

Ken Nelson 1985 Conservation Man



Ken Nelson sits on chisel plow which he uses instead of a moldboard plow to work the sandy soil on his farm near Lexington. The plow helps to conserve moisture and prevent soil erosion.

A third generation farmer, Ken Nelson of Lexington was named the 1985 Conservation Man of the Year.

Nelson received the award for carrying on a family tradition of conservation farming that dates back over 80 years. Through the years, the Nelsons' farming practices have saved soil moisture and prevented wind and water erosion on their dryland farm. Ken's grandfather started the tradition in the early 1900's on a farm east of Lexington which he handed over to his two sons, Fred and Norman. In 1981 Ken took over the reigns of the farm from his father. He now leases a portion of the original homestead and has acquired more fields by lease.

"My dad, Fred, and Uncle Norman received this conservation award in 1956 and I was taught to conserve the soil while I was learning the ropes of farming," said Ken.

The farm contains sandy, ashy soil and years ago, sand blows were prevalent. The Nelson brothers used chisel plows instead of moldboard plows, seeded marginal land to permanent grass and established grass waterways.

Nelson has continued these practices and today there is little soil lost to wind erosion.

"Ken has done an excellent job of conservation tillage and his trashy fallow has saved valuable water moisture," said Bob Adelman, soil conservation specialist.

Soil conservation is not a one-time operation for Nelson, it is a way of life. Every farm decision is made to insure the soil stays in the ground.

Nelson has instituted additional steps to conserve soil by plowing later in the season to save moisture, using herbicides to minimize tillage operations and adding terraces to prevent erosion. He uses a chisel plow and disc to create a trashy fallow that leaves residue on the ground holding soil down and moisture in. He uses herbicides such as Round-up to eliminate a weeding operation and has also experimented with using Glean and Round-up together and obtained good results in holding down Russian thistle.

"The use of chemicals is one of the best things that has happened to farming," Nelson noted. "Every time you work the soil or weed you lose soil moisture and make the ground susceptible to blow," he added.

In 1978 Nelson put in his first level terrace to hold water and soil and now has 55,610 feet of terraces. He was an early participant in hosting field variety fertilizer and chemical test plots because he feels they are beneficial.

Miller receives award



Joe Miller, of Miller & Son's Welding, receives special recognition for his efforts developing the no-

till drill. Rudy Bergstrom, Vice-Chairman of the Morrow County Soil and Water Conservation District, presents award.

30 grass species tested locally



Scott Madison, a director of the Morrow County Soil & Water Conservation District and Bob Adleman, District Conservationist for the Soil Conservation Service inspect grass test plot at Lexington Public Works Department.

Nearly 30 grass species have been planted at Morrow County's Public Works Department headquarters in Lexington. The plots were established by the Heppner office of the Soil Conservation Service in cooperation with the Morrow Soil and Water Conservation District several years ago.

Plots are useful to the organizations when selecting varieties for specific purposes. The varieties planted will provide information on which are the most suitable grasses for this region in several areas, ero-

sion control (both wind and water), forage for different seasons, wildlife food and cover, and weed control.

The Morrow County Soil and Water Conservation District will take an active role in securing adequate supplies of seed and providing for the availability of drills. The district also plans to be actively involved in the conservation reserve program.

You may view the plots on your own or contact the SCS or SWCD offices for a guided tour of the various varieties planted.



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