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Improvement-Success Story -- Harold Loken's farm near Zumbrota is fully strip-cropped and terraced but was getting a lot of runoff from a nearby farm. Because of its "up and down-hill" farming, water rushed down through a road culvert within five minutes after every rain. Recently that adjoining farm was bought by Olaf Knutson, who began contour strips two years ago. He now has 116 acres of them, every third strip seeded down. This embraces the entire watershed drainage onto the Loken farm. This summer heavy rains--which had once started a torrent through the culvert now cause no water flow for half an hour. That slowed-down water doesn't tear away top-soil.

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Long-Needed Soils Research to Begin -- Long-needed research on Minnesota soils "physical properties" will begin soon at the University of Minnesota's soils department. University soil scientists will tackle the study of how soil particles "live and work together" and how they must be handled to stay healthy. A young soil physicist recently joined the Minnesota staff to help push this project. "Many soil secrets will have to be unlocked by research if we are to show higher production and still save our precious soil," says University soils head William P. Martin.

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Drainage Pays for Tractor Fuel -- Here's a new angle on this drainage business. A Dodge County Soil Conservation District cooperator, Melvin Langemo, who has done a lot of tile drainage on his place, says: "If a young fellow, starting farming on a wet farm, tiled it out the project would pay for itself in motor fuel he'd save over the years--that's profit over and above the higher yields drainage brings.

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Are You Planting Weeds? -- Here's a shocker from University of Minnesota seeds men. A survey by the Minnesota Crop Improvement Association showed that, of 45 samples collected of farmers' own seed, only one was pure enough and germinated high enough to meet requirements for certified seed. Thirty-seven samples contained other crops, averaging 125 "foreign seeds" per pound of seed. Ten contained weeds in amounts over allowed by the State Weed Law. The answer to such "weed planting" -- certified seed. It can have only a tiny percentage of weed seed in it.