



Wind erosion

THE PAST COUPLE OF WEEKS have been windy, to say the least. The wind has taken its toll on topsoil in Delaware county farm fields. The photo above, taken Friday near the junction of

highway 13 and freeway 520 just south of Manchester, shows dust and dirt being swept across a plowed field. (Press & D-R photo)

Signs of soil erosion

Delaware county has three types of water erosion, according to Norman Brus, soil conservationist with the local soil conservation service. They are gully erosion, rill erosion and sheet erosion.

Brus said most of this erosion takes place in spring and early summer so an ideal time to detect erosion is during spring and summer field work.

Gully erosion is the type of erosion that is most common. This type of erosion is apparent since it makes travel difficult or even impossible because of deep ditches that have been cut into the soil. Usually this type of erosion oc-

curs in drainageways or any other place where large volumes of water flow over the soil surface. Brus said a typical gully may be a foot deep, two feet wide, and 300 feet long. This is not as large as some gullies in the country, yet is equivalent to a soil loss of 25 tons per acre per year. "This is five times the rate of which we can afford to lose soil since Mother Nature replaces soil at a rate of five tons per acre per year," said Brus.

Rill erosion is much like gully erosion. A simple definition of rill erosion would be: a rill is a gully that can be crossed

easily by equipment. Rills often form between corn and soybean rows when crops are planted up and down a hill rather than on the contour. Rills are not as large as gullies, but often more rills will form on a field and if these rills join, they may form a gully.

Sheet erosion is the removal of thin layers of soil. One-fifteenth of an inch of soil removed from an acre is not noticeable, but this is equal to a 10 ton per acre of soil loss. "Ten tons per acre is twice the rate at which we can afford to lose soil. If you are collecting silt and sediment at the bottom of hills, at fence lines, or in waterways, but cannot notice any rill or gully erosion, sheet erosion is taking place," noted Brus.

"This year when you are in the field tilling and planting the soil, watch for signs of erosion. Then later in the spring or early summer when you

Soil--

cultivate or monitor your crops for pests, take a second look. If you notice rills or gullies on slopes or sedimentation at the bottom of slopes at any time, erosion is occurring on your farm," suggests Brus.

In most cases solving this problem is relatively easy. Soil erosion control practices include contouring, contour stripcropping, rotation changes, reduced tillage, no-till, waterways, terracing and others. The decision of which practice is best suited to the farm is yours. A good decision will allow you to produce the crop and livestock products that you want to while keeping soil losses down to a tolerable level.

"If you feel you have erosion and would like help stopping it, a member of the Soil Conservation Service would be happy to visit with you. The services of the Soil Conservation Service are free and without obligation," said Brus. Anyone wishing assistance may call the SCS office, 927-4590, or stop in at

SIGNS OF SOIL EROSION

By Norman Brus, Soil Conservationist
Delaware County Soil Conservation Service

Delaware County has three types of water erosion. They are gully erosion, rill erosion, and sheet erosion. Most of this erosion takes place in spring and early summer so a perfect time to detect erosion is while you are doing spring and summer field work.

Gully erosion is the type of erosion that comes to the mind of most people. This type of erosion is quite apparent since it makes travel difficult or even impossible because of deep ditches that have been cut into the soil. Usually this type of erosion occurs in drainageways or any other place where large volumes of water flow over the soil surface. A typical gully may be a foot deep, two feet wide, and 300 feet long. This is not nearly as large as some gullies in the county, yet it is equivalent to a soil loss of 25 ton/ac./yr. This is five times the rate of which we can afford to lose soil since Mother Nature replaces soil at a rate of 5 ton/ac./yr. or less.

Rill erosion is much like gully erosion. A simple definition of rill erosion would be: A rill is a gully that can be crossed easily by equipment. Rills often form between corn and soybean rows when crops are planted up and down a hill rather than on the contour. Rills are not as large as gullies, but often more rills will form on a field and if these rills join, they may form a gully.

Sheet erosion is the removal of thin layers of soil. One fifteenth of an inch of soil removed from an acre is not noticeable, but this is equal to a 10 ton per acre soil loss. Ten tons per acre is twice the rate at which we can afford to lose soil. If you are collecting silt and sediment at the bottom of hills, at fence lines, or in waterways but cannot notice any rill or gully erosion, sheet erosion is taking place.

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This year when you are in the field tilling and planting the soil, watch for signs of erosion. Then later in the spring or early summer when you cultivate or monitor your crops for pests, take a second look. If you notice rills and gullies on slopes or sedimentation at the bottom of slopes at any time, erosion is occurring on your farm.

In most cases solving this problem is relatively easy. Soil erosion control practices include contouring, contour stripcropping, rotation changes, reduced tillage, no-till, waterways, terracing, and others. The decision of which practice is best suited to the farm is yours. A good decision will allow you to produce the crop and livestock products that you want to while keeping soil losses down to a tolerable level.

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