

Traer couple helps conserve



JIM AND PAM WESCH stood in front of an old wagon the couple rescued near the entrance to their farm with Skip, one of the dogs

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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Jim and Pam Wesch, who live just outside Traer, were selected for the Kansas Bankers Association soil conservation award.

The couple has lived a little over two miles north of Traer for the past seven years. Mr. Wesch said his granddad homesteaded the land and built the house in 1917, where they now live.

Mr. Wesch grew up four miles from the homestead, while his wife is an Iowa farm girl. Mr. Wesch graduated from Decatur Community High School 50 years ago. Actually, said Mrs. Wesch, her husband is helping plan the classes, 50th reunion coming up this May.

Although retired, the couple is involved in many activities, including being what they call hobby farmers. Mr. Wesch said they grow wheat and sometimes milo.

Over the years they have put in grass strip-ping, providing areas in the fields for wild-life habitat and also helping block the wind some.

Mr. Wesch said they probably started putting in the grass strips five or six years ago. One, he said, has a million sunflowers in it. The seed planted in the strips includes native grasses.

There's probably six of the strips of grass on land near the house, he said.

"We are stewards of the land," said Mr. Wesch, "while we are here on earth. It's up to us to take care of it."

The conservation practices, he said, aren't only good for the land, but also help increase habitat for the animals. It's just a good thing.


Besides the grass stripping, he said, they also do rotational grazing on the pasture land they rent out.

The couple said they had a pasture a few years ago that was full of prairie dogs and soap weeds. They treated for the prairie dogs and sprayed and sprayed the soap weeds and now the pasture is cleaned up, said Mr. Wesch.

In 2006 the couple won the windbreak award. The trees are still out there, said Mr.

— Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis

Congratulations
 to the Kansas Bankers
 Awardees and all farmers
 of the area for the practice of wise conservation
 practices that help to preserve the precious soil.



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