



NORM BERG COLLECTION

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DICK ESSEKS

NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY AND UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN

I have known Norm Berg since 1978 and have admired him greatly for his conservation advocacy, his intellectual honesty, and his encouragement of others seeking to make contributions to the preservation of natural resources. At our first meeting, an NRCS conference in DC, where he was the Service's Associate Chief and I was a rapporteur, he publicly admitted to weakness in the implementation of a significant agency policy. In the years afterwards I observed him working energetically and highly effectively to improve the agency's policies and performance, both when he headed it as Chief and when he advised it while associated with American Farmland Trust and serving as the SWCS's representative in DC.

For 20 years he helped Steve Kraft (Southern Illinois University) and me with surveys of farmers and farmland owners on conservation policy issues. Norm suggested questions, evaluated our preliminary write-ups, and then helped us to disseminate findings to policy makers. He arranged entrée to the latter and often accompanied us to the meetings. Regardless of how academic we looked and sounded, the listeners tried to take us seriously because Norm was our patron.

Never did he boast of his own many achievements or otherwise signal the need for praise and deference. Instead, he concentrated on learning about policy issues and developing solutions through his own efforts and the warm encouragement of others. He has been the perfect official and unofficial public servant