

Soil society calls for acid rain action

ANKENY, Ia. — Enough is known about the causes and effects of acid precipitation so that the governments of the United States and Canada should act now to avert long-range environmental problems.

That is the conclusion expressed in a position statement released today by the Soil Conservation Society of America (SCSA).

According to SCSA, acid precipitation, accelerated by mankind, may adversely affect a wide range of soils, vegetation, watersheds, and ecosystems.

The international conservation organization acknowledges in the position statement that proof of certain impacts of acid precipitation may be lacking. But the statement contends, "sufficient scientific evidence exists to justify prompt action" by the

governments of both countries.

The position statement was written for SCSA by a committee of scientists. It is based on the views expressed by representatives from the scientific community, government, industry, and public-interest groups during a conference on acid precipitation held last October in Burlington, Vermont.

In the statement, SCSA challenges scientists to find more answers to acid precipitation questions and urges government leaders not to ignore the problem. The statement sets forth 10 recommendations for dealing with acid precipitation problems:

1. The United States and Canada should accelerate efforts to achieve a mutually acceptable international agreement on acid precipitation; obligations agreed

to in the Memorandum of Intent dated August 5, 1980, should be honored.

2. Acid precipitation-related problems should be acted on promptly where relationships, effects, and costs are clearly established and where enabling legislation is in place.

3. Clean air legislation in the United States and Canada should be strengthened by (a) adding provisions for long-range transport, (b) establishing a workable standard for emission reductions (moving toward 50 percent reduction by the year 1990), and (c) providing for sufficient funds to ensure proper enforcement.

4. Monitoring networks should be expanded to provide more stations and more parameters for monitoring wet and dry deposition.

5. Common methods and

procedures for arriving at cost and benefit figures on both sides of the U.S.-Canadian border should be developed.

6. Standard procedures for evaluating and using research results should stress reliance on published reports that have been subjected to peer review in accord with standard scientific methodology.

7. Economic incentives should be provided to reduce emissions, including tax write-offs, low-interest loans and grants, and write-off of old plants that cannot handle scrubbers. Costs of remedial action should be shared fairly, as is done in mined land reclamation, soil erosion control, and toxic waste management.

8. Conservation programs that reduce the use of fossil fuels and products derived from fossil fuels

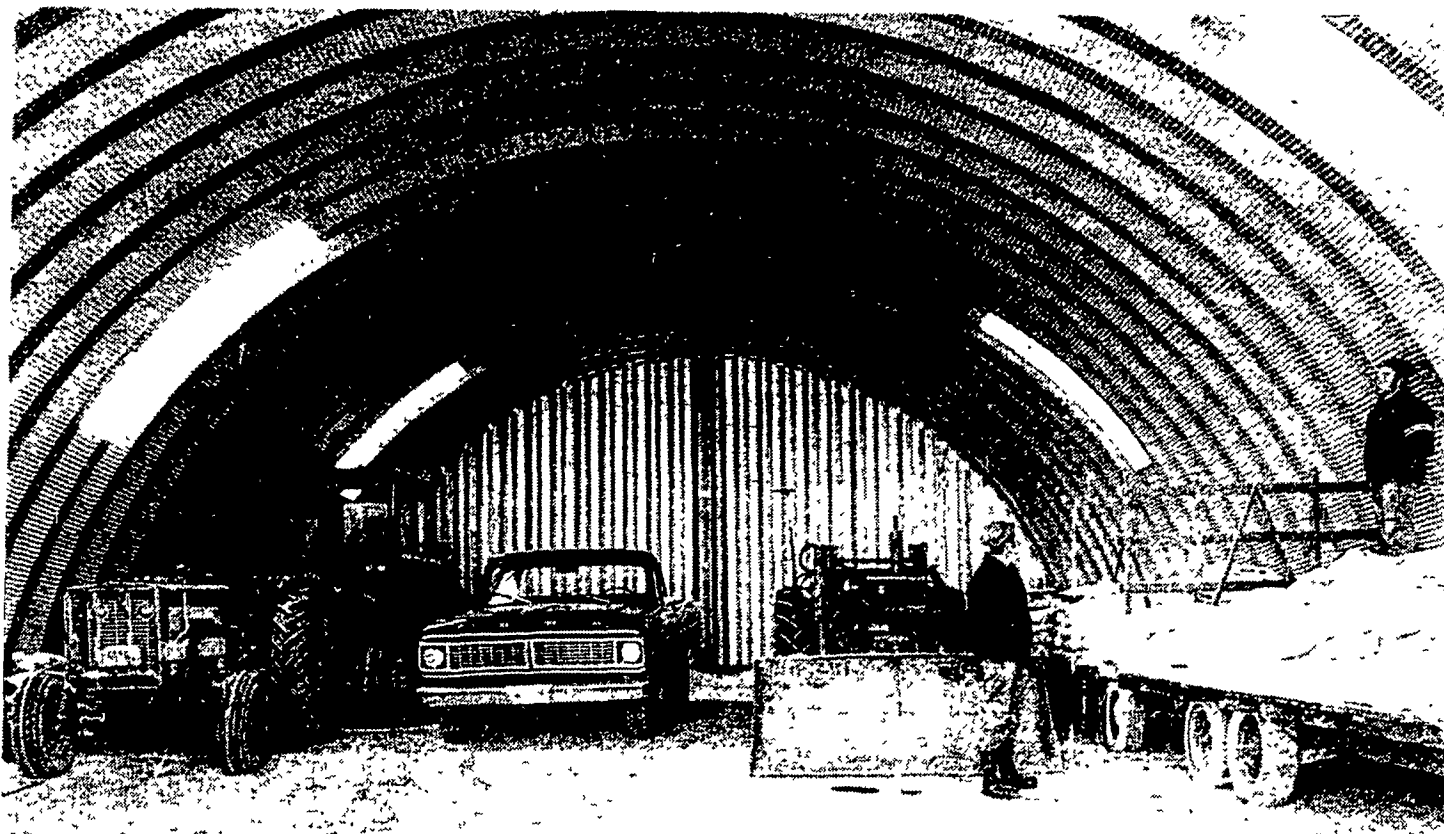
should be emphasized.

9. Coal prewashing and modified application of the operating technique known as least emission dispatching should be encouraged as tangible moves toward emission reduction.

10. Priority should be given to additional funding and proper coordination of funding and research, which is essential to an effective international effort to determine the facts, specify the causes and mechanisms of injury, and design remedial actions.



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closing

3 offices

WASHINGTON, D.C.

— The three regional information offices responsible for providing information services for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service will close June 4.

Offices to be closed include the Southern Regional Office at Atlanta, the Western Regional Office at San Francisco and the Northern Regional Office at Chicago.

Two other offices, at New York City and Dallas, were closed in 1982. Prior to June 30 of last year, the five offices had provided information for four other agencies. Those agencies were responsible for meat and poultry inspection and care, animal and plant health inspection, agricultural transportation, livestock marketing and federal grain inspection.

"Agency reorganization and budget reductions are the prime reasons for the closings," said Donald R. Hayes, acting director of AMS' Information Division at Washington, D.C.

Some of the functions of the regional offices will be transferred to the Washington Information Office, Hayes said.

AMS programs include marketing agreements and orders, seed law enforcement and other regulatory activities, commodity standardization and grading, market news and marketing research. About 75 percent of the AMS budget comes from user fees paid by industries AMS services, Hayes said.