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Farmers Abandon Tradition Of Fall Plowing

Over 9,000 Iowa farmers are now harvesting corn and soybeans on nearly three-quarters of a million acres of land that was not plowed, Wilson T. Moon, State Conservationist, U. S. Soil Conservation Service, said today.

These acres mostly involve soybean land where spring seedbeds for corn were prepared by use of disks, field cultivators, chisel plows, or combinations of these tillage tools. More Iowa farmers than ever are abandoning the tradition of fall plowing this year, Moon said.

Dust clouds have been part of the Iowa scene three of the last four years. Most of the dust

clouds, he said, came from fall-plowed soybean land. Soybeans have a tendency to loosen the soil. When it is plowed in the fall, the soil mellows rapidly by the action of freezing and thawing, wetting and drying. By spring the surface is a layer of dust awaiting the first gust of wind to move it into the air.

John Maddy, Conservation Agronomist, U. S. Soil Conservation Service, said the Clarion-Webster soils of north central Iowa grow

a large percentage of the State's acreage of soybeans. Many farmers in this area have used the "no-plow" system on soybean land for many years but it is estimated that its use increased by 700 percent in 1969 over 1968. Maddy said that research has shown that corn yields following soybeans can be as high as on plowed fields when the seedbed is prepared by disking in the spring. The bean residue is not buried but is mixed in the sur-

face soil and helps prevent soil blowing.