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BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ANNUAL REPORT

1-9-4-0

SEMINOLE SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Sanford, Florida

The Board feels that great strides have been made in establishing an effective soil and water conservation program on cooperator lands in a District scarcely a year old.

It has been the purpose of the Board to further and promote all sound developments which lead to the wise planned use of land in Seminole District. To realize such an objective requires a great deal of work and cooperation on the part of the Board, and the trained technicians provided to assist the District, as well as on the part of the farmers, other agencies, and the general public.

During 1949 soil and water conservation plans were prepared for forty-nine landowners covering 3,519 acres. Some of the more important conservation measures included in the plans were: cover cropping on 1,074 acres, pasture improvement on 1,503 acres, farm drainage on 704 acres, 9.5 miles of properly designed ditches, irrigation land preparation for 106 acres, improved water application on 103 acres, and 5 managed and fertilized fish ponds. While these plans are prepared for a five-year period, it is very significant that about one-third of the planned practices have already been established on the land. Most of the conservation practices not yet applied are scheduled for establishment in 1950.

A strong beginning has been made in solving some of the problems confronting those who wish to adopt a system of conservation farming. The vast acreage of tilled lands, intensively cultivated to truck crops have offered a peculiar challenge to find ways of improving existing systems of water control as well as improve soil fertility. Field studies were made during 1949 on tilled lands belonging to Leo Butner and E. J. Cameron. These comprehensive studies measured the rise and fall of water in the soil using tile spaced at twenty and forty feet respectively. Preliminary evaluations of the data indicate that a wider spacing may be utilized than the twenty foot intervals, which is standard practice at the present time. A wider spacing of tile intervals which gives a satisfactory performance, would represent a considerable money saving to the farmer. Mr. Butner was furnished the results of the field study made on his property. Mr. Butner said, "I've made good use of the information already. I have been able to do a much better job of irrigation, because I know how much water is required and how long it needs to be applied."

R. F. Cooper planted hairy indigo on his tilled farm as one of his soil and water conservation practices for the first time this past summer. A part of his farm acreage was also planted to crotalaria spectabilis. Both the indigo and crotalaria were turned under and the acreage set to cabbage. Mr. Cooper said, "The cabbage planted behind the indigo seemed to take off and grow faster than the cabbage behind the crotalaria." Mr. Cooper wanted to be certain that the indigo was responsible for this increased growth. At harvest time Mr. Cooper had this to say, "Behind the indigo I was picking four bags of cabbage compared to only three bags behind the crotalaria. Furthermore, the cabbage behind indigo matured marketable heads a week sooner." Mr. Cooper's success with hairy indigo on tilled truck land has sold many farmers on the idea of trying this legume next summer. Further field studies are planned for the coming year in order to evaluate present practices of soil improvement more accurately, drainage and irrigation in order to determine what improvements can be made.

Hairy Indigo has grown in favor in Seminole District with cattlemen and citrus growers as well. F. T. Meriwether, local grower and cattleman, planted 275 acres for grazing and seed production. The Indigo planted in mixture with improved pasture grasses made the grasses grow better, saved on the fertilizer bill, provided good grazing, and income from seed harvest," Meriwether said.

Jack Hagar, production manager for Fosgate Growers Cooperative at Forest City, reports that soil and water conservation plans have been prepared for citrus grower members and these plans include provisions for planting 850 acres of early variety Hairy Indigo as a cover crop. Hagar said that his experience has indicated that indigo has slowed, if not prevented, erosion on steep slopes even after experiencing hurricane rains last September.

On April 7, 1949, Miracle Soil Conservation Day was staged at the Sanford Municipal Airport. Sponsoring the big day were the Seminole County Chamber of Commerce, the Greater Orlando Chamber of Commerce, Orlando Sentinel Star, The Sanford Herald, The Fellowship Biblical College, and the Seminole Soil Conservation District. The purpose of Miracle Day was to attract attention to soil and water conservation and emphasize its importance. The dramatic program of building a 385-acre farm in one day was witnessed by over 35,000 people, the largest gathering ever to assemble in Seminole County. It is felt that those who witnessed the event went home with an increased appreciation of what a soil and water conservation program can do toward establishing a permanent agriculture. It is very unfortunate that the organization benefiting from Miracle Soil Conservation Day found themselves unable to carry the plan forward. Recently the organization moved to another location. An effort is being made to procure an individual or organization to carry on the program of soil and water conservation that was established on Miracle Day.

The Board received requests during the year for development of two water control plans for truck lands lying east and west of Sanford. The requests for developing group facilities were received from the Commissioners of Seminole County after farmers had requested action in solving their critical water problems. The Board has tentatively approved these requests but is withholding further action pending receipt of assurance that the required work will be done after the plans are completed.

During the year the Board sponsored a guided tour through the Soil Conservation Service Nursery at Brooksville, Florida. Ten farmers and ranchers and five FFA boys from Seminole District made the trip. The tour resulted in an increased interest in pasture development as evidenced by the demand resulting for soil and water conservation plans. Many of those making the trip have requested information concerning sources of supply of the new grasses and legumes that were seen.

The District has not neglected wildlife in its program. An opportunity exists of integrating intensive land use with the use of the land for quail and other desirable forms of wildlife. As farm plans are developed to use the soil wisely, wildlife development will become a necessary part of the program. Howard Bissland, biologist with the Soil Conservation Service, has been of real service in organizing a program of wildlife conservation. The large number of natural ponds in Seminole District provide a real means for having a fish pond in the back yard to provide recreation and food for the table. Recently, fish ponds belonging to Martin Andersen, Ross Mobley, and W. L. Cullum were stocked with bream from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Hatchery at Welaka, Florida. Large mouth black bass will be stocked this spring. The pond owners are fertilizing their ponds and expect a production of seven hundred pounds of fish per acre of water within the next year.

Plans for the District program in 1950 include: (1) Processing as many as possible of the 71 applications for assistance on file in the work unit office. (2) Through the cooperation of the U. S. Soil Conservation Service and other agencies, studies will be made to develop a satisfactory plan for range management for grazing and game. (3) To continue encouraging the development of permanent pastures using improved grasses and legumes. (4) To find ways and means of replenishing the District treasury in order to obtain more equipment needed in conservation work. (5) To establish more seed and stolon blocks of new grasses and legumes so that local sources of supply will become available.

The Board of Supervisors of Seminole District compliments Les Jacobson, planning technician, and George Keen, conservation aid, for their assistance in developing and applying a program of soil and water conservation.

Thanks is also given to the Orlando Morning Sentinel, The Sanford Herald, and the Floridian, whose publishers have always given space to feature articles and stories of soil and water conservation.

Stocking of fish ponds by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service is deeply appreciated. The Central Florida Experiment Station, the Florida Forest Service, the Extension Service, and the Veterans and Vocational Agricultural instructors and their classes have been of much assistance during the District's first year of operation.

Respectfully submitted,

SEMINOLE SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

By

G. A. Wales

G. A. Wales, Chairman
Board of Supervisors

SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT
ANNUAL REPORT OF RECEIPTS & EXPENDITURES

District Seminole Sanford Florida
(Name) (Supervisor's Headquarters) (State)

Period: January 1, 1949 to January 1, 1950

RECEIPTS (BY SOURCE)

1. Balance Brought Forward		
2. Sale of Seed	\$281.00	
TOTAL		\$281.00

EXPENDITURES (CLASSIFIED)

1. Salaries	--	
2. Telephone	\$50.50	
3. Combine Brachioria seed	50.00	
4. Stationery and stamps	40.20	
5. Fuel for Weed Burner	19.67	
6. Payment 1948 State and National SCD dues	25.00	
7. Bank Service Charge	.57	
TOTAL		\$194.94
BALANCE CARRIED FORWARD		\$ 86.06