

Direct

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Soil Conservation Service
405 Iowa Building
Des Moines, Iowa

April 11, 1955

To: Area Conservationists
From: Frank N. Mendell, State Conservationist
Subject: Conversions of Cultivable Land

The Soil Conservation Service is being asked about the extent of recent withdrawals of cultivatable land from agricultural production for use as rights-of-way, suburban developments, airports, and similar uses. The rapid increase in suburban housing and projected public road building are examples in our expanding economy that may take millions of acres of land out of cultivation. We need the facts with regard to changes in land use that are and will be taking place in order to plan the assistance which the Soil Conservation Service can give the public for their appreciation of the most efficient long-range use of the remaining cultivatable land.

Using the attached form, will you please estimate the cultivatable land that has been and is being planned to be taken out of agricultural use for your Area for the indicated three five-year periods. If the information is not available to break down figures by periods, show totals and indicate "no breakdown practical." Please keep in mind that Classes I, II, III, and IV are cultivatable land and be careful to exclude land in Classes V, VI, and VII.

Housing developments, highways and airports are probably the principal changes that will be listed here in Iowa. As a suggestion, most districts have sets of aerial photographs taken in 1938 or thereabouts, and most of them also have sets available for examination in County ASC Offices that were flown in 1949 or later. A comparison of those sheets that cover areas where suburban developments have taken place should give you a pretty good estimate in a short period of time. The same is true of highways and airports.

These are only estimates and we do not intend that you take a great deal of time obtaining these figures or trying to make them completely accurate. A rough estimate obtained in the shortest period of time possible is what we want.

Please complete the attached form and return to the area office by April 26.

INSTRUCTIONS

Total Area of District - Show official district acreage which excludes cities and towns.

Area of Cultivable Land - Use Census cropland figure.

Approximate Area of Cultivable Land Dedicated to Private and Public Use Before 1942. - Leave blank. We will fill this in at State Office.

Table - Conversions of Cultivable Land to Non-Agricultural Use - use estimates.

Attachment