1-1-1964

Soil erosion by water in W.A. cropland: a serious and widespread problem

Department of Agriculture, Western Australia
Soil erosion by water in W.A. cropland

Much wheatbelt agriculture is based on thin topsoils which are inherently infertile by world standards. Erosion even to the depth of cultivation will cause the loss of:

- most of the original topsoil
- the phosphate build up from years of “super” applications
- any accumulation of organic matter and humus.

SEVERE WASH IN 1963

Scenes such as the one above were very common in cultivated paddocks in 1963. The aerial photo on the opposite page shows similar severe damage and extensive loss of topsoil over three paddocks with a total area of 400 acres. Both photos were taken in the very wet period July-August 1963. Even in drier years however there are often one or more intense rains which cause soil wash in cultivated paddocks.

MANY W.A. SOILS ARE LIABLE TO EROSION

More than half of the developed land has been cleared less than 20 years. Much of this land, besides having low natural fertility, is also poor
a serious and widespread problem

in physical condition with little resistance to erosion. Frequent cultivation and cropping may cause rapid deterioration. Many areas have already suffered some erosion, which is serious considering that the land has been cleared for only a few years. Soil conservation farming methods are essential.

CLOVER LEY FARMING IS A MUST

With the clover and medic species now available, most soils can be sown to a legume pasture with assured establishment if recommended methods are used. This must be done to achieve a permanent agriculture. The pasture cover will protect the surface soil from erosion by water or wind. The clover ley period will improve the soil fertility and physical condition. The soil will then be more resistant to erosion when exposed to wind and water in the cropping year.

CONTOUR FARMING FOR SLOPING LAND

Sloping land needs the added protection of contour banks. The banks and associated contour cultivation keep more rain where it falls, thus aiding pasture and crop growth. Any rain not absorbed is intercepted and diverted by the banks. With controlled run off, water cannot concentrate sufficiently to cause gully erosion.

The picture on this page is from a W.A. Lands Dept. aerial photograph. Scale 1 in. = 11 chains
Outsells ALL others!

PROVED THE BEST OF ITS TYPE

RONALDSON-TIPPETT

OMNI-MIST
HIGH PRESSURE
ORCHARD SPRAYER
DILUTE OR CONCENTRATE

In practical usage over several seasons by leading fruitgrowers all over Australia, the OMNI-MIST has proved itself beyond all doubt to be the best spray plant of its type. OMNI-MIST'S amazing penetrative qualities and coverage have everywhere contributed to better, cleaner, more prolific crops. Get all the facts about OMNI-MIST. Send for free literature now.

West Australian Distributors:

Barrow Linton's

763 Wellington St., Perth • 21 9151

Please mention the "Journal of Agriculture of W.A." when writing to advertisers