

OUTSTANDING CONSERVATIONIST

This year's outstanding conservationists were the recipients of the Bankers Award in 1991. At that time they stated their management philosophy in this way: "Conservation goes back to stewardship whether you are talking about the land or whatever you do". By the success of their operation, it is apparent that they still live by that philosophy. The people we are talking about are Calvin and Carla Boyd. The Boyd's live on the farm southwest of Isabel and farm with their son Christopher. The farm consists of both cropland and rangeland and has been in the family for several generations.

Calvin's father, Ivan, and his grandfather both were good conservationists and protected the land as good as they could with the equipment of the time. The Boyd's have improved the cropland with rotations their predecessors would never have dreamed of. One of the rotation crops Calvin uses is cotton. Cotton used to be planted only in the south, but has moved north with improved varieties for our climate.

Another change Calvin has made is to no-till. During his father's and grandfather's time, equipment and chemicals were not available to allow this type of enterprise. Calvin has done a good job of maintaining and improving conservation practices such as terraces and waterways. Most of the Boyd's fields are hilly and making sure terraces and waterways are in place has proven beneficial in preventing the loss of valuable top-soil. They work every year to keep the waterways in good working order. The waterways need to be fertilized and mowed to maintain a good stand of grass that will allow flood water to pass over the grass without causing erosion.

Sunflowers are another rotational crop Calvin uses with no-till to plant into wheat stubble. This gives him another crop for the year and protects the soil from evaporation of moisture. The crop rotation includes wheat, milo, soybeans, corn, sunflowers, and cotton. Cover crops are being used to keep the ground covered and to produce nitrogen for the next crop. Calvin uses strip cropping on fields that are very sandy to assure there will not be any wind erosion even when the crop is short from lack of moisture. He has several center pivot irrigation systems to allow him to have good crops even when the weather does not cooperate.

Calvin and Carla also run a small feedlot to utilize some of the crops they raise and to diversify the operation.

Wildlife are benefitted too when good conservation is practiced. The no-till allows for food and shelter for many kinds of wildlife like geese, ducks, pheasants, quail, and many ground nesting song birds, reptiles, and rodents.

In 1993, Calvin won the Goodyear Conservation Award for his good stewardship. The Goodyear Conservation Award is a previous Banker's Awards recipient who shows exemplary continuation of good stewardship.

Calvin, Carla and Chris worked hard to renovate an old windbreak that was planted back in the WPA days. They cleared out 6 rows of old trees and replaced them with 4 rows of cedars or pines. They

established a drip irrigation system to water them and placed weed barrier fabric around the new trees to control weeds that would rob the trees of moisture and sunlight. This effort rewarded them with the Windbreak Award in 2001. The windbreak continues to grow bigger every year and is doing a good job of protecting the farmstead.

As you can tell, the Boyd's have worked hard over the years to practice good stewardship of the land and the environment.

Congratulations Calvin and Carla.