were elected at the time of organization. To keep the district program truly democratic this board is re-elected by the people every three years. All board of supervisors members give their time freely to direct the program.

Once a district was organized the U. S. Department of Agriculture, through the Soil Conservation Service, assigned technically trained personnel to assist farmers cooperating with the district. During 1951 the Soil Conservation Service employed R. D. Fisher, work unit conservationist, Clarence L. Daniels, soil conservationist, C. W. Tomlin, conservation aide, and James F. Hughes, negro technician working with negro cooperators.

Any farm owner or operator within Madison County is entitled to the services of the soil conservation district. An application for assistance must be made by contacting the district office or any of the members of the board of supervisors.

CLASSIFICATION OF LAND

Before technicians of the Soil Conservation Service can safely apply any soil conservation practice the kind of land or conditions must be determined. This is done by classifying the land. Classification is made possible by the use of a soils map prepared of the farm by a soil scientist. The soil scientist indicates on an aerial photograph the different types of soils, the percent slope and the degree of erosion which has occurred on each area. These factors, when combined, place the land into one of seven classes. All farm land in Madison County has been soil mapped. The land classes are:

Class I. Very good land that is easy to work and can be cultivated safely with ordinary good farming methods. Soils are deep and productive. The land is nearly level and there is little or no erosion.

Class II. Good land that can be cultivated safely provided such practices as terraces, contour cultivation, short rotations, cover crops and fertilization are used. Usually gently sloping and moderate erosion is common.

Sub-Class IIA. Bottom land that is imperfectly drained but which is suited for intensive use for row crops with ordinary good farming methods after the establishment of a drainage system to remove excess surface water.

~~CLASS III~~

Class III. Land that can be cultivated safely only if such practices as terracing, contour cultivation, strip cropping, moderately long rotations, cover crops and fertilization are used. This is moderately sloping land and moderate to severe erosion is common.

Sub-Class IIIA. Land that is poorly drained and which has moderate limitations in crop adaptations. It can be used intensively for adapted crops with ordinary good farming methods after the establishment of a drainage system to remove excess surface water.

Class IV. Land that is best suited for permanent pasture or hay, but which can be cultivated occasionally, usually not more often than one year in six. This land is usually moderately steep and severe erosion is common.

Class IVA. Land that is very poorly drained and has severe limitations in crop adaptations. It can be used for adapted crops, preferably hay and pasture crops, after the establishment of a drainage system to remove excess surface water.

Class V. Swamp land where drainage appears to be impractical at the present. In some cases the land has an overwash of sand.

Class VI. Land that is best suited for permanent vegetation, preferably hay and pasture. May be used for trees. Usually steep or severely eroded or both. Requires careful management to stabilize erosion.

Class VII. Land best suited for timber or wildlife with selected areas suited for grazing. Usually very steep or very severely eroded or both.

TOTAL ACREAGE LAND CLASSES BY PRESENT USES

LAND CLASSES	LAND USE				Total Acres
	Cultivated	Woodland	Idle	Pasture	
I	1147	26	19	159	1351
II	36201	3386	1664	5217	46468
IIIA	25046	5277	943	2247	33513
Total II	61247	8663	2607	7464	79981
III	48234	4953	6802	11262	71251
IIIA	29245	21965	1185	4447	56842
Total III	77479	26918	7987	15709	128093
IV	7983	3408	3172	3484	18047
IVA	4303	8511	549	1304	14667
Total IV	12286	11919	3721	4788	32714
V	1107	845	167	183	2302
VI	6581	11496	6167	4992	28236
VII	5794	45855	15241	8609	75499
Grand Total	165641	105722	34909	41904	348176

CONSERVATION NEEDS OF THE DISTRICT

During the past year the County Agricultural Advisory Committee, which is composed of a farmer representative of all agricultural agencies, and other

organizations concerned with soil conservation, assisted the Board of Supervisors with determining the overall needs of the district by practices. This committee agreed that there is a need for the following:

<u>PRACTICES</u>	<u>NEEDS</u>	
1. Winter cover crops	75,000	Acres
2. Permanent Pastures	40,000	"
3. Wildlife Area Improvement	2,000	"
4. Tree Planting	30,000	"
5. Farm Ponds	2,000	(Number)
6. Terraces	75,000	Acres
7. Contour Cultivation	75,000	"
8. Farm Drainage	38,000	"
9. Crop Rotations	85,000	"
10. Water Disposal Areas	3,000	"
11. Kudzu	2,000	"
12. Sericea	23,000	"

When these needs have been satisfactorily applied these acres will be contributing their maximum to the income of every individual farm. Not only will the individual farmer feel the benefit but all business people in Madison County will share in it.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS DURING 1951

During 1951, 118 more farmers were added to the list of district cooperators. This brings a total of 1296 farmers who have been assisted since the district was organized. The farms total 190,622 acres.

PASTURE SEEDING 4,634 acres of pastures were seeded during the year. These pastures were seeded on steep, eroded land and land too wet for cultivation. Mixtures most commonly used were Ky. 31 fescue and white clover or orchard grass and white clover. Some of the farmers who seeded pasture were; F.A. Bond, W. A. Birdsong, Fred T. Smith, Charles Smith, U. D. Johnson, Eugene Laster, Glenn Harris, F. L. Exum & Sons, C. A. Rowlett, Robert Caldwell, Howard Johnson, M. T. Lawrence, S. M. Lawrence and Sons, and Sammy Wilson.

PASTURE IMPROVEMENT: 5,314 acres of old pastures were improved in 1951 by applying fertilizer or clipping.

COVER CROPS: 8,327 acres of winter cover crop was seeded in the fall of 1951. This brings the total to 52,206 acres that have been seeded since the district was organized. These cover crops consist of crimson clover, vetch, Austrian winter peas, caly peas, button clover and ryegrass. Some cooperators who seeded cover crops include Joe Watridge, Clarence Turner, A. B. Burrus, C. W. Butler, Woodrow Mathis, J. B. Mathis, Herndon McCleary, Bill Cook, Bond Jones, Wiley R. Parker, James F. Berkley, W. D. Forsythe, Claude McCleary.

CONTOUR FARMING: 10,002 acres of row crops were planted on the contour last year. This makes 44,439 acres which have been contoured to date.

TERRACES: 238.5 miles of terraces were constructed in 1951. These terraces were built on row cropland. Construction was done with farm equipment. 2799.3 miles of terraces have been built by district cooperators. Some of those who constructed terraces during the year were: V. D. Johnson, James Dean, Robert G. Young, J. T. Longmire, R. T. Curlin, Ivy Forsythe, R. A. Sanders, Grady Fowler, George Vickers, Mrs. Mary Milam, K. J. Johnson, Dabney and Booth, Mike Freeman, Lambuth College, Jack Robins and Aggie Lewis.

WATERWAYS: 124 acres of water disposal areas were established during the year. These include W-type outlets, shaped meadow outlets and larger areas seeded to grasses to provide outlets for runoff water. Sericea was used for sod on outlets seeded in the spring. Fescue and white clover was seeded on fall-sown outlets. Farmers who prepared and seeded waterways last year were: K. J. Johnson, C. A. Rowlett, W. A. Birdsong, K. D. Sneed, Clyde Owen, H. H. Burnett, R. R. Porter, Eugene Laster, Ran Marsh, Allen R. King, W. L. Watson, Jr. and J. B. Nelson.

FIELD DIVERSIONS: 7.9 miles of diversion ditches were constructed in 1951. These ditches were built above gullies or at the bottom of slope to protect the land below.

DRAINAGE: 4,816 acres of bottomland were drained during the year. 18,490 acres have been drained since the district was organized. Farmers who constructed ditches in 1951 were: C. C. Holmes, Robert Gaston, C. H. Little, Dr. H. L. Jones, D. N. Hall, Herndon McCleary, H. H. Burnett, Mrs. Eunice Franson, F. L. Exum & Sons, F. B. Moore, Robert Booker and Hugh Pearson.

SERICEA: 786 acres of sericea were seeded during the spring of 1951 by cooperators. This was seeded on fairly steep, badly eroded slopes which have been idle for several years. The plant is adapted to thin, droughty land and produces good quality of hay and pasture when fertilized and kept mowed to prevent tall, woody growth. Seed yields are usually profitable.

KUDZU: 103 acres of kudzu were planted in 1951, making a total of 439 acres planted in the district to date. This was planted on severe tullies, road banks and drainage ditch banks. Kudzu will prevent the growth of willows and other vegetation on ditch banks. Farmers who planted kudzu in 1951 were: C. A. Rowlett, J. R. Thedford, Elco Fowler, A. T. Hilliard, H. T. Hopper, U. D. Johnson, W. W. Woolfolk, B. D. Arrington, J. S. Morris, R. M. Clements, S. M. Lawrence & Sons, C. C. Holmes, E. A. Towater, and Wallace Greer.

WILDLIFE AREA IMPROVEMENT: 54 acres of lespedeza bicolor were planted during the year along woods, ditches and fence corners for food and cover for birds. Some farmers seeded sericea along side of the bicolor strips for additional cover. Some of the cooperators who planted bicolor were: W. D. Pope, Howard Johnson, John Deloach, R. E. Hicks, Harry Thomas, Jack Graves, George Neely, Lambuth College Farm and W. C. McCleary. Bicolor plants were furnished by the Tennessee Game and Fish Commission.

FARM PONDS: 144 ponds were built in 1951 for stockwater. These ponds were built with local contractor equipment.

FISHPOND: 64 farm ponds ranging from one quarter acre to seven acres in size were stocked with bream and bass. The fish were furnished by the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service

TREE PLANTING: 33 acres of trees were planted in 1951. Most of these were loblolly pine. The pine were planted in large gullies to prevent further erosion and sometime produce income from what is now wasteland. Farmers who planted trees include Robert Hardee, Mrs. A. V. Patton, Mrs. Mary Milan, John Jefferies, Wallace Greer, Jessie Givens, Charlie Day, Henry Lane, Harvey Weddle, Willie T. Fransow and J. R. Crawford.

SAVE-ENRICH OUR SOIL CONTEST

The Save-Enrich Our Soil Contest is sponsored each year by the Memphis Chamber of Commerce, Memphis Press Scimitar and the Memphis Chapter of The Friends of The Land to promote more conservation farmers in West Tennessee, Mississippi and Arkansas.

At a rally held in Memphis last March two entries from Madison County were awarded prizes for their accomplishments during 1950.

L. T. Bowman of the East Union Community, who is a tenant on the farm owned by J. A. Stratton and F. M. Blythe was awarded a \$50 Savings Bond as second place winner in the Tenant Landlord Division for Tennessee. Bond Jones of the Middle Community was awarded a \$25 Savings Bond as third place winner in the State in the Owner-Operator Division. Bill Wilbur and Mrs. Edd Spivey received a certificate award for being the county winner in the Father and Son Division.

This year the District Board of Supervisors sponsored the contest on the county basis, by awarding cash prizes to the first, second and third place winners in each division. Ten farmers enrolled in contest during 1951. The supervisors selected a team to judge the entries. Judges' decision was as follows:

Charles W. Smith received \$25 as first place winner in the Owner-Operator Division.
U. D. Johnson received \$15 as second prize.
Claude McCleary " \$10 " third award.
W. S. Harris & Sons won first prize of \$25 in the Father and Son Division.
C. A. Rowlett & Son won second prize of \$15.
F. A. Bond & Son won third prize of \$10.

These farmers are to be highly complimented because the competition was very keen in this contest. Many farmers are doing a good job of soil and water conservation but these were the best. All of them used the services of the district in carrying out their operations.

OTHER OUTSTANDING AWARDS

Charles W. Smith who farms a 116-acre farm in the Pleasant Plains Community was selected the Lebonaire Farmer of the year for the State of Tennessee. This selection was made at the American Legion State Convention held in Memphis in September. A trophy was awarded Charles in Jackson by Post Commander Whit Lafon of the John A. Deaver Post No. 12 of which Charles is a member. The award was made on the basis of a proper land use and soil conservation program being carried out on his farm.

J. R. Crawford, colored farmer in the Cerro Gordo Community, was state winner in a soil conservation contest sponsored each year by the Association for Advancement of Negro Country Life in Log Cabin Community, Georgia. The contest includes contestants from 13 southern states. Crawford received \$100 award, being a state winner.

AFFILIATE MEMBERSHIP

During 1951, 20 business firms in Jackson purchased \$25 Affiliate Memberships to the Tennessee Association of Soil Conservation Districts. This shows that business people are sold on the district program. The money will be spent in the district to promote soil conservation and further the work of the State Association of Districts. The Board wishes to thank these business men for their support. We know it is a sound investment. Those who contributed were:

First National Bank	Madison Farmers Cooperative
Second " "	Model Mill Co.
National Bank of Commerce	John E. Parker
John H. Johnson & Sons	John L. Williams
Farm Implement Co.	H. H. Burnett
Murphey Tractor Co.	J. C. Edenton Co.
Wilson Motor Co.	Sadler Fertilizer Co.
McCall Hughes	Jackson Packing Co.
S. M. Lawrence & Sons	Farmers Gin Co.
Farmers Gin Co.	Jackson Truck & Tractor Co.

HELP OF OTHER AGENCIES

Without the full cooperation of all agricultural and non-agricultural agencies in the county the district would not have been able to accomplish so much in soil and water conservation. We would like to acknowledge and express our appreciation to the following groups or agencies for their contributions:

Soil Conservation Service
Tenn. Dept. of Agriculture
Production and Marketing Administration
Farmers' Home Administration
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Agriculture Extension Service
Tenn. Division of Forestry
Tenn. Game & Fish Commission
Production Credit Association
West Tenn. Flood Control & Soil Conservation District
Department of Vocational Agriculture
Veteran On-the-farm Instructors
Madison County Highway Department
Madison County Conservation League
Jackson Sun Publishing Company
Local Heavy Equipment Contractors

ATTRIBUTE TO THE LATE COOPER ALEXANDER

The District Board of Supervisors take this method to show their respect to Cooper Alexander, 29-year old farm leader who was killed in an automobile accident near Pinson on September 2, 1951. Mr. Alexander was active in all community and civic affairs. He was especially interested in improving agriculture. He was a trustee of the University of Tennessee, Director of the Tennessee Dept. of Agriculture and a veteran instructor. He was a graduate of the University of Tennessee.

Mr. Alexander had been influential in the organization of new soil conservation districts over the state. He was a farmer and vitally interested in improving land. Soil conservation practices needed in keeping with proper land use are demonstrated on the farms owned by him and his father. Not only was Mr. Alexander interested in improving the soil on his own farm but he also enjoyed helping others establish conservation practices. It was in connection with this phase of his work that he was killed. The accident occurred enroute to another farm in his community where he was preparing land and seeding pasture.

Cooper Alexander will always be remembered for his work which he so effectively displayed during his short life. He was a good steward of the soil. It can truthfully be said that he left his land in better condition than he found it.

PLANS FOR 1952.

We, the supervisors of the Madison County Soil Conservation District feel that 1951 was a very successful year. However, studying the overall needs of the district we believe that speeding up the application of certain phases of soil and water conservation must be done. We believe that tree planting on gullied areas must receive special emphasis. The terracing program has advanced to such a point that less emphasis needs to be placed on that practice. Our cropland is being treated with the necessary practices. It is the critical areas which are contributing to the farm income. For 1952 we are going to strive to reach the following goals:

1. Winter cover crops	25,000 Acres
2. Pasture Seeding	6,500 "
3. Wildlife Area Improvement	50 "
4. Tree Planting	1,000 "
5. Farm Ponds	150 (No.)
6. Terraces	3,000 Acres
7. Farm Drainage	3,000 "
8. Water Disposal Areas Crop Rotations	15,000 "
9. Water Disposal Areas	120 "
10. Kudzu	2,000 "
11. Sericea	2,000 "
12. Fishponds	75 (No.)

Let us all work together for this all important cause. The job must be done. Won't you do your part?

J. Harris Smith, Chairman
James S. Lawrence, Sec'y & Treasurer
C. O. Hopper
A. R. Buntin, M. C. Bowman