

TECHNICAL NOTES

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SPECIFICATION

By Ed Sheer – Supervisor of Wood River S.C.D.

Many of us have a tendency to “bristle” when the word “specification” is used. Perhaps the word seems to mean that “we must do the job according to specifications or else.” But if I’m building a house and I tell the contractor that I want 2 x 10 floor joists, or 2 x 4 studs, or anything about how I want him to build my house, I’m setting up specifications he must follow if he expects pay when he completes it. If I wish to level a field so that it irrigates West instead of South, I, myself, automatically set up the specifications for that job, and the technician I consult merely works out the details which will enable me to meet the specifications which I decided upon. If ASC is to cost-share my leveling, then the people who provide the funds through Government regulations, have a right to add a few specifications which will assure that their money will assist me in securing the best possible leveling job. The same provisions apply to all Conservation jobs, such as installation of concrete checks, drops, etc. So who should I be upset or angered when the technicians utter those familiar words, “The completed job must meet these specifications”? When I decide which direction I want to irrigate my field, and when I apply for cost-shares, I know that I must meet specifications, or else ... If I borrow money from my loaning agency or bank, I know that the loaning institution will require me to meet specifications which that loaning agency will review and approve before the funds are advanced. I must show that the project for which I am borrowing funds is sound and feasible.

I believe, therefore, in prior planning on my job. I believe that if I stake a field for leveling, have the leveling job designed, and then require my contractor to follow the design as nearly as possible, I will be able to irrigate that field and harvest my crops with a minimum of trouble. I believe that only in rare cases should a contractor “eye ball” a leveling job.

While I believe that specifications should be followed to the letter, I believe also that the specifications on any soil conservation job should be checked with the designing technician to assure that mistakes have been corrected if any have been made, and to assist the technicians in effecting changes in specifications which may seem unsound. Once accepted by the farmer, I believe that the specifications on a conservation job should then be followed by the contractor as nearly as possible.

/s/ Meader H. Wilkins