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Precious topsoil being lost to soil erosion

Today our country is losing more precious topsoil, as a result of the "great plowout" of the 1970's encouraged by former Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butts, than at any time since the "dustbowl days" of the 1930's. Yet, this administration proposes to eliminate the Soil Conservation Service (SCS). Only Congress can save conservation: Congress needs a broad based consensus from every sector of our country to accomplish this goal.

The Soil Conservation Service was created as a permanent agency of the Department of Agriculture in 1935, at which time then President Franklin D. Roosevelt stated "The nation

that destroys its soil destroys itself." The SCS is totally different from the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS). The ASCS principally deals with commodities, target prices, loan rates, allotments, etc. In broad terms, SCS provides professional conservationists to help plan and carry out conservation programs established by the local Soil and Water

conservation district. Locally elected district directors determine the recipients of these professional services and set out priorities for the kind and amount of work. Sometimes, as when the government policy under Butts was to "plow fen-

cerow to fenceow," the SCS and the ASCS are at cross purposes. This administration, it seems, wants to pass the responsibility for controlling soil erosion and water quality to state and local government as though this is a local concern rather than a national problem. This simply is not true. What happens to eroded soil in South Dakota or farmland in Illinois can affect the drinking water in Louisiana. Soil erosion in Pennsylvania can hurt the livelihood of oystermen in Virginia. Texans depend on the soil resource base in Idaho and Maine for their potatoes. Others depend on our soil for rice and citrus. The capability of our soils to feed the nation

is a national interest as well as a state and local one. Floods and wind do not honor state, county or any other boundary established by man. The nation's current political tendencies to strength national defense and "reindustrialize" America must also include an intensive effort to conserve, improve, and "revitalize" agriculture and agricultural land. Without such an effort, the other attempts to curb inflation, improve defense, and rebuild American strength at home and abroad will be only temporary. In most places on earth we stand just six inches from desolation, for that is the thickness of the topsoil layer upon which the entire life of

the planet depends. Entire civilizations have succumbed to the ravages of soil erosion. A great part of the starvation in Ethiopia today is a result of its failure (through lack of knowledge, poor governmental objectives, reduce excessive soil erosion; improve irrigation efficiency and water management; control flood damage; and improve water quality. You don't have to be a farmer to appreciate these priorities.

If you are concerned about the current proposal regarding the Soil Conservation Service, you should do two things. 1. Write to Senators Lloyd M. Bentsen Jr. and Phil Gramm; your Congressmen, Congressman Jamie Whitten (Chairman, House Agriculture Committee) and Congressman Eligio "Kiki" de la Garza (Chairman, House Agriculture Committee). 2. Contact your friends and relatives living in urban congressional districts and urge them to let these same political leaders know their concern. It is urgent that you do this now because these committees start hearings on this problem in early March.

George Cason
 Rt. 1, Box 76
 Eagle Lake, Texas 77434

Risk management, insurance for spring crops

Farming is a risky business. With narrow profit margins, managers are continuously concerned with risk management strategies for countering price and production adversity.

"Although soil moisture conditions over most of Texas are currently favorable for the '85 crop season, there are other production risks that farmers must face," says Dr. Ashley Lovell of Stephenville, economist with the Texas Agricultural Extension Service.

"Assuming drought won't be a problem this year, farmers still may have to deal with crop damage from excessive rain, hail, wind, hurricanes, tornadoes, lightning, insect infestations, plant diseases, flooding, wildlife and fire," says

Lovell. While certain management strategies may counter some of these risks, they are all insurable. Federal or multi-peril crop insurance, the economist points out. On the other hand, insurance cannot be purchased to cover losses from poor farming practices, theft or low commodity prices.

"Thus, multiple-peril crop insurance is an alternative strategy for managing yield or production shortfalls," explains Lovell. "This strategy should be evaluated by producers who may wish to pay the subsidized-premium to shift the risk of a crop failure to another entity."

Farmers who bought crop in-

surance last year will have their insurance contract automatically renewed for the same crops in 1985 unless the policies were cancelled or terminated, says Lovell. However, deadlines for first-time crop insurance customers are rapidly approaching. The deadline is March 1 in South Texas, March 31 for far western, central and eastern areas, and April 15 for the plains and parts of north central Texas.

Farmers deciding to purchase multiple-peril crop insurance can choose among three levels of yield coverage (50, 65 or 75 percent) and three levels of price coverage (60, 70 or 90 percent of a projected market price).

"Evaluating multi-peril crop insurance is a challenging process," says Lovell. "Completing a whole farm production and financial plan requires consideration of the marketing, financial and production characteristics and intentions for the business."

For effective whole farm planning, accounting and budgeting functions must be integrated. The accounting system and enterprise production budgets are expected to provide data for establishing cash flow requirements as well as estimating the timing and amount of cash available month by month. Additionally, the balance sheet depicts the financial condition of the business and provides liquidity indicators.

Survivability and growth in net worth have been used to measure payoff from various crop insurance options, based on the analysis of several representative Texas Panhandle cotton and wheat farms. Results suggest that businesses with

high debt (and higher leverage ratio) will benefit from purchasing higher levels of protection relative to similar businesses that have less debt (and thus lower leverage ratios).

Lovell advises farmers to work through enterprise budgets and cash flow projections using several yield and price assumptions to determine the risk of unfavorable yields. He also suggests working with a lender in the whole farm planning session to get his suggestions for yield and price risk strategies.

Local ASCS offices have additional information on certifying yields, insurance yields and names of insurance agents.

Columbus Livestock Market

The market this week was fully steady to strong in all classes from last week's market. Lighter weight steer calves continued to sell strong with several 200 pound calves selling at 105-110 per lb., says George Hagen and Don McAllister, Columbus Livestock Market every Thursday.

Cattle on hand, 496; hogs, 10; sheep, 4; horses, 4; 40 to 46 cents; lightweight feeder calves, 50 to 56 cents per pound; utility and cutter cows, 46 to 50 cents per pound; lower dressing utility and cutter cows, 40 to 46 cents; lightweight canner cows, 34 to 40 cents.

Packer Bulls: heavyweight, 54 to 56 cents per pound; utility and cutter, 51 to 54 cents; lightweight canner, 45 to 50 cents.

Butcher Calves and Yearlings: good to choice, 58 to 60 cents per pound; standard, 53 to 58 cents; utility, 52 to 57 cents.

Feeder and Yearling Cows and Yearlings: Steer and Bull calves 200-300 pounds, 85 cents to \$1.10; 300-400 pounds, 78 to 94 cents; 400-500 pounds, 68 to 72 cents; 500-600 pounds, 63 to 74 cents. Heifer calves 200-300 pounds, 70 to 84 cents; 300-400 pounds, 66 to 74 cents; 400-500 pounds, 64 to 71 cents; 500-600 pounds, 60 to 66 cents; replacement heifers, 65 to 78 cents.

Stocker Cows: good stocker cows and heifers, 50 to 56 cents per pound; commercial and medium stocker cows and heifers, 45 to 50 cents per

pound; good cow and calf pairs, \$575 to \$650; medium cow and calf pairs, \$500 to \$575; common cow and calf pairs, \$425 to \$500.

Hogs: No. 1 butchers, 42 to 43 cents per pound; No. 2 and 3, 41 to 42 cents; feeder pigs and shoats, 50 to 70 cents per pound; sows, 38 to 42 cents.

Sheep: ewes, 6 to 14 cents per pound; lambs, 30 to 40 cents; bucks, 5 to 8 cents; pairs, \$25 to \$35.

Deed, Eugene Lamar Guyon Jr. to John A. Melites; undivided interest to-wit: 132.5 acres, McJain & McNair League; 2-6-85.

Deed, Mary Bittner Corlies to Walter Corlies et al; 19.83 acres, Samuel Kennedy League; 12-31-84.

Deed, Otto E. Kahlden Jr. to Trustee to Roger Rybe et al; lots 1 & 2 blk. 83, Huvor Addition; 1-15-85.

Deed, Robert Norway Jr. to Henry Wicks Jr. et al; 1.528 acres, W.R. DeWees Survey; 2-12-85.

Gift deed, Raymond E. Janeczek to Darrell Ray Janeczek et al; 1.178 acres, B.J. Juxm Survey; 2-13-85.

Gift deed, Raymond E. Janeczek to Barbara Ann Janeczek; parcel of land, Henry Austin Five League Grant; 2-13-85.

Deed, Corean Hodges to Jimmie Lyons et al; parcel of land, P. Reel's Survey; 2-6-85.

Deed, Mallard Investments Inc. to Martha Smith Birdwell; tract 7, Lake-Side Subdivision, P. Reel's Survey; 1-7-85.

Deed, Arnold Sanders et al; Roy Sanders' Ind. Co-Executors of Estate of Eunice Chromchak to Zula Maud Loring; 22.90 acres, R. Dowdy League; 2-7-85.

Deed, Zula Maud Loring to Roy Donald Sanders; 22.90 acres, R. Dowdy League; 2-7-85.

Deed, Jerry Pustejovsky to Ruben Contreras; parcel of land, P. Reel's Survey; 9-27-84.

Quit claim deed, Amanda Pustejovsky to Jerry Pustejovsky; parcel of land, P. Reel's Survey; 11-21-84.

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Don't fall in!

If you haven't noticed, the rail crossings at Commerce St. and at Lake St. are in such bad shape it appears the wheel of a car could get lost. Although Southern Pacific officials "promised" Mayor Elmer Struss, in a letter dated March 1, that they would be here in two weeks to look at it, we were wondering "two weeks from when?" As of Tuesday, the mayor had not heard from the railroad. Local railroad employees have done the best they could to keep the cavernous ruts patched, but it only takes an hour or two for the patching to break away. We hope the railroad pays a little more attention to their promises, before the community gets so riled up it suggests the rails be moved from the center of town, as has happened in other cities. And, when and if the company executives do visit, we suggest they consider installing a traffic guard and flashing lights at both crossings. In the nearly three years we have owned the newspaper here, one man has been killed on the Lake Street crossing, and two very close friends have had such close calls with speeding trains, it was frightening, to say the least.

—John Fearing

County Courthouse Report

DISTRICT COURT SUITS FILED
 Curtis Automotive Supply Inc. vs. Novela Carlin; suit on account; 2-19-84.
 Charlie, Wilhelm and Oscar Senora, vs. Audrey Benke; partition; 2-19-84.
 Delores Cruise vs. Gary Cruise; divorce; 2-19-85.
 Martha Lujan vs. Robert John Lujan; seeking payment of child support; 2-20-85.
 Irma M. Pickett et al, vs. Irma Hain et al; partition; 2-20-85.
 Doris Toliver vs. Ray C. Toliver; divorce; 2-27-85.
 Robert Ramos Galabaz vs. Alicia Galabaz; divorce; 2-27-85.
 Jacquelyn Marie Jones vs. James Lee Jones; divorce; 2-28-85.
 Olivia Cheryl Williams vs. Jessie Williams III; divorce; 2-28-85.
 General Electric Credit Corp. vs. Melvin and Marie Scott; suit on contract; 3-1-85.
 Patricia A. Cardenas vs. Daniel Lynn Cardenas; divorce; 3-4-85.
 Larry Wayne Otradosky vs. Sharon Mary Otradosky; divorce; 3-4-85.
 Donald R. McGrew vs. Roy Heimold, dba Coastal Mobile Homes, Coastal Mobile Homes Inc. and All American Housing of Alabama; seeking \$4,000 on claim of mobile home misrepresentation; 3-8-85.

MARRIAGE LICENSE APPLICATIONS
 William Eugene Markwood, 22, and Jacqueline Maria Surovack, 20, both of Columbus.
 Kevin R. Teague, 20, and Mary R. Brown, 17, both of Halsteadville; 2-28-85.
 David Stanley Uhermosky, 22, and Elida Moreno, 16, both of Rosenberg; 3-4-85.
 Larry Glen Zaskoda, 19, Cat Spring, and Pamela Ann Spitzenger, 18, Dime Box, Texas; 3-8-85.

REAL ESTATE DEED TRANSFERS
 Deed, Eugene Lamar Guyon Jr. to John A. Melites; undivided interest to-wit: 132.5 acres, McJain & McNair League; 2-6-85.
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 Quit claim deed, Amanda Pustejovsky to Jerry Pustejovsky; parcel of land, P. Reel's Survey; 11-21-84.

OIL, GAS LEASES
 Chester Albright Jr. to Adena Exploration Inc.; 50 acres, Ransom Weed Survey; 10-15-84.
 William T. Youens Jr. to J. et al; 50 acres, John Dunlavy Survey; 11-19-84.
 David Wintermann et al to Haber Oil Co. Inc.; 28.19 acres, McClain & McNair Survey; 1-21-85.
 Gary R. McKinney et al to Roy R. Gardner; 15 acres, Walker Wilson Survey; 7-30-84.
 Charles B. Haines et al to Roy R. Gardner; lots 11 blk. 57 and lot 3 blk. 69, Sheridan; 1-4-85.
 Janie Perez Ramirez Garcia et al to Roy R. Gardner; lot 9 blk. 57, Sheridan; 1-25-85.
 Edwin M. Peterson et al to Roy R. Gardner; lot 9 blk. 57, Sheridan; 1-4-85.
 Herbert Heyne Dromgoole et al to Forney Oil Corporation; 267.08 acres, Thomas Rabb League; 1-10-85.
 Jean F. Walker et al to Roy R. Gardner; lots 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 & 16 blk. 10, Sheridan; 1-4-85.
 Mittie Faye Collins to Roy R. Gardner; lot 3 blk. 10 and lot 14 blk. 69, Sheridan; 1-4-85.
 First City National Bank of Houston Co-Trustee to Haber Oil Co. Inc.; 28.16 acres, L. Watson Survey et al; 1-21-85.
 Fulton M. Dromgoole et al to Forney Oil Corporation; 15 acres, Thomas Cartwright Survey; 1-22-85.
 Benjamin Taylor et al to Scott Carlson; 64.967 acres, James G. O'Farrell Survey; 10-29-84.
 Bobbie Taylor to Scott Carlson; 63.677 acres, James G. O'Farrell Survey; 10-29-84.
 Joyce Taylor Usery to Scott Carlson; 63.677 acres, James G. O'Farrell Survey; 10-29-84.
 The First National Bank of El Campo to The Louisiana Land & Exploration Co.; 160 acres, H.S. Leckler Survey; 1-11-85.
 Monte Peck aka Irvon Monte Peck et al to Columbia Gas Development Corp.; 6.378 acres, R.M. Johnson Survey; 1-11-85.
 Reta Mae Peck Hrachovy et al to Columbia Gas Development Corp.; 4 acres, R.M. Johnson Survey; 1-11-85.
 Marvin F. Gilbreath et al to Columbia Gas Development Corp.; 15.72 acres, H. Austin Five League; 1-4-85.

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