

Land in Stripcropping Systems for Soil-Erosion Control

Stripcropping, although not defined in 1969, is usually considered as the practice of alternating close grown crops with strips or bands of row crops with bands of cultivated fallow land. Stripcropping, stubble mulching, and other conservation practices help control soil blowing. Wind stripcropping involves the planting of crops in strips of uniform width, which are arranged at right angles to the direction of prevailing wind. Small grain crops and cultivated summer fallow often occupy the alternating strips.

Since 1964, there has been a decrease of more than 20 percent in the acreage in stripcropping systems for soil-erosion control. The following figures indicate the magnitude of the change for the last three censuses:

	1969	1964	1959
Number of farms	62,672	102,049	105,786
Number of acres	12,447,013	16,029,231	15,349,750
Average acres per farm . .	198.6	157.1	145.1
Percent of total farms . . .	3.6	5.6	5.1

By type of farm, cash-grain farms contributed more than one-half of the total acreage in stripcropping systems. According to the data in table 3, all types of farms showed decreases in the acreage of land in stripcropping systems between 1964 and 1969. Data by type of farm are provided in table 3.

Table 3. Land in Stripcropping Systems for Soil Erosion Control by Type of Farm: 1969 and 1964

	Farms reporting		Acres	
	1969	1964	1969	1964
United States, total.	62,672	102,049	12,447,013	16,029,231
Cash grain.....	14,121	22,911	6,836,505	9,104,520
Tobacco.....	1,578	2,926	28,876	46,050
Cotton.....	669	2,341	126,128	274,050
Other field crop.....	784	1,499	103,984	147,031
Vegetable.....	335	427	27,637	29,250
Fruit and nut.....	276	562	13,010	24,428
Poultry.....	767	1,952	49,128	93,248
Dairy.....	20,795	35,978	1,445,633	2,126,410
Livestock other than poultry and dairy.....	17,876	22,516	2,927,055	3,015,280
Livestock ranches.....	907	1,235	200,266	268,160
General.....	4,300	9,232	675,264	874,200
Miscellaneous.....	264	470	13,527	26,560

The data on stripcropping for 1969 relate to class 1-5 farms for all States. The comparable data are available for 1964 and 1959 for all States except Alaska. The 1954 data relate to only 14 States and part of Texas.

The 63 thousand class 1-5 farms reporting the use of stripcropping systems for erosion control in 1969 accounted for between 3 and 4 percent of the class 1-5 farms in the United States. The acreage in stripcropping totaled 12.4 million or 5 percent of the cropland harvested in 1969.

This conservation practice is most important in the wheat-producing areas in the Great Plains. Of the 12.4 million acres in stripcropping systems in 1969 on class 1-5 farms, about 4.5 million acres were in Montana, and 2.8 million acres were in North Dakota.

Cropland and Pastureland Having Terraces

This item relates to the acreage in ridge-type or channel-type terraces constructed on sloping cropland or pastureland to control water erosion. The acreage served by terraces is generally considered to be the gross area which has been affected or improved by the construction of terraces. The inquiry regarding cropland and pastureland having terraces was included on the report form for class 1-5 farms in the 1969 census for all States. This inquiry was not included as part of the 1964 census; however, data are available from the 1959 census, for all States except Alaska and Hawaii.

There were 16.4 million acres of cropland and pastureland served by terraces in 1969. Kansas with 4.4 million acres, Texas with 3.7 million acres, and Oklahoma with 2.1 million acres were the three leading States. These three States account for three-fifths of the total acreage.

The number of farms reporting cropland and pastureland having terraces decreased by about 161,000 farms, or about 56 percent, from 1959 to 1969. The acres of cropland and pastureland having terraces decreased by about 10.2 million acres, or 38 percent, from 1959 to 1969. The comparative data are as follows:

	1969	1959
Number of farms	117,294	278,426
Number of acres	16,435,486	26,665,027
Average acres per farm	140.1	95.8
Percent of total farms	6.8	13.5

The decreasing amount of land terraced in recent years and the failure to improve and maintain older terraces account for a significant part of the decrease in the acreage served by terraces. Of the 10.2 million acre decrease, 3.5 million took place in Texas. Georgia and Alabama also show decreases of more than one million acres. Kansas, with an increase of 122,000 acres, was the only major State to show an increase.

By type of farm, the acreage in terraces on cotton farms declined 3.5 million acres, or about 75 percent. Changes in the acreage served by terraces from 1959 to 1969 by type of farm are shown in table 4.

Table 4. Cropland and Pastureland Having Terraces: 1969 and 1959

	Farms reporting		Acres	
	1969	1959	1969	1959
United States, total.	117,294	278,426	16,435,486	26,665,027
Cash-grain.....	24,411	41,327	4,735,565	5,491,235
Tobacco.....	4,024	19,996	130,991	523,591
Cotton.....	4,344	38,033	1,064,673	4,611,705
Other field crop.....	1,926	3,469	272,757	292,887
Vegetable.....	401	650	24,557	41,771
Fruit and nut.....	730	2,349	43,867	197,946
Poultry.....	2,127	12,109	122,488	537,939
Dairy.....	11,779	33,615	869,075	2,111,038
Livestock other than poultry and dairy.....	51,385	83,575	6,684,804	7,940,687
Livestock ranches.....	4,718	10,338	697,334	1,849,779
General.....	10,690	30,321	1,732,685	2,866,394
Miscellaneous.....	759	2,554	56,690	200,055