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Contour Strips Slow Runoff -- "After our fields were laid out in contour strips, there was less runoff in the spring and after heavy rains than before the land was contoured", say Ingolf Aal and sons, Starbuck, Minn. These farmers, in the Pope county soil conservation district, report heavier stands of grains, corn and legumes on the strips than there were before. They found that strips are ideal if they want to plant a few acres of a new seed variety, because the strips are small individual fields. Also, with strips, the Aals don't have to wait for the lower ends of fields to dry up before seeding. They have had contour strips for seven years.

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Burning Harms Soil -- The old idea that it helps to burn woodlands and prairies just isn't so, say soils men and forestry specialists at the University of Minnesota. Burning does more harm than good. Besides creating a hazard to the whole countryside, fire will kill young trees and young grass, injure the old trees, set back the growth of old grasses, and destroy valuable organic matter. Forest and grass fires also take a heavy toll of wildlife.

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Rough Tillage Saves Soil -- "Smooth plowing" may look fine just after a field is completed, but rough tillage--especially in the fall--does a better job of checking wind and water erosion. Rough tillage has two main advantages, say soils scientists at the University of Minnesota. First, the uneven surface and crop stubble slow up the wind and keep the soil from breaking up into fine particles that blow away easily. Second, rough tillage gives the water more chance to soak into the soil.

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More Forage Aids Hennepin Farmer -- Andrew Jessen, Maple Plain, a cooperator in the Hennepin County soil conservation district, doubled his dairy herd "carrying capacity" by setting up a corn-corn-hay-hay rotation and using plenty of fertilizer. He put in contour strips, sod waterways and drain tile. The farm had no other hay than bluegrass and timothy in 1952, but now half of the land is in alfalfa-brome. Jessen green-feeds his 30 Holsteins in the summer. That means cutting green forage daily with a chopper and feeding it to cows in the barnlot.