

Our LAND



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Short Story -- The spring sun beamed down on the farmers watching the tree-planting machine as it left a neat line of young trees. Herman Paquin, Elbow Lake, pointed to a bunch of sleek steers and said, "Last winter the northwest wind blew a hundred pounds off every steer I owned." Says Marvin Smith, Extension forester at the University of Minnesota, in telling the story: "Livestock exposed to freezing winter blasts in unsheltered feed lots often lose instead of gain weight. But the sheltered animal uses less feed to 'keep his own furnace' going and puts more of it into flesh. Stocks of young trees are now more complete than later, so order now for spring delivery. Your county agent has full information.

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Crops Returns Double Through Livestock -- "Income from crops is increased, often doubled, when they are fed livestock and marketed as dairy and livestock products. But the feeding has to be efficient. High yields in livestock feeding as well as high crop yields are both essential if a farm operator is to earn high income. Low yields can thus be a serious handicap to even the most skillful dairy or stockman." That's S. B. Cleland speaking. He's a farm management specialist at the University of Minnesota. He points out that when crop yields on a livestock or dairy farm drop one per cent, potential earning power of that farm is likely to drop three times as much--three per cent. And where yields drop lower than 30 per cent below normal, then the whole farm is likely to lose money--regardless of high farm prices.

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Growing More Interested -- Minnesota farmers show great interest in their soils. So says Alex Robertson of SCS. In 1954, 6,000 farmers in our nearly 70 soil conservation districts requested a soil survey. They've learned that just as you can't judge a book by its cover, you can't judge a soil by just looking at it. When a soil scientist makes a soil map, it is based on examination of the soil four feet deep -- a "3-D view".

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Soil Test a Must -- When you're hungry, you know what you want to eat--your body tells you that. But, how about your soil? It can't talk--except at harvest-time. Only a soil test will tell you the nutrients it's hungry for. County agents have information on the University of Minnesota's soil testing program. The information--free, of course. The soil tests--remarkably inexpensive.