Dakota Farm Talk – Protecting Soil from Wind Erosion

**Pam Geppert**

The Great Plains is famous for its wind. But this year's frequent and fierce spring winds, coupled with drought, is blowing soils and eroding vulnerable fields in grasslands. Natural Resources. Conservation Service. Grazing Lands. Soil health specialist Tanse Herman reports. This windblown dirt contains valuable soil and nutrients.

**Tanse Herman**

I'm looking at an extension actually from Minnesota right now from 2014 that estimated the value of soil in one acre of road ditch at $55. I don't know how the 2002 prices compare to 2014, but I would venture a guess that that $55 in 2014 is probably upwards of 150 or even $200 per acre of fertility lost from crop land.

**Pam Geppert**

Poor land management is often the source of this degradation. But implementing soil health practices can begin the healing process.

**Tanse Herman**

The thing that I would point to as a recipe implement the principles of soil health on all acres, regardless of land use, and that is a keep the soil covered.

**Pam Geppert**

He says plant residue on the soil surface protects soil against wind and water erosion, increase in soil organic matter over time, which then enhances soil water holding capacity. Additional soil health principles include using diversity in crop rotation, disturbing the soil less, incorporating livestock into cropping systems and keeping a living root in the soil as long as possible. The NRCS can be a partner helping farmers and ranchers enhance natural resource resilience.

Visit any USDA Service Center to learn more. I'm Pam Geppert, reporting for the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Helping people help the land.