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# Our LAND



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Here's How Conservation Plan Affects Runoff -- How his farm is affected by nearby farms is told by Arthur Fitschen, Wells Creek. He has often noticed the difference in the amount of water two similar 70-acre watersheds give off. The south one comes from Art Schilling's farm -- a farm protected with a stock pond and contour strips in a four-year rotation. The water comes slow enough so a grassed waterway can carry it to the creek without its tearing away soil. The other watershed comes from the north and drains a farm that has no conservation practices. It carries small stones that have dug a 10-foot deep gully as it runs off the steep slope. Says Fitschen: "If all small watersheds were protected with conservation plans, there would be no silt or water damage in Wells Creek.

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Pine Planting In A Big Way -- Down near Stewartville, an 82-year-old farmer, George Hale, first started planting pines on his farm 35 years ago. He's planted 5,000 pines over the years. Nearly 2,000 pines form a 30-foot high shelterbelt around his home. About the time he started the windbreak, he began a quarter-acre reserve plot for replacing the few trees that die. From this plot also comes Christmas trees to give friends, neighbors and civic and church groups. Hale sells no trees -- refuses to, even when asked -- but has given hundreds away, says Parker Anderson, Extension forester at the University of Minnesota.

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Rotations Don't Take "Back Seat" -- Sometimes it might seem that with all the emphasis on huge corn yields from heavy fertilizing, the value of good rotations "takes a back seat." But, not so. One Dodge County farmer, a steady follower of rotations, says: "When we drained out our permanent pasture years ago, it was mellow and easy to work and, since it was flat, we thought it could be worked forever. It yielded well, but after it was in a row crop several years, yields began to drop and the land got harder to work. Since we've begun a farm plan, however, yields are rising and the land is easier to work. These fellows who go overboard with fertilizers thinking they can keep up their yields year after year -- and save their soil, too -- are in for a big surprise, especially if they hit a dry year. Only humus will take in and store water and make ground work easier and only good rotations add humus."

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Letters of Recommendation -- "I like a soil conservation district program because it helps you develop a long range blueprint of your farming operation -- and that will show your needs." That's one Carver County farmer's endorsement of his district.

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