

# Family Farm Business

(Continued from Page A28)

The debate and the policy making process continues.

In the meantime, Masser rotates his fields with three years of small grains and one year of potatoes.

It is part of the soil conservation plan that he has for all his acreage, and it requires him to farm much of his acreage in small grains in order to rotate potatoes well, even though grain production accounts for only about 5 percent of the company's income.

Along with conservation tillage, terracing and trying to maintain healthy farming practices, Masser also knows that the land that his enterprise keeps open will allow recharge of groundwater — the constant source of water for all freshwater streams and rivers.

Without healthy crop agriculture, and without well-practiced livestock production that contributes to keeping local land open for crop production, Masser and others question how long it would take get-rich quick investors to pave over, bulldoze, or otherwise drain those recharge areas.

In fact, Masser and others within the agricultural community have offered that perhaps agriculture, and others who maintain open groundwater recharge areas, should be given some kind of credit by the rest of the community for the amount of groundwater recharge their operations provide.

"I believe in that," Masser said. "It's only fair, and it's the only way to maintain those open areas that everyone benefits from."

Some early estimates on groundwater recharge for the area has suggested that farmland receiving 36 to 42 inches of rainfall per acre/per year recharges about a foot/per acre of water into the aquifer.

"The more land we operate and own, the more water we ought to be allowed to use, because the more land kept open, the more water is available to recharge.

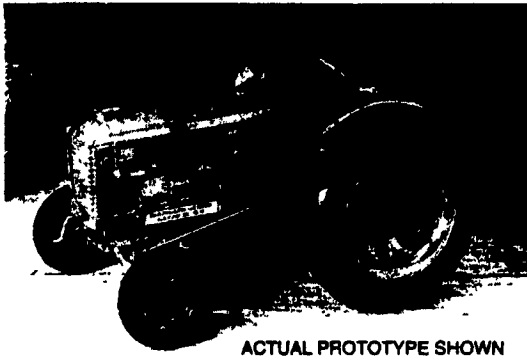
"It's consistent with farmland preservation (goals). We need to want to preserve farmland to continue to get water."

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Actual Prototype Shown.

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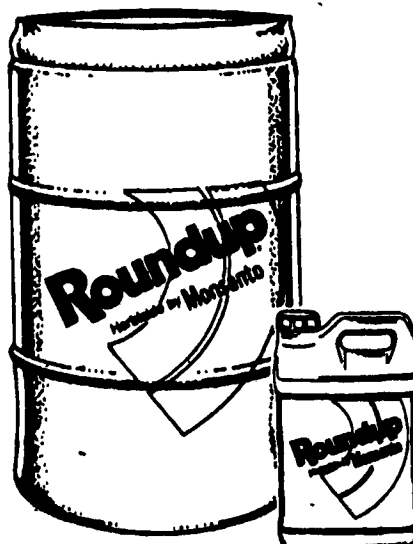
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