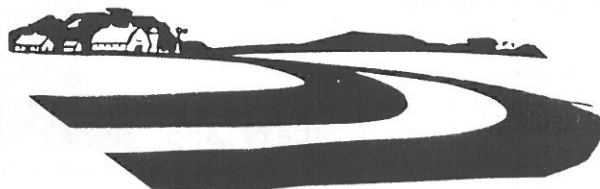


CLARENCE AND DIANE OTTO NAMED 1994 "OUTSTANDING CONSERVATIONISTS"

By Jerome Ledermann
Douglas SWCD Supervisor



Every year more and more people are realizing the importance of conserving soil, water and environment and some of these people have been doing something about it.

A Brandon couple, Clarence and Diane Otto, were recently recognized for their conservation efforts and were presented the 1994 "Outstanding Conservationist" Award for Douglas County by the Douglas SWCD Board of Supervisors.

Some of the conservation methods practiced by the Otto's are as follows: no-till and reduced tillage; an ag waste management system; wildlife and farmstead shelterbelt tree plantings; DNR Forest Management Plan; conservation plan on their HEL acres; and 125 acres in the Water Bank program. Clarence also cuts strips in his alfalfa which keeps the snow where it falls, providing needed moisture for spring.

The farm where Clarence and Diane live has been in the family since the 1940's when Clarence's father, Alfred Otto moved his family there during the depression. Clarence and Diane took over the farm in 1973. The Otto's have two sons, Bill, an Alex Technical College student and Tim, a Brandon High School student.

When asked about his reasons for using conservation farming methods, Clarence said, "Stopping erosion has been my main priority in using conservation practices, however, using conservation methods also provides additional benefits, which are saving fuel, and wear and tear on our equipment."

The Otto family has a 50-cow dairy operation with a feeder operation for dairy steers. They farm 500 acres of cropland with a corn, bean, wheat, alfalfa rotation. Clarence and Diane have restored a wetland on their Water Bank acres and have a large pond on their farmstead for wildlife nesting. They also provide food plots on their Water Bank land. Clarence is involved on their Church Council and has been president of the Pope-Douglas Forage Council.

Clarence was also instrumental in starting the "Alfalfa Scissor Cut" program. This program is a weekly testing of alfalfa fields throughout the County testing for relative feed value. The results are then broadcast over local radio stations informing farmers of when to cut their first crop alfalfa to gain maximum feed value.

1994 Outstanding Conservationists (Continued)

In addition to being recognized as Douglas County "Outstanding Conservationists", Clarence and Diane also received a statewide award at the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD) State Convention held in Minneapolis in December, 1994. The Otto's were one of seven area conservation award winners chosen from the state in a contest sponsored by the MASWCD and The Farmer magazine. This award recognizes people who make outstanding achievements toward protecting the environment and valuable natural resources on farmland.

According to SWCD Board Officials and staff, the Otto's pride in their farming operation is apparent by their neat and well maintained farmstead. Their dedication to the environment by implementing conservation practices is evident by the reduced erosion on their farmland and their concern for water quality is easily recognized by the care they take in using ag waste management practices.



Clarence and Diane Otto
1994 "Outstanding Conservationists"