

Water Pollution Through Erosion: How Do You Measure Up?

Like a thief in the night, erosion silently steals our most valuable resource - land. The sediment, produced by erosion from our precious topsoil, pollutes water and clogs streams.

Is your soil washing away? This fact sheet will help you look for symptoms of erosion on your farm. Take some time to look at your farm and farming practices. You may find erosion and sediment problems that you have never noticed starting to develop. Now is the time to stop this loss. Remember, the land you save may be your own.

If you would like assistance in correcting any erosion or sediment problems you may have, contact your Soil Conservation District office or supervisor. The district supervisor will work with you to prepare a Soil Conservation and Water Quality Plan to help you protect the soil for years and generations to come.

Answer these few questions and find out for yourself how you measure up.

Visual Evaluation of Overall Farm

A. Cropland and Pastureland

1. Are there any gullies in your cropland or pastureland?
2. Do rills (small channels which can be smoothed by normal cultivation) develop on your cropland?
3. Is sediment filling your farm pond, ditches or culverts?
4. Is a stream bend washing your cropland away?
5. Have you noticed the buildup of soil at the fence lines, at the bottoms of slopes or fields, or on the roads bordering your fields?
6. Do you have drainage or flooding problems on your farm?

B. Farmstead and Access Roads

1. Do you have to fill in gullies around the house or barn after storms?

2. Do you have gullies and washouts in or on your farm road or lane after storms?

Evaluation: If you answered any one of the above questions "Yes", ask the local Soil Conservation District supervisor for help in developing a Soil Conservation and Water Quality Plan.

Farming Methods

A. Cropland

1. Do you use conservation farming methods on all fields? (Example: across-slope farming, contour farming, strip cropping, no-till method of conservation tillage, cover crops.)

2. Do you use crop rotations?

3 . Do you leave grass filter strips next to stream banks or ditchbanks?

B. Pastureland

1 . Do you have adequate grass cover (no soil directly exposed) on your pastures?

2. Do you have adequate watering facilities (live- stock needs met) away from streams?

3. Do you rotate supplemental feeding facilities to prevent heavily used areas from becoming bare or eroded?

Evaluation: If you answered "No" to any one of the above questions, you could have a severe but not easily seen erosion problem where valuable topsoil is being lost. The local Soil Conservation District office will help you evaluate the extent of loss and develop a Soil Conservation and Water Quality Plan.

Special Practices

1 . Do you leave natural waterways in grass?

2. Do you have ponds or diversions on your farm?

3. Have you installed any shore erosion control or streambank and ditchbank measures to prevent erosion caused directly by your farming practices?

Evaluation: If you answered any one of the above questions "No", you may want to reconsider and use the mentioned practice in your overall farm plan. The local Soil Conservation District office will be glad to discuss all the plans with you or help you develop your own Soil Conservation and Water Quality Plan.

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