HOW MUCH DOES EROSION COST?*

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A number of vocational agriculture teachers throughout the state are cooperating with the Agricultural Engineering Department to determine the effect of erosion on production potential and net income on the major soil types in Missouri.

A field is selected that has varying degrees of erosion. Three areas are selected in this field: one with slight erosion, one with moderate erosion and one with severe erosion. Other characteristics such as soil type, slope, cropping history, fertility and management practices should be the same on all areas.

Records are kept of the planting rate, early growth rate, percent stand at harvest, yield, power and time required to produce the crop, weed growth, and insect and disease damage on each of the areas.

Following is a summary of the information obtained from 14 different sites during 1971. Note that the net income from the severely eroded areas averaged $33.20 per acre less than that from the areas with little erosion. Soil erosion does cost the farmer. In addition the soil along with the fertilizer, insecticides and herbicides that are eroded from the farmers land are causing increasing problems and costs for those concerned with maintaining a quality environment. The expenses involved in controlling erosion are much less than the costs of erosion if not controlled. Soil erosion control is a good investment for the farmer and society.