

Farmers fighting

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 addition to, not a substitute for, other programs operating in the Great Plains states.
 Besides controlling wind erosion, the program helps farmers whose

land is subject to serious erosion by water because of soil type, terrain, climate, flooding, salinity and other natural resources. In most Great Plains counties, 33 different conservation practices

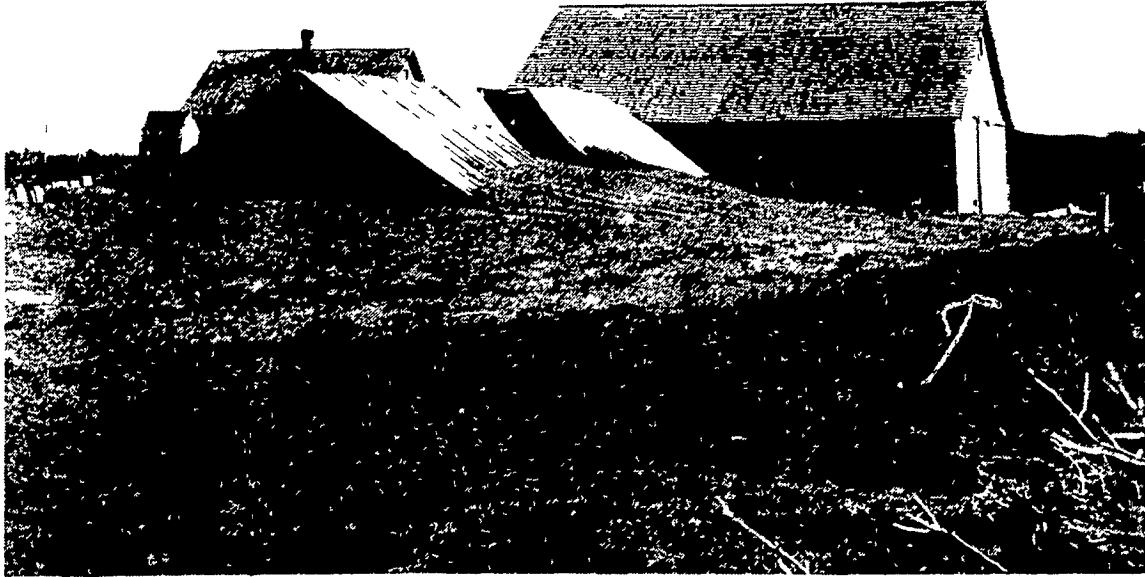
can qualify a farmer or rancher to receive cost-sharing assistance. Visualize an aerial view of the ten Great Plains states—a total land area of 346 million acres—and saving the soil looks like too big a task to think about, but it is being done, said Berg.
 Considerable progress is being

made," he said. "We've had no Dust Bowls since the 1930's. Much soil that otherwise would be lost is staying on the Great Plains. However, we'll have to do more to prevent one in the years ahead."
 Russ Thompson, a rancher near Lusk, Wyoming, put it this way: "Despite the especially dry conditions around Lusk this year, we were able to manage our ranch so we did not have to worry about buying hay or hauling water."

"It would have been harder to do this before the Great Plains Conservation Program. That's why I got interested in soil conservation in the first place."
 Thompson said he's using the program to carry out several practices to maintain good rangeland. These include piping livestock water to various areas and fencing pastures so animals will graze the forage evenly.

"I have backed the Great Plains contract all the way. Nobody has a crystal ball to predict the future. The Great Plains program gives us the flexibility to modify plans as operating conditions change," he said.
 Last year, Berg said, the Soil Conservation Service helped farmers and ranchers practice conservation on 3.2 million acres of land in the Great Plains.

Among these projects were 163,000 acres of permanent vegetative cover, 3198 miles of terraces, 599 miles of livestock pipelines and 4241 acres of wind-breaks.
 More than 57,000 conservation contracts have been developed on 108 million acres in the ten Great Plains states. Nearly 12,250 contracts now are in effect on about 30 million acres.



No people lived on this farm one mile south of Winner, S.D., when the top photo was snapped on September 10, 1935. The country's first national dust storm had driven them out after it became unthinkable to grow crops on the land or live in the house.

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