SOIL EROSION OF SOYBEAN LAND

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During the last five years there has been an enormous increase in the soybean acreage in practically all of the corn belt states. Missouri has shown an increase from 16,000 acres in 1919 to 260,000 acres in 1924. This increase has seemed desirable because of the high feed value of this crop and also because of the high cash value of the seed. Furthermore, it is a legume crop with wide adaptations and can be grown on nearly all types of soil. It has become quite a general practice in most sections of Missouri to grow soybeans in rows and cultivate them. In this case the land is subject to losses by erosion as with other intertilled crops. It would seem that this factor has not been given enough consideration. In fact soybeans are being grown on many types of rolling land where the loss of soil by erosion is very serious.

If soybeans are to be a real soil building crop from the standpoint of nitrogen maintenance, they must not only replace, by means of their nitrogen-gathering power, the nitrogen removed from the land by the crop, but also the nitrogen lost in the eroded soil. During the last two years this loss of soil under soybeans has been measured in connection with a soil erosion project at the Missouri experiment station. The work is being continued and this paper is presented as a progress report.

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