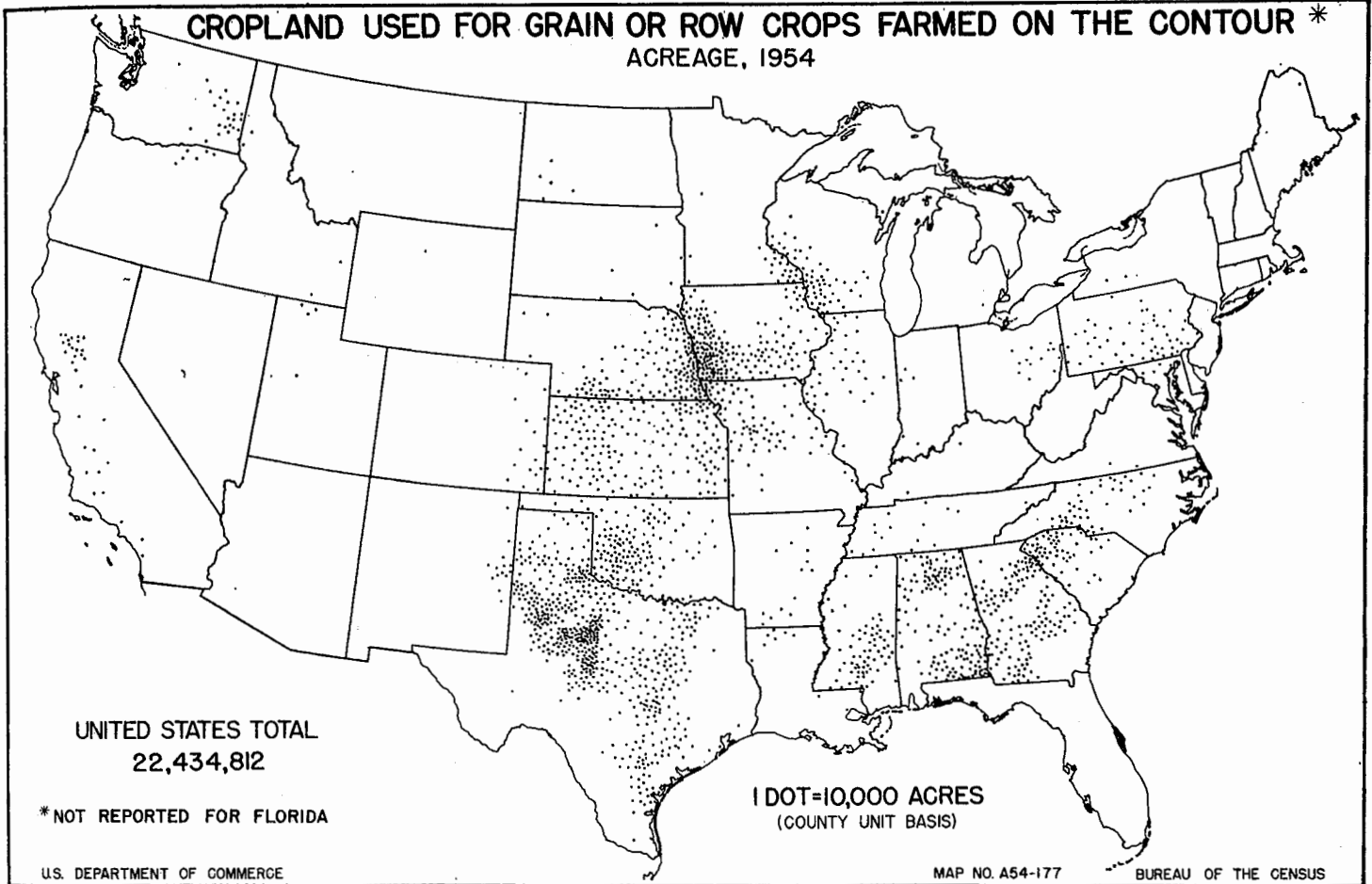


CROPLAND USED FOR GRAIN OR ROW CROPS FARMED ON THE CONTOUR * ACREAGE, 1954



Crops planted in the fall are known as winter cover crops. Winter protection of the soil is especially significant in much of the South where clean-cultivated crops, such as cotton, corn, and tobacco, are grown and where relatively high rainfall and the absence of frozen ground are conducive to severe erosion of sloping land left without cover during the winter. Some of the winter cover crops grown in this part of the United States are vetches, Austrian winter field peas, clovers, and abruzzu rye. Sweetclover grown in the northern Corn Belt and crimson clover in the Atlantic Coastal Plain from New Jersey to Georgia are other legumes used as cover crops. Rye, winter oats, and wheat are other nonlegume crops frequently used for their value for cover and green manure. Rye is the most commonly used grass or grain crop for winter cover in the Corn Belt and Cotton Belt.

The accompanying map showing the distribution of land in cover crops turned under for green manure shows that such crops are grown widely in the Southern States, Corn Belt, southern parts of the Lake States, and in the Middle Atlantic Coastal Plain. Except for parts of Idaho, Washington, Oregon, and California, cover crops turned under for green manure is not a common practice in the 17 Western States, excluding eastern Texas. Inadequate moisture is a major reason for the infrequent use of cover crops in the 17 Western States.

Land in row crops or close-seeded crops grown in strips for wind erosion control.—As indicated by the accompanying map, this conservation practice is concentrated chiefly in the western part of the Great Plains wheat-producing areas. Along this dry margin, wheat is being grown on land that is subject to wind erosion, particularly during the drier years. Wind stripcropping, stubble mulching, and other conservation practices help

to control soil blowing. The practice of wind stripcropping involves the planting of crops in strips of uniform width which are arranged at right angles to the direction of the prevailing wind. Cultivated summer fallow and small grain crops often occupy alternating strips. Not all land on which wind stripcropping is a current practice is necessarily best suited to wheat. Some of the land on which wheat is presently produced is best adapted to a permanent cover of grass used for grazing livestock.

Cropland used for grain or row crops farmed on the contour.—Crops are planted on the contour when the rows or strips are laid out at right angles to the natural slope of the land. Farming land on the contour generally means that alternating strips or bands of different crops are also used in order to retard soil and water loss. Row crops alternated with close sown crops is a general arrangement. The different crops commonly grown are also rotated among the different strips of land.

Farming on the contour is a widespread practice where sloping land is used for cropland. As shown by the accompanying map, there is widespread use of contour farming in those areas in the South where cotton is an important crop on sloping land. In some of the more rolling parts of the Corn Belt, a considerable acreage of crops are grown on the contour. In the central and southern Great Plains, growing crops on the contour is a widely used practice. Moisture conservation as well as the control of wind and water erosion is a major incentive to arranging crops on the contour. Yields are increased materially through the application of this moisture-conserving practice. In some parts of the Great Plains, where there is no dominant prevailing wind direction, strips of crops planted on the contour are likely to give more protection against wind erosion than strips planted at right angles to the prevailing wind.