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# Soil and Water Conservation Field Day Well Attended

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For Immediate Release

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION FIELD DAY WELL ATTENDED

The special Soil and Water Conservation Field Day held at the West Central School and Experiment Station and the North Central Soil and Water Conservation Laboratory at Morris on June 24 was well attended by a large group of people interested in Soil Conservation. Royce Lewis, Soil Scientist with the Soil Conservation Service, led a discussion on the problems involved in developing means of conserving soil on most of the land in our area which has a very complex topography. The present means of conserving soil and water on this type of land can be divided into mechanical means of conservation; such as Contour farming, Contour strip cropping, and terracing, along with grassed waterways and other practices. The second means of conservation of soil and water would be the vegetative methods of control; such as, including more grasses and legumes in the rotations or utilizing land which is not subject ot erosion for more intensive cropping programs and the rough land for permanent grass lands.

George Blake of the University of Minnesota Soils Department led a discussion on the importance of conserving moisture that comes during the fall and early spring since the precipitation that is received during the months of July and early August is not sufficient to meet the needs of crop production during this period. There is a tremendous potential storehouse for moisture in our soil and normally more moisture is stored in soils of Minnesota than can be stored in Lake Mead which is the largest man-made reservoir in the United States. It is very important, however, that rainfall that comes onto the land is permitted to be stored rather than to be lost through run-off.

The group then went on a tour through the soil conservation demonstration area of the West Central School and Station where Dr. Henry Hanson of the Forestry Department of the University of Minnesota discussed the use of chemicals for

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controling weeds in trees. While some chemicals can be used effectively, the hoe still remains the most dependable and the least injurious to young trees. John Dobie from the Minnesota Department of Conservation pointed out to the group that one of the greatest problems in the management of fish for farm ponds is insufficient fishing. When farm ponds are stocked with sun fish, the fish reproduce very rapidly and the pond soon becomes over-stocked and, as a result, the fish which are taken from the pond are undersized; this in turn results in less fishing so the over-population becomes more intense. It was suggested that there is less danger of over-fishing these farms ponds than underfishing them. The farm pond at the West Central School and Experiment Station was stocked with rainbow trout this spring in an attempt to see if trout could live in ponds of this type. There would be no problem with trout becoming over crowded because they will not reproduce under this type of a condition.

Dr. Robert Holt, Field Station Director of the North Central Soil and Water Conservation Research Laboratory, the ARS at Morris, welcomed the group to the afternoon program and discussed the various projects that are being carried out in different areas of the four states over the 38 million acre problem area. One of the important areas of experimental work is being done with the artificial rainfall simulator and additional work on the uptake of Strontium 90 by plants.

Dr. C. A. Van Doren, who is now Chief of the Corn Belt Branch of the Agricultural Research Service, told the visitors about the work that is being done on the development of a universal erosion equation. This equation will be used in the determination of the soil losses that will occur under varying conditions of soil type, management practices, length and degree of slope, rainfall, and the conservation practices that are currently being used on the soil. When this equation is completely worked out, it will be possible to predict how much soil loss will occur under varying conditions. Other points of interest included the rainfall tower where Dr. Calvin Mutchler is studying the effect of rain drops on soil erosion.