

Subject: 4-15-10 eBlast from NRCS



April 15, 2010

This day in HISTORY

The banner has a warm, golden-brown background with a subtle texture. The text "This day in HISTORY" is written in a mix of cursive and bold, block letters.

THINK ABOUT THIS AS WE PREPARE TO CELEBRATE THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF NRCS
Seventy-five years ago, one of the worst dust storms in history ripped across the plains. This “Black Blizzard” was the result of intensive tillage and wind combined with drought that left the soil open to erosion.



Lured by the promise of rich, plentiful soil, thousands of settlers came to the Great Plains. They plowed up native grass and practiced intensive, non-rotational farming. During “the good years,” above average rains produced bountiful wheat crops. Soon all farmers were being paid good prices for their commodity. Between 1925 and 1930, the amount of land under cultivation (farming) more than tripled.

Then, two things happened that created disaster. In 1929, the stock market crashed, the prices of wheat went from \$3 to only 40 cents a bushel. And, in the summer of 1931, the rain stopped causing the catastrophic drought

that renamed the region “The Dust Bowl.”

By December 1934, more than 100 million acres of cropland had lost most or all of its topsoil. Ninety percent of the crops surviving the drought were later destroyed by grasshoppers in an 11,000 square mile area.

Sunday, April 14, 1935, known as Black Sunday, marked one of the worst Black Blizzards of the Dust Bowl. By December 1935, 850 million tons of topsoil had blown off the southern plains during the year.

Today, intense wind can still whip across Utah farms and fields, but modern farming practices and conservation efforts now safeguard the soil.

Seasoned citizens that lived the Great Depression and Dust Bowl years may simply be grateful for survival, but modern society must appreciate the decades of hard work that's helped safeguard the environment for current and future generations.

Helping People Help the Land for Over 75 Years

Periodic news reports from NRCS Utah



To see blasts from the past go to [e-Blast archives](#)

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