Professionalism & State Societies

A NEW SOCIETY FOR SOIL SCIENTISTS

The name of the society shall be “Nebraska Society of Professional Soil Scientists.” The Objective of the Society is “to advance and promote the science of soil and the profession of Soil Scientist.”

The above quotes are from the constitution and bylaws of the newly organized Nebraska Society of Professional Soil Scientists. The group held its first annual meeting at Kearney, Nebraska on October 16, 1975. It boasts about 60 members made up largely of soil scientists with the Soil Conservation Service, and the University of Nebraska Conservation and Survey Division. Members are also drawn from the Department of Agronomy at the University of Nebraska, the Natural Resource Districts within the state, and the State of Nebraska Department of Revenue.

Membership in the organization is based “on payment of dues” as the constitution indicates. In addition to this important requirement, an active member must hold a B.S. degree in soils or equivalent area of study and must have a minimum of 3 years experience in soil mapping and/or soil classification. Associate members must meet all requirements of active membership except the experience. The philosophy expressed by these membership requirements is that a background in the principles of soil science plus a measure of experience in soil mapping and/or soil classification are usually necessary for development of the level of competence expected of one who may be called upon to accurately interpret soil survey information.

Proficiency in making soil surveys and interpreting information from them is basically what the Society is all about. Several states now have a procedure whereby soil scientists are certified through official state channels. Development of such a system of certification was attempted in Nebraska a few years ago, but the attempt was not successful. At that time it was decided to form an organization that would provide additional identify for soil scientists and work toward establishing this organization as one in which membership implied a specified level of competence in soil surveying, soil classification, and interpretation of soil survey data. After the society has established itself, it will hopefully have a greater chance of gaining state recognition than was previously possible.

Interim officers who carried the major responsibility for development of the organization were Jim Culver, state soil scientist, SCS; Bob Pollock, soil scientist, SCS; Lloyd Mitchell, state soil scientist, SCS (retired); and Dave Lewis, associate professor of agronomy, University of Nebraska. Prior to the October 16 meeting, Bob Pollock, Aurora, Nebraska was elected president, Dave Lewis was elected president-elect, John Brubacher, assistant state soil