

Our LAND



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Contour Strips Stop Dust-Bowl Conditions -- The dust bowl of the Thirties came back to southwest Minnesota on April 20--not for a long stay, however, but enough to make you stop and think. Striking examples of the benefits of contour strips were reported to Howard Stevermer, soil conservationist for the Lincoln District. He said many people told him stories of "no blowing" from strip-cropped fields which lay next to open fields that were "smoking" from the big blow.

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Schools Emphasizing Conservation -- Here's a report on schools that are promoting soil conservation. It comes from Clifton Halsey, Extension soil conservation agent in Stillwater, Washington County. The Mahtomedi schools have for some time been setting the pace by "plowing in" conservation subjects with other courses such as biology and social studies. In 1954, the school started a conservation class which participated in the Land Appreciation School last fall. Forest Lake has a high school conservation class taught by Herbert Harper and they also participated in the school. One semester of "conservation" is required of all seventh and eighth graders of the District 102 system in St. Paul Park. Many joined in a Tree Planting Day this spring.

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Wind "Lifts" Many Tons of Soil -- How much does the "lift" of soil amount to in a heavy wind? It'd startle you. It's not pounds, but tons--hundreds of tons. Harold Dineen, Nobles District soil conservationist in western Minnesota, measured the drifted soil in a road ditch that came off one 40-acre field during the big April 20 "blow." It amounted to 117 cubic yards, or about 175 tons. Yes, tons. And it didn't all stop there. Dineen believes the wind probably carried off as much plant nutrients, organic matter and fine soil particles as the 175 tons of heavier soil particles which lay in the ditch. That's perhaps a total of 350 or 400 tons sucked off a field.

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Fertilizer Sense -- When fertilizers do not increase crop yields on low-producing soils, it means you haven't put on enough or put on the wrong kind. A soil test will help you find out. County agents have full information.

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