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Proper Drainage Improves Local Road -- Douglas Sillers, Moorhead, arranged with his township board and the Clay county Soil Conservation District to combine the features of a well-built township road and a good outlet drainage ditch alongside it. Sillers has this to say about his present road and ditch improvement project: "Our modern off-highway roads should all have been constructed with drainage features alongside them instead of the usual borrow pits. In the past, the farmers' efforts to do on-farm drainage have actually been hindered due to lack of a suitable outlet."

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Corn Crops Need Nitrogen -- Corn is a big nitrogen-user. A 100-bushel-per-acre yield of corn will require from 100 to 200 pounds of nitrogen per acre, says J. M. MacGregor, soils scientist at the University of Minnesota. That means that future yields will decrease if we don't put some nitrogen back on the land. Right now, it would take 100,000 tons of nitrogen annually to get the most out of our soils, says MacGregor, but state farmers applied only 33,783 tons last year. And even that was 25 times as much as they used in 1945.

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Fertilizer Can Double Crop Yields -- A sound fertilizer plan has doubled crop yields for Robert Backstrom, grain farmer in the Red River Valley near Warren, Minnesota. By using 80 to 150 pounds of 16-20-0 per acre on every field of seeding, he has increased yields of every crop on the farm since World War II. His yield increases run like this: Oats, from 40 bushels per acre 15 years ago to 75 and 90 per acre now; wheat, 20 bushels before, 40 now; and barley, 25 bushels per acre in the early 40's compared to 50 and 60 per acre nowadays.

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Shelterbelt Protects Farm -- Seeds he gathered as a boy now provide K. Vernon Gerdin, Stanchfield, Minnesota, with a shelterbelt north and west of his farmstead. He started forestry work on his farm while a 4-H club worker. Within his shelterbelt are a number of fruit trees. He harvests some timber from the 50-acre woodlot every year. Since 1949 he has planted about 30,000 trees on some low waste land. And in addition to his income from farm timber sales, he produces about 275 gallons of maple syrup every year.