

USDA says more work needed to prevent soil erosion

WASHINGTON, D.C. — More than half of the nation's cropland, forests, pastures and rangeland need

increased conservation treatment to reduce soil erosion and improve water quality, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture M. Rupert Cutler said last week.

Announcing the first results of a 1977 national inventory of land resources by the Department's Soil Conservation Service (SCS), Cutler said nearly 900 million acres of non-federal land need conservation work, about the same as a decade ago.

"But there have been significant changes in the kinds of land needing treatment," he said.

Cropland acres that need conservation treatment declined from 64 per cent in 1967 to 58 per cent in 1977, he said. But forest lands needing treatment climbed from 62 to 67 per cent in the same period, and the pasture and range land needing treatment rose from 71 to 75 per cent, Cutler said.

The SCS National

Resource Inventories, which cover all non-federal land in Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and the United States except Alaska, are being conducted in three phases. Phase 1 is now complete; phase 2 will be completed later this year, and phase 3, in 1980.

Data were collected by SCS field employees at more than 200,000 sample points.

Other highlights of phase 1:

— The amount of rural land available for farming, ranching, and forestry declined nearly 37 million acres between 1967 and 1977, while the proportion of good, fair and poor agricultural land remained about the same. Of the total rural nonfederal land, 414 million acres are fairly level, while 1 billion acres have gentle to very steep slopes. Nearly 270 million acres are wet, while about 402 million acres are droughty or lack enough water to grow agricultural

crops or trees. Many of these conditions, singly or in combination, limit the use of land.

— Land available for grazing has increased sharply since 1967, rising to 541 million acres in 1977. Today more than half the non-federal agricultural land is used for native pasture, pastureland or rangeland. There has been a corresponding decline, in non-federal forestland.

— Homes, businesses, roads and ponds are swallowing rural land at the rate of about 3 million acres a year. Most of this irreversible change is related to urban expansion. Nearly one-third of the rural land lost to development is cropland. Small water areas increased by more than 1

million acres in the 1967-77 decade.

— Flood prone areas in the non-federal land area of the United States total 175 million acres. Nearly half this land is farmland of good quality for crops.

— There are 42 million acres of wetlands in the United States, of which 97 percent are in uses other than cropland. Forested wetlands account for half the total acreage.

— Average rates of soil erosion on cropland range from less than one ton per acre per year in some states to more than 41 tons per acre in the Caribbean area. Twenty-two states, mainly in the midwest and east, have average annual cropland erosion of 4 tons or more per acre.



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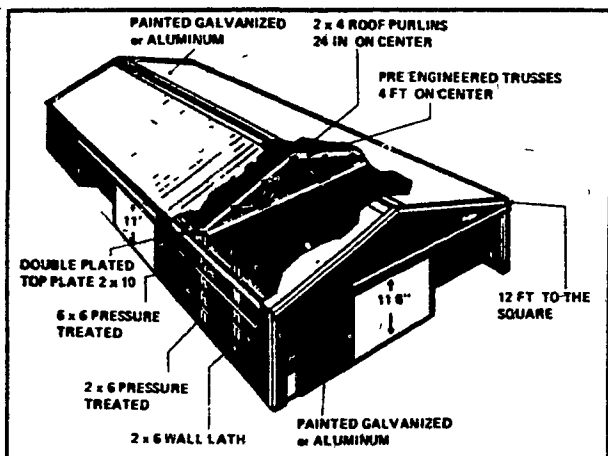
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COLUMBUS, Ohio - The fourth Eastern Limousin Breeder Association Sale was held recently at the Ohio State Fairgrounds, here. The 53 lots of mostly open heifers and bulls grossed \$83,380 to average \$1573.

Topping the sale was Nordic Jelena, a March 1977 fullblood daughter of Gendame and bred to Inautionmare. She sold to K&M Limousin, Lynn, Ind. for \$5600 and she was consigned by Nordic Farms, Guelph, Ontario.

Top selling bull was BJCO Dynamo 065K Jones Farm, Venedocia, Ohio, paid \$4900 for this May 1978 purebred bulls averaged \$3510. The top percentage bull was a Patton's Seldom Rest Farm

consignment. He was an April 1978, 75 percent son of Gendame and was purchased by Charles Roberts, Cumberland, Ohio for \$2500. Seven percentage bulls averaged \$1817.

A set of 14 open 87 percent heifers averaged \$1255. A Jerry Church, Amelia, Ohio consignment topped the groups at \$1625. She was a March 1978 Fanfaron daughter and was purchased by W.J. and Hazel Somerville, Parkersburg, W. Va. Fourteen open 75 percent heifers averaged \$876.

Volume buyers were W.J. and Hazel Somerville; Shively Farms, Fremont, Ind., and Wayne Miller, Bruston Mills, W. Va. Cattle were sold into six states.

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