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OUR LAND

Two Whelan Brothers in the Sherburne county Soil Conservation District use contour and field strips to lick the water erosion problem on their 280-acre farm. They give credit to strip cropping for better plant growth, increased production, reduced costs and greater ease of operation. The boys report field preparations and planting costs on the strips are the cheapest they have ever had.

There are ten basic commandments recommended by University Farm for good legume stands. The principals, all proven in practice by Minnesota farmers, include

1. Use lime on acid soils according to soil tests.
2. Use fertilizers where soil tests show a need.
3. Seed when the soil is moist all the way to the subsoil.
4. Prepare a good seedbed.
5. Inoculate seed with proper nodule bacteria every time.
6. Use a companion crop, if advisable.
7. Use proper seeding rates and mixtures.
8. Seed shallow (to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch) and firm the soil after seeding.
9. Protect the land from erosion, particularly from wind on sandy soil.
10. Preserve the stand by careful management, once seedlings have emerged.

North of Eyota, in the Upper Zumbro Soil Conservation District, live a nearly solid block of people who make their living from the farm. They all practice soil conservation. Most of them belong to the Eyota Evangelical and Reformed Church. Before and after Sunday services they get together to discuss their experiences with contour strip croppings, terracing, crop rotations, improved pastures and grass silage.

Everyone agrees drainage is one way to increase production -- on some soils. Some can't be improved by drainage. Dennis Ryan, University Farm Extension engineer says not to drain (1) acid peats, (2) soils with heavy alkali, (3) marl beds.

Acid peats are low in lime and are generally moss-covered bogs with extensive tree growth. There aren't many heavy alkali soils in Minnesota. Usually all that is left after marl beds are drained is solid lime.