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Our LAND



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Letter of Recommendation --- "Some of my neighbors think it's just luck." This is from a letter from Lewis Norman, who farms 200 acres near Leonard in Clearwater County. "But, I plan for the yields and meat production on my farm and use every way I know to improve the soil. I don't believe that the recommendations of any county agent, SCS man or any other professional advisor are any good--unless they're put to use." Lewis is secretary of the Clearwater Soil Conservation District board, and keeps most of his farm seeded down to grasses and legumes for hay, pasture and soil-building.

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Lime Can Increase Corn Yields, Too --- Quite often liming is done only to improve stands and yields of grasses and legumes. But an experiment reported by University of Minnesota Extension Soils Specialist Charles Simkins showed that putting limestone on corn fields can boost yields, there, too--and as much as four or five bushels per acre. Liming soils increases the ability of phosphorus to be used properly in the soil and also encourages growth of soil micro-organisms, which are, of course, essential to healthy soil and crops. Better micro-organism growth increases the ability of nitrogen to go to work in the corn plants.

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Brothers Change to Contour Plan --- Alvin and Oscar Myhre, who farm in the Root River Soil Conservation District, decided last fall that the damage their 240 acres took last fall from soil and water loss was going to stop. Since joining the district, they have contour strip cropped 120 acres, built two stock ponds and planted 500 evergreen trees. Commenting on the heavy May rains, Alvin said, "The soil we'd have lost if we were farming the old way would have been tremendous."

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Soil Sampling Time Growing Short --- Not much time left now to do a job of soil sampling. Before freeze-up is the best time. Arnold Wiebusch, extension soil conservation agent for Goodhue County at Red Wing, says the field you plan to plant to corn next spring would be a good one to start on. Corn is the crop that usually gets a favored spot in the rotation. But to produce a really top-quality crop, corn must have a balance of plant nutrients in the soil. That's why a soil test is so helpful --it gives you exact facts on the needs for each plant food in that soil.

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