

U.S. soil losses would cover Iowa

LANCASTER — Erosion robs this country of enough soil to cover the state of Iowa with a layer an inch thick each year, and this often comes from the best land, say experts with the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

That's an annual loss of 5.5 billion tons of soil, a persistent statistic despite efforts to bring it down.

Farmers, ranchers and conservation specialists with USDA agencies have stepped up their fight to check the huge losses, and they're urging that much more be done in the years ahead.

Conservationists emphasize that the stakes in protecting farm topsoils have risen sharply. With so many more mouths to feed than in the past, abroad as well as in the U.S., they warn, failure to better protect the topsoil eventually would mean hunger for millions.

"Soils being taken by erosion generally are the richest in

nutrients and organic matter and have the most favorable conditions for plant growth," said Norman A. Berg, chief of the USDA's Soil Conservation Service. "This constitutes a significant drain on the productive potential of land where our food is produced."

Berg cited a Farm Pond Harvest magazine story which said enough soil goes into the Mississippi River in one year to build an island a mile long, a quarter of a mile wide and 200 feet high. Such an island would contain the equivalent of 808 rail carloads of phosphorus, 21,121 carloads of potassium, 291,511 carloads of calcium and 67,270 carloads of magnesium.

"Our specialists haven't made a precise check on those magazine statistics, but they look about right," said Berg.

"We know the losses are tremendous year after year. We also know that, with the nutrients washed away, it takes a heavy diet

of chemical fertilizers to keep the land producing adequate food and fiber."

Berg said the soil losses are like bags of money floating down the nation's rivers.

Figured at 1979 prices, USDA soil conservation specialists estimate that putting all of the lost nitrogen and phosphorus and one-fourth of the lost potassium back into the damaged land would add up to \$18 billion in just one year.

Dollars are just part of the problem. This past summer's long stretch of 100-degree-plus temperatures in some areas stirred memories of the dust clouds that engulfed Great Plains states like Oklahoma and Texas nearly half a century ago.

Although the hot, dry summer of 1980 was mild compared to the "Dust Bowl" of the mid-1920s, it did reduce food production. The recent drought piled soil dunes at the sides of buildings and on highways, sent soil into homes, muddied drinking water, made food on the table gritty and killed the dreams of some farm and ranch families.

Some people living in the Great Plains prayed for rain and hung wet sheets over windows and across cribs so babies could breathe easier. Yet, this was only a relatively gentle reminder of what can happen in the future if the pace of erosion isn't slowed, Berg said.

At today's erosion rate, he said, food supplies will be seriously threatened in about 100 years.

In Iowa, for example, half of the original topsoil—six to eight inches—

already has been lost from sloping, unprotected land during the century the state has been farmed.

Fortunately, said Berg, the country has the know-how to bring soil erosion under control.

"By using modern conservation methods and advanced agricultural technology, we can prevent another Dust Bowl," Berg said. "Terraces, conservation tillage, contour stripcropping, grassed waterways and other practices help save the land. Many of the country's farmers and

ranchers are aware of this and are taking appropriate actions.

"However, on land that has no conservation measures, erosion continues.

"It has been said many times, and it is true, that nature cannot replenish the topsoil as fast as we can destroy it. It also is true that farmlands we lose today will not grow food for future generations. We must act now to conserve the soil resources or face serious trouble ahead."

New Penn State dairy manual available

UNIVERSITY PARK — The dairy producer who survives in the 1980's will be one who can manage cows, large amounts of money, and who can effectively put the technical services of ag industry to work.

According to Lawrence Specht, Extension dairy specialist at Penn State, the professional dairy producer needs many facts to make sound management decisions. These are now available in reference form, with the new "Dairy Reference Manual" published by Penn State's College of Agriculture.

The new publication, a major revision of the very successful manual released nearly a decade ago, is designed to be a catalog of facts for dairy producers and for the people who support them with supplies and services.

Topics covered in this new 278-

page edition include milk quality and product technology, diseases and parasites, breeding and selection, feeding, milking equipment, and farm management data. The book includes a detailed index.

To get your copy of this helpful reference guide, send \$7.50 to DAIRY MANUAL, Box 6000, University Park, PA 16802. Be sure to make your check or money order payable to The Pennsylvania State University.

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The distant thunder ancestor of today's birds was a certain type of dinosaur, some scientists believe. Both birds and dinosaurs may have developed from early reptiles that crawled on the earth more than 200 million years ago.

ABSOLUTE AUCTION SATURDAY, MAY 23

1:00 P.M.

FARM OF APPROX. 60 ACRE

Located in Monroe Township, Juniata County approx. 12 miles Northeast of Millerstown, Pa., 7 miles northwest of Liverpool, approx. 5 miles north of the village of Steven Stars, next to Rhoads Nursery, (watch for auction signs off Route 17 day of sale.)



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Small stream, pond, open and wooded areas can easily be divided into 2 or more parcels - Not far from anywhere, but away from all the hustle and bustle. (A rare opportunity.)

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10:00 AM

Located along the Clover Creek road, 4 miles South of Williamsburg, near Shellytown, Blair Co. Farm machinery, tools, and some household goods of Mr. & Mrs. John R. Baker.

Farm Machinery: IHC 674 tractor (400 hrs.), Farnall H tractor w/loader, Farnall H w/pusher & Hydraulic, IHC No. 450 3-16" bottom plow w/automatic reset, IHC No. 27 baler w/thrower, JD 8250 drill (1 yr. old), NH 206 ground driven spreader, NH 477 haybine, 15,000 BTU generator, IHC hayrake, IHC 2-row cornplanter, JD chopper, 30-foot Stoney elevator w/motor, drag scoop, IHC cultipacker, Oliver 3-section harrow, Gehl wagon w/gravity bin, JD 953 wagon w/bale racks, Grove wagon, JD No. 57-foot mower, JD hay crimper, Cunningham haycrusher, IHC cultivators, JD small disc, metal road drag, IHC 2-bottom plow, Oliver-Superior drill for parts, IHC hayloader (fair), PTO grass seeder, IHC Hammermill, AC No. 6 combine, Easy-flow lime sower, dump cart, tractor chains, 40-foot extension ladder, Bulldozer elec. fencer, 50-foot belt, Clipper seed cleaner, platform scales, wheelbarrows, some chicken equip., 4 wheels for Gehl wagon, fuel tank, wagon & manure spreader for parts, scrap iron, wagon load of small items, 52-gal. water heater, 5 Surge units, 2 stainless steel strainers & 2 carrying pails, Delaval No. 73 pump, lot of water pipe, oil barrel, Forney welder, some lumber, 3 walnut logs, 1 cherry, 1-30 foot oak log, 4 telephone poles, and snow fence.

Feed: 1-2-3 cutting of hay (about 20 tons), 8 tons straw, 30 bu. oats, and 6 or 600 bu. corn.

Household Goods: Maytag wringer washer, IHC 22 cu. ft. freezer, 2 pc. living room suite, end tables, lamps, dresser w/mirror, wardrobe w/center drawers, Set of Twin beds complete (nice), several double beds, baby bed, sewing machine, Piano, piano stool w/clawfeet, glider, lawn chairs, jars, crocks, meat grinder, butcher's bench, yard roller, and many other items too numerous to mention.

Antiques: Barn lantern, wooden planes, cowbells, copper ladle, copper kettle, 2 iron kettles, 2 3-foot, some sleigh bells, 1-gal. & 2-gal. sausage stuffers.

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7:00 P.M.

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10:00 A.M.

Hog Trough, Stohler Ax, 1/2 Bushel & Bushel Baskets; Sizing Boxes, Assorted Antiques, Cherry Wood & Assorted Lumber, Dump truck of Firewood, Bagged Peat Moss & Top Soil, 340 Yamaha Snowmobile, Suzuki T-S 185 Trail Bike, Small Gas Engines, Lawn Mowers, Garden Cultivator, Gas Stove, Elec. Stove, Copy Machine, New Glass Fire Place Doors, 2 Metal Desk, Windows, 15-12' Durawall, 12-10'x1/2" & 5-34'x1/2" Rebar, 8 Large Bags of Insulation, Selection of Plants & Flowers, Afghanw/Pillow.

Tool Man w/Lawn, Garden, Farm, Carpenter Tools.

Sale by Donation & Commission. Items will be accepted at the Fire Hall the week of May 11-15 6:00 a.m.-9:00 a.m., May 16, till 9:00 A.M. For info. call 665-6238, 665-4138 or 367-9423.

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