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Farming today as seen in Year 2050

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Son, put another plastic log in the fireplace and I'll tell you a story that my great-grandfather told me.

When my great-grandfather was a young man this land was mostly prairie. The soil was covered with a thick sod. The good, rich topsoil was from 18-24 inches thick. It was plowed up to make rich farmland.

When my grandfather started farming, about half of this topsoil had been eroded away by wind and water. Some people realized that we needed to conserve the soil to keep it productive, but too many people didn't care. The people who cared tried to teach people about conservation practices such as contouring, strip cropping, conservation tillage, and terraces, but prices were high and people were concerned about making lots of money. In order to do this, they raised the crops that brought the highest prices - corn

and soybeans. The problem was that these crops left the soil bare, without protection from wind and water, for a good part of the year. The soil washed away.

These same people cleared away the timbers that dotted the landscape to make room for more crops. Soon there was little area left that could produce wood or provide a home for the wildlife that used to live on earth. If they had been more careful and replanted what they destroyed, we could burn wood logs in our fireplace.

I know it will be hard for you to be a farmer when you grow up. The topsoil is gone now. You must use all sorts of chemicals to make the subsoil produce any crops at all. If only people had cared enough while there was time to do something about conserving the topsoil, They didn't worry enough about your generation and those to come.

I hope there will be a great-grandson that you can tell a story to someday.

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