

# Our LAND



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Hard to Measure Value of Grasses and Legumes -- It's difficult to put a dollar value on a grass or legume crop in a regular rotation over and above its values as a livestock feed. Many values last for years. Rodney A. Briggs, Extension agronomist at the University, says it's easy to overlook that "bonus" value in improving soil structure, holding water, controlling plant diseases and insects, boosting yields, and protecting wild life. Often, that hard-to-measure bonus surpasses the value of the original use the grasses were planted for.

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Conservation Plan Thwarts Erosion -- Erosion is slight on farms that have a good conservation plan. C. Leonard Johnson, a farmer near Red Wing, says his 50 acres of upland farmed in contour strips in a four-year rotation since 1946 didn't wash in the last hard rains. And nearly 11 inches fell on his land in one week. Still, no silt drifted from the corn strips to hay strips below and his yields have grown each year. Contrast this bright picture with the great rain damage on so many farms. Silt covers bottom land a foot deep in places. Road ditches are partly filled, bridges washed out. Farm fences across waterways and draws are damaged or completely torn away.

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Don't Let Weeds Get Start -- Our land can produce a greater bounty of high quality crops if it's free of weeds. One way to lick weeds is to prevent them from getting established. You can do this by using only adapted, pure seed; cleaning farm machinery when moving from field to field or farm to farm; using weed-free feeds; and maintaining high soil fertility to give crops the competitive advantage to hold their own against weeds. Another step is keeping waste areas free of weeds so they don't get a chance to produce seeds. These tippers come from Edwin Jensen, University extension agronomist.

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S-D Day, December 15 -- Wednesday, December 15, is S-D Day -- Safe-Driving Day. Stay around to enjoy our land and its wealth. Drive more carefully, considerately and sensibly.