



South Dakota



CONSERVATION *Showcase*

Hammerstrom Family Has Successful History with Wetlands

Many family farmers and ranchers have a long history of stewardship.



Betty and Lloyd Hammerstrom at his 80th birthday celebration.

Mr. Lloyd Hammerstrom and his family of Lincoln County continue to be an excellent example of a legacy of conservation.

Through the work of private landowner partners such as the Hammerstroms, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) claims countless conservation successes since the very beginning of the Agency. The results of delivering conservation assistance are visible on the Hammerstrom farm and thousands of other family farms and ranches across America's landscape today.

Mr. Hammerstrom owns nearly 400 contiguous acres in northwest Lincoln County south of Sioux Falls, South Dakota. The majority of these acres were purchased in the early 1960's with an additional tract added in 1983.



Lloyd Hammerstrom with a restored wetland. In 2008, a 12-inch tile was broken to restore this wetland. Runoff retention should bring this wetland to a 6-to 8-foot depth. The farm headquarters can be seen in the background.

In 2005, a certified wetland determination inventoried about 80 acres of wetlands on the Hammerstrom farm. Many of those wetlands are drained by 12-inch mainline tile of a 1930's drainage district. However, because the wetlands lie in the lower elevations of the district's drainage area, crops are often inundated for extended periods and damaged beyond profitable margins of return.

Lloyd enrolled much of his original tract in the Soil Bank Program in the 1960's while working at the local meat packing plant to make ends meet.

Then, after the Soil Bank years, the Hammerstrom family, which included more than 20 foster children during the 1970's and 1980's, milked cows and farmed the acres that did not routinely drown out.



Warm season grasses were drilled directly into soybean stubble.



Photo shows a small restored wetland shortly before it was seeded to native grasses.



Miniature ponies are among Lloyd's many hobbies.

The Holstein herd grazed the 39-acre wetland that lies immediately north of the farmstead as well as other parts of the tract that were adjacent to the headquarters and frequently too wet for row crops.

After Lloyd's first wife Mary died of cancer and the foster children left the nest, the cows were sold.

Lloyd's first 24 acres were enrolled in the Farmable Wetlands Program (FWP) in 2002. In early 2006, 109 acres of nonfloodplain wetland restoration and 16 acres of additional farmable wetlands were enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Those acres were seeded to native grass species in June 2006.

The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) gives producers an opportunity for economic return on non-cropland acres. After seriously considering a WRP easement on the remaining eligible acres and acres without crop history, Lloyd did opt for another non-floodplain wetland restoration contract in 2007 on the balance of the eligible acres.

In 2008, the Hammerstrom family was nominated by the Lincoln Conservation District for the NRCS "Excellence in Conservation" award. The Hammerstroms were then selected at the state level and their nomination was carried forward nationally. To acknowledge their

stewardship, the Hammerstrom farm is recognized by NRCS for contributions that non-federal government individuals or groups make to conserve natural resources on private land.

Mr. Hammerstrom is an endearing, neighborly fellow, well-known and highly regarded in Lincoln County. The NRCS and conservation district staff have enjoyed working with Lloyd for many years, "He's been a good one," they say! Lloyd Hammerstrom is an excellent advocate for conservation of private lands, CRP and the services provided by the NRCS and conservation district.

His acreage is enrolled the SD Game, Fish and Parks' Controlled Hunter's Access program and has become a haven for wildlife. This walk-in area is utilized by many hunters in the fall.



The waving big bluestem, Indiangrass, and switchgrasses have encouraged at least two of his neighbors to inquire about CRP and also to enroll in the Farmed Wetland Program. The Hammerstrom Farm is a great conservation showpiece for this region.