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NORTH DAKOTA CHAPTER POSITION ON EROSION AND SEDIMENTATION (ADOPTED 9/81)

Being agriculture is a major contributor to the economy of North Dakota, and our soil is the foundation of agriculture, be it the observation of the North Dakota Chapter that:

1. Many soils of the State of North Dakota have been and are being mismanaged, resulting in erosion and depletion of the amount of productive A horizon (topsoil);
2. Portions of the sedimentation resulting from erosion (wind and water) is reaching the State's rivers and lakes, lowering water quality, and decreasing their potential as recreational use area; and
3. Agriculture is the number one industry in the State.

Be it the position of the North Dakota Chapter of Soil and Water Conservation Society that:

1. Every effort should be used in conserving the remainder of our soil resource by keeping it in place;
2. Conservation practices which reduce erosion from wind and water be used wherever possible;
3. This Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society will make a concentrated effort to inform citizens of the State on ways to make conservative use of, and to eliminate misuse of, our soils resources; and
4. The North Dakota Chapter of Soil and Water Conservation Society will promote expanded use of all available sources of publicity to encourage better use of soil resources

NORTH DAKOTA CHAPTER POSITION ON FISH, WILDLIFE, AND OUTDOOR RECREATION (ADOPTED 9/81)

1. Wildlife Habitat – The North Dakota Chapter Soil and Water Conservation Society, recommends that wildlife management and related agencies expand programs that provide private landowners with incentives and techniques for preserving and enhancing wildlife habitat, especially on agricultural land. We encourage adequate funding of the Water Bank Program in the future for the renewal and updating of existing Water Bank contracts in addition to the present rate of new contracts.
2. Fish Habitat - The North Dakota Chapter Soil and Water Conservation Society, recommends expanded programs of water quality improvement to counteract pollution from both point and non-point sources. WE support efforts to (1) apply conservation practices to agricultural land to reduce sedimentation in our lakes and streams and (2) reduce eutrophication of lanes in our state by installing proper sewage treatment facilities; and (3) require controls over construction-related erosion.
3. Sportsman-landowner Relationship - The North Dakota Chapter Soil and Water Conservation Society, recommends expanded educational programs for sportsmen emphasizing (1) the need to obtain permission to hunt or fish on private property; (2) respect for property including fences, crops and livestock and (3) litter clean-up and prevention.
4. Wildlife Mitigation - The North Dakota Chapter Soil and Water Conservation Society, acknowledges that projects for the control and management of water resources often affect fish and wildlife resources, sometimes beneficially and sometimes adversely. All project planning should evaluate the probable effects of fish and wildlife. We recommend that where it becomes necessary to take land for wildlife mitigation in connection with water resource development, designated agencies should give first priority to the lease or purchase of land other than prime farmland. The mitigation process should consider factors such as wildlife mitigation land.
5. Outdoor Recreation - The North Dakota Chapter Soil and Water Conservation Society, acknowledges that the use of natural resources for outdoor recreation imposes responsibilities for their conservation. We recommend that (1) full consideration be given to soil survey interpretations when planning for intensive outdoor recreation, and (2) outdoor recreation resources in North Dakota be identified and designated for current and future development, and (3) State financial and technical assistance to local public groups involved in developing and operating public outdoor recreation facilities be requested.

NORTH DAKOTA CHAPTER POSITION ON RANGELAND CONVERSION

It is the position of the North Dakota Chapter that:

1. The rangelands of North Dakota are a valuable resource.
2. The lack of management and understanding of this rangeland resource has resulted in a conversion of thousands of acres of rangeland to cropland. This conversion has caused a tremendous loss of valuable topsoil, loss of unique and complex vegetation, loss of wildlife habitat, loss of grazing capacity and further deterioration of the remaining rangeland.
3. It is in the best interest of all citizens that this conversion of rangeland be discouraged.
4. It is therefore the position of the North Dakota Chapter of Soil and Water Conservation Society that continued conversion of this resource is not in the best interest of the citizens of North Dakota.
5. We therefore endorse any effort by all individuals and organizations to discourage this rangeland conversion and, as a professional society, do our part to reestablish these rangelands within the limits of present technology.
6. The Society therefore publicly proclaims this position and will make it know to landowners and various responsible public and private organizations.

NORTH DAKOTA CHAPTER POSITION ON SOIL EROSION (ADOPTED 12/2/94)

The North Dakota Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society is dedicated to the wise use of natural resources. The Chapter's objectives include economic development, environmental quality, social well-being, and soil and water conservation. We believe this soil erosion policy should achieve a reasonable balance of these objectives. This position statement describes our vision for the future and defines the major strategic initiatives necessary to set future direction for managing and sustaining our soil resource and protection from erosion.

- ✳ Although erosion is a natural process, which was occurring long before this state was founded, man has greatly accelerated, through intensive agricultural practices, the soil erosion process in the last 130 years. The recognition of the interrelationship between the soil resource and the water, air, plants, animal, and human resources is paramount to addressing the soil erosion problems in our state.
- ✳ Total resource management systems on all land uses is essential to control soil erosion and improve soil health. Land capability must be explained and taught to all North Dakota citizens to insure that land is properly used and protected from excessive soil erosion. Cropping is not the only land use that produces soil erosion. The use of both vegetative and structural practices are necessary to control wind and water erosion.
- ✳ A persistent and effective public information and education program must be implemented to inform citizens of North Dakota about soil erosion and its social, economic, and environmental effects on them. Both rural and urban citizens should work closely with their soil conservation district boards and other state and federal conservation agencies to develop and implement practices which manage soil erosion.
- ✳ The development of alliances or guilds between land users, agribusiness, and conservation agencies needs to continue. Conservation partnerships between individuals, groups and governmental agencies need to be initiated.
- ✳ The basic conservation principles of leaving vegetative cover on the land and decreasing slope lengths and field widths must be accentuated.
- ✳ Good irrigation water management must be practiced to prevent soil erosion and improve water quality.
- ✳ The 1985 Food Security Act (FSA) and the 1990 Food Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act (FACTA) requires the planning and implementation of conservation system on designated highly erodible land (HEL) cropland fields. This act, although good, only addresses approximately 1/3 of the cropland in North Dakota. We feel strongly that the other cropland designated as not highly erodible land (NHEL) be properly protected from soil erosion.

- ✱ Soil erosion from overland flooding needs to be addressed by evaluating the entire hydrologic unit area and planning appropriate land treatment and structural conservation practices.
- ✱ State and Federal conservation programs need to continue to be implemented at the local and county level. Both technical and financial assistance need to be provided in a user friendly approach, which will encourage citizen involvement in soil conservation.
- ✱ Streambank, shoreline, and roadside water erosion need to be addressed. These types of erosion are a significant source of sediment and nutrient loading in our water resources. This form of erosion not only displaces our soil, but pollutes our water resource and creates safety hazards.
- ✱ Soil erosion on urban and industrial land needs to be addressed by working more closely with community and county planners and zoning commissions.
- ✱ Existing programs such as the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Water Bank Program (WBP), Small Watershed Program (P.L. 83-566), Great Plains Conservation Program, Agricultural Conservation Program (ACP), Wetland Reserve Program (WRP), Nonpoint Source 319 and Stewardship Incentive Program (SIP) must be supported both financially and technically.

NORTH DAKOTA CHAPTER POSITION ON THE 1995 FARM BILL (ADOPTED 5/95)

The North Dakota Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society supports the adoption of public policies that will result in the best sustained use and management of natural resources. Thus,

- ✳ We recognize the need for economic viability of agricultural producers in a global economy,
- ✳ We recognize the need for a secure food and fiber supply at a reasonable cost to the consumers,
- ✳ Public funds should be targeted to where natural resource problems are the most significant (soil, water, air, plants, and animals), and
- ✳ Unfunded mandates are unacceptable both in terms of incentive-based programs and the staff needed to properly implement them.

With these thoughts in mind, the North Dakota Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society supports the implementation of the following principles in the 1995 Farm Bill:

- ✳ Federal agricultural policy should be based on promoting Best Management Practices (BMP's) that will achieve the sustainable use of soil, water, air, plant, and animal resources.

2. Give priority to research and programs that will achieve sustainable use of resources (ahead of "non-use" programs such as CRP), and

3. BMP/conservation incentive payments must be subject to performance-based evaluation. In accordance with these principles, the Dakota Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society recommend the following changes to programs in the 1995 Farm Bill:

Phase out commodity-acreage programs and replace them with incentive payments that are prorated according to the environmental benefits of the practices applied by the landowners,

2. If the Conservation Reserve Program is extended, modify it to include the following:

A. Scheduling of non-pay years alternated with at least two paid years on grass acreage.

Allow appropriately managed haying, grazing, or burning during non-pay years to maintain grass/legume health.

B. Require restoration of all drained wetland acreage with 100% of the cost reimbursable by the USDA,

Modify USDA Conservation Easements to allow haying during alternate years on areas that are now designated "grazing only" but are not feasible to graze in a timely manner,

4. Drop the federal crop insurance enrollment requirement for producers earning incentive/cost share payments for utilizing BMPs, and

5. Drop the Wetland Reserve Program because it duplicates the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Wetland Easement Program.

NORTH DAKOTA CHAPTER POSITION ON WATER RESOURCES (ADOPTED DEC. 10, 2000)

The North Dakota Chapter of the Soil & Water Conservation Society is dedicated to promoting the wise use of natural resources. Our objectives include economic development, environmental quality, social well-being, and soil and water conservation. We believe that water policy and management should achieve a reasonable balance of these objectives. We believe that planning for wise water management is essential for North Dakota to respond to potential increasing demands on water resources for agriculture, industry, municipalities, recreation, fish, and wildlife. The North Dakota Chapter of the Soil & Water Conservation Society supports the following principles for water management:

1. All citizens have a responsibility to this and future generations to manage air, animals, energy, plants, soil, and water for optimum sustained use. Optimal uses sustain healthy ecosystems and a healthy society.
2. The management and uses of water should not cause the waste or degradation of other resources, and vice-versa. The interactions between air, animals, energy, plants, soils, & water that result from their management and uses must be recognized and understood.
3. Water management policies and water projects should promote self-sufficiency in our agriculture, communities, and lifestyles. Government policies and programs should promote a resilient ability to live with variations in water supplies that inevitably result from precipitation extremes. For example, xeriscaping should be promoted as an alternative to subsidizing irrigated lawns. Pro-active approaches, such as floodplain zoning, should be used to prevent increasing or perpetuating vulnerability to flood damage.
4. Public water projects must not contribute to indirect, large-scale resource degradation, such as urbanization of prime farmland.
5. The maintenance of worthwhile, existing public water projects and the environmentally sound decommission of obsolete water projects should be completed before new projects are started.
6. Citizens must be afforded the right to be informed of pending water management decisions that might affect them, and must be allowed to participate at all levels of water resource planning- especially within their watershed and aquifer zone. The public must be well-informed to properly manage resources. A comprehensive, unbiased water information & education program should be provided to North Dakotans.
7. Water uses, management policies and projects should not infringe on property rights, either within or beyond political borders.

8. Water projects and water management should be based on a precautionary approach. Resource degradation and waste should be avoided by choosing the best plan from a reasonable array of studied alternatives & mitigation measures, including on-site, off-site, and cumulative effects. Water quality protection incentives such as programs to seal abandoned wells should be given a high priority.
9. The quality and quantity of surface water and ground water must be protected by responsible government. Diligent monitoring is essential. Laws with sufficient scope to reasonably prevent degradation, waste, and unlawful use of water must be enforced. Penalties should be commensurate with the severity of the hazard and/or damage, and the difficulty of apprehending the violator. Responsible agencies must be adequately funded and managed to accomplish their duties.

NORTH DAKOTA CHAPTER POSITION ON THE PROPOSED ORGANIC RULE (ADOPTED 4/98)

The North Dakota Chapter Soil and Water Conservation Society has concurred with the Northern Plains Sustainable Agriculture Society on the issues described below:

USDA should use a precautionary, rather than a risk assessment approach in determining the materials and practices that will be allowed in organic production and processing. Using "measurable degradation" as a basis for determining the inclusion or exclusion of practices or material is unacceptable and inconsistent with the history and principles of organic. Organic has always prohibited the use of materials and practices based on the principle that they had to be proven safe, rather than merely not proven unsafe, and only allowed them on the basis of demonstrated need. USDA should use these precautionary principles in drafting the regulations.

Private certifiers must be allowed to exceed the national standard and be recognized in the marketplace for doing so. This provision is vital to the ongoing improvement of organic practices and is necessary in order for private and state certifiers to be in a level playing field, as proposed in the Senate Report. The rule also needs to clearly express that such rights of private certifiers are assured for the purpose of certifying organic products for export.

Standards for crops, livestock and handling must AT LEAST meet the requirements set forth in the National Organic Standards Board's (NOSB) recommendations. In many instances the materials and practices allowed in the rule do not meet this requirement. This is unacceptable.

Under no circumstances should GEOs (Genetically Enhanced Organisms), irradiation, sewage sludge, or the feeding of rendered animal by-products be allowed in organic production or processing. These materials and practices are incompatible with the principles of organic systems.

The Secretary should uphold the legal authority of the NOSB to establish the National List.

With regard to labeling, we request that the right to use eco-labels such as "hormone free", "pesticide free", "humanely raised", etc. be preserved. Further, the right to use negative claims in organic production, such as "grown without antibiotics", "fed grains grown without pesticides", etc. be protected. Under no circumstances should this regulation prohibit producers from claiming that their product is produced without the use of pesticides, as noted in the Senate Report.