

University Farm News
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Soil Test Results Sometimes Take Awhile --- It might take a bit longer than you think necessary to get your soil analysis back from the University of Minnesota. There's a good reason, though. Dr. John Grava of the University's soils department has found it necessary to give each soil sample a good "conditioning" before testing it. This "conditioning" is a slow drying for at least three days. Tests show that many soils will show twice as much available potassium after such a "conditioning" as they would have if tested when moist. This also helps explain why some poorly drained soils are low in available potash. This story came to us from Charles Simkins, extension soils specialist at the University.

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Got a Problem Lake --- Do you have a problem lake? The State Department of Conservation often gets letters asking, "What can I do about algae?" "How can I destroy weeds around our lake?" "How do we dredge to improve our lake frontage?" "How about this rotenone?" For answers to these questions and many more that might be bothering you about a lake, write or call the Bureau of Fisheries, 360 State Office Building, St. Paul.

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Soybean Worth Something --- Did you know that the residue after soybean harvest --that is, the leaves, stems, hulls and stubble-- are worth about \$8 a ton? In Minnesota we get about a ton of such residues per acre from an average crop of soybeans, so why burn them? Here's how they figure that \$8 a ton value. First, at present fertilizer prices, nitrogen that's worth about \$3 per acre is lost when the straw is burned. In addition, we lose some minerals. This makes the total loss of plant food--due to burning soybean leftovers--to about \$5 an acre. You lose valuable organic matter, too of course. This story comes from Ed Jensen, a University of Minnesota extension agronomist.

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A Little Water Goes a Long Way --- Tile drainage and soil erosion seldom are linked, but a farmer near Odin, Norman Ramsdale, has a gully that has eaten back 100 feet and is now 30 feet deep after 10 years--all from the water of an eight-inch tile outlet. This is a slow process, but if not checked it will swallow up rich farm land beyond. Now, with the Watonwan Soil Conservation District, Norman is building a drop-pipe inlet that will carry that water to where it won't have a chance to "bite".

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