
U.S. Conservation: A History of Success

USDA Sustainability Meeting

London

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Merritt Chesley

Assistant Deputy Administrator

Merritt.Chesley@fas.usda.gov

TODAY'S THEMES

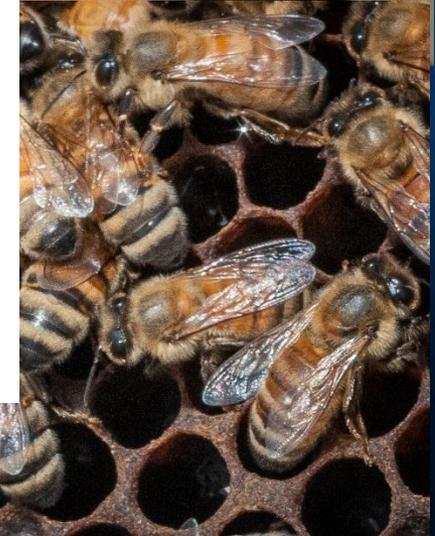
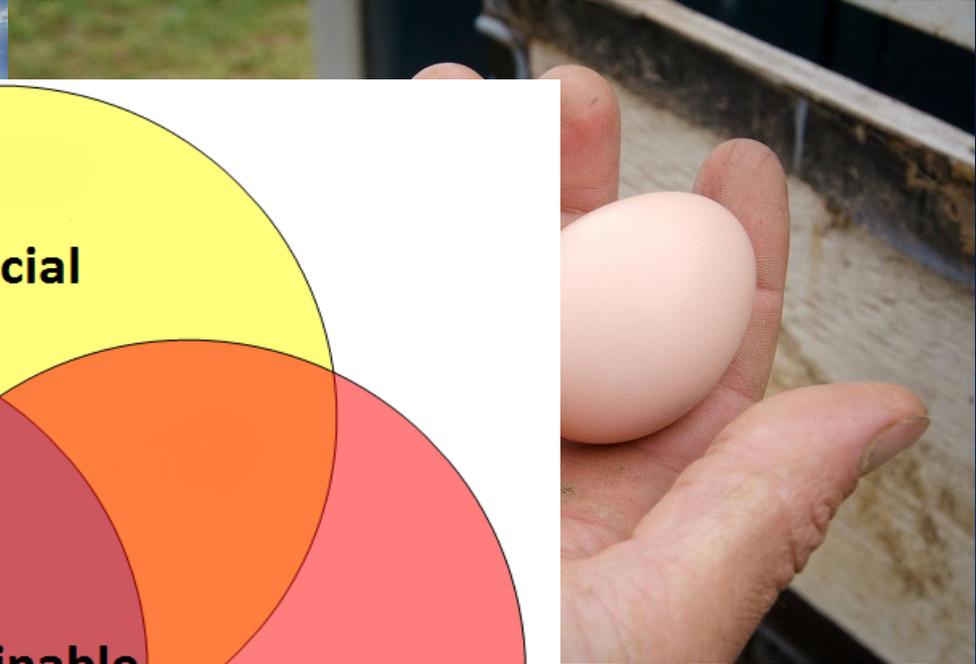
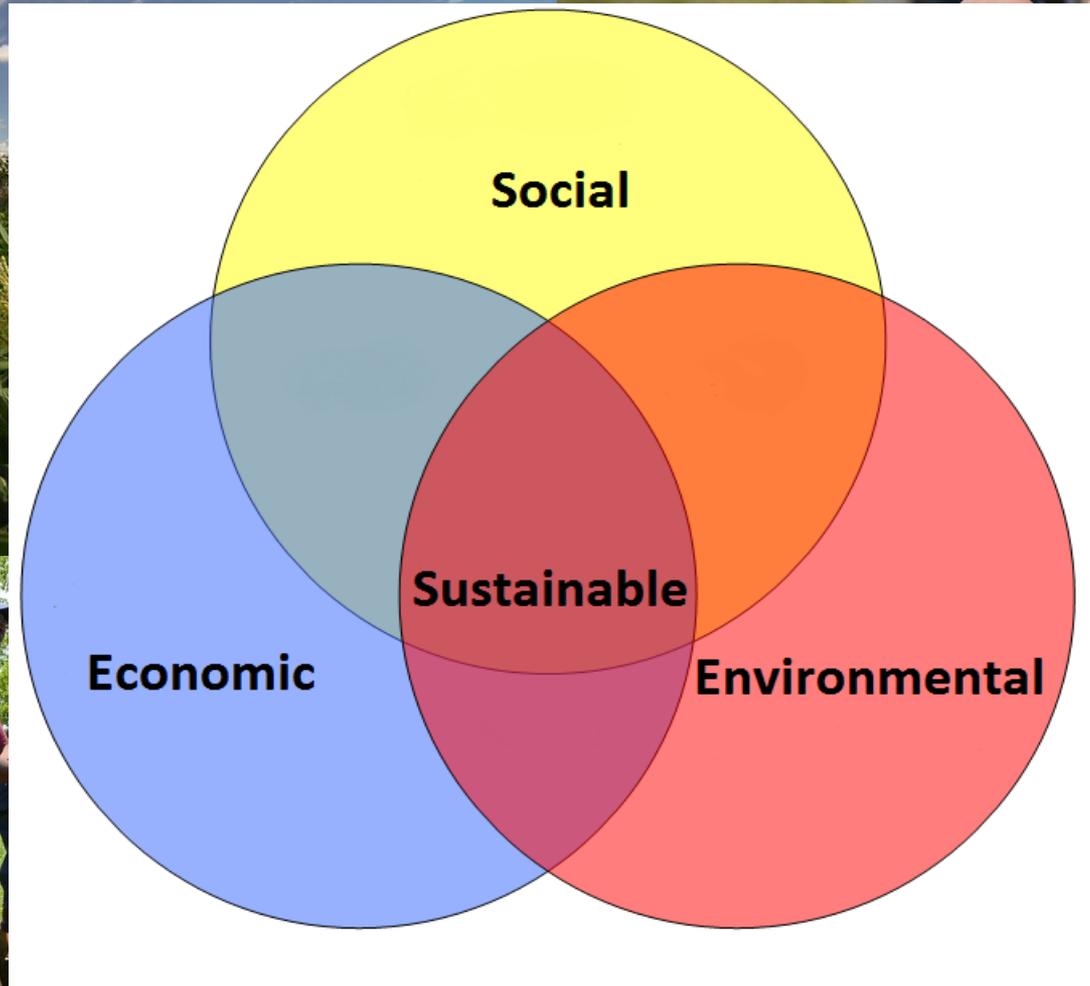
- Sustainability and Trade
- U.S. Conservation Programs
- U.S. Public and Private Sustainability Efforts

TODAY'S THEMES

- Sustainability and Trade



CAN YOU DEFINE SUSTAINABILITY?



Sustainability and Trade – It's Land Use

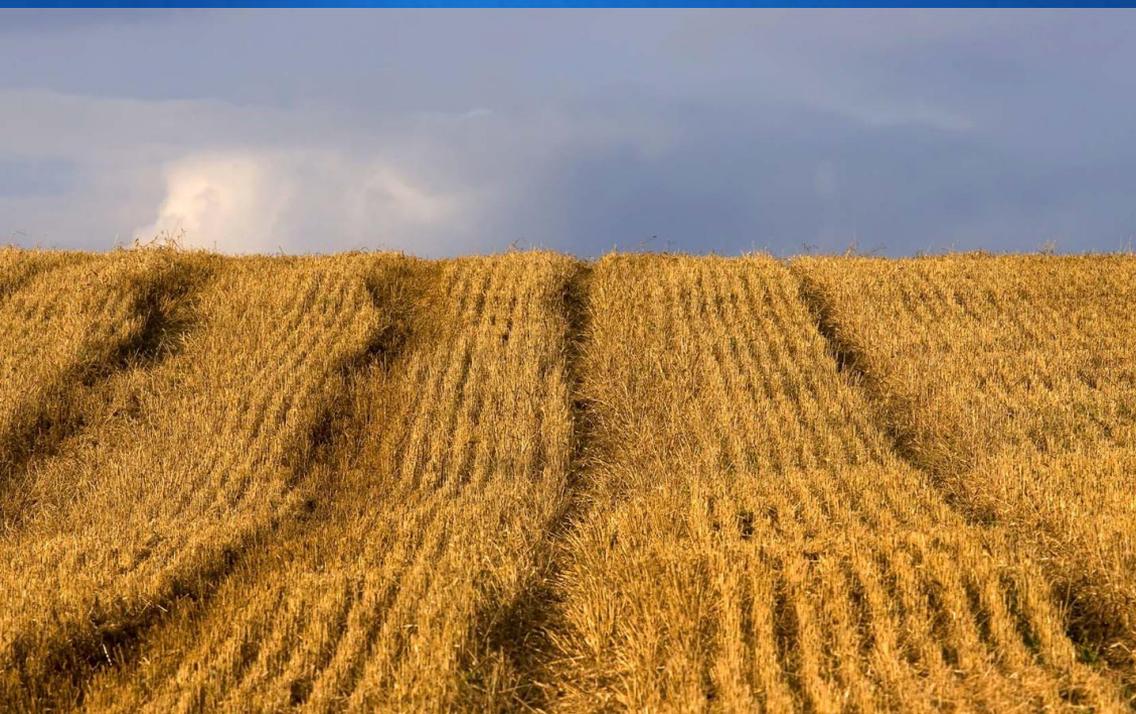
- Two kinds of land use changes
 - Direct - change on land feedstock is produced (e.g., Deforestation, new cultivation, soy to corn, corn on corn)
 - Indirect - change on land elsewhere

Sustainability and Trade – It's Land Use

- Environmental Implications of Land Use Changes
 - GHG Emissions
 - GHG Sequestration in Grasslands, Forests
 - Water Use and Quality
 - Biodiversity Loss
 - Soil Erosion

TODAY'S THEMES

- U.S. Conservation Programs



The Dust Bowl



A Conservation Pioneer



“If we take care of the land, it will take care of us.”

- Hugh Hammond Bennett, first Chief of NRCS – 1935 to 1951

NRCS Acting Under Secretary

Ann Mills

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bg4bRS4t81A>

Key U.S. Conservation Programs

- Two Long-standing Compliance Programs
 - Highly Erodible Land (HEL)/Sodbuster
 - Swampbuster

Highly Erodible Lands/Sodbuster

- Part of Food Security Act of 1985 (Farm Bill)
- Requires producers to maintain practices to reduce soil erosion to tolerable levels on Highly Erodible Land (HEL)
- Violators risk losing eligibility for USDA farm programs

HEL Practices

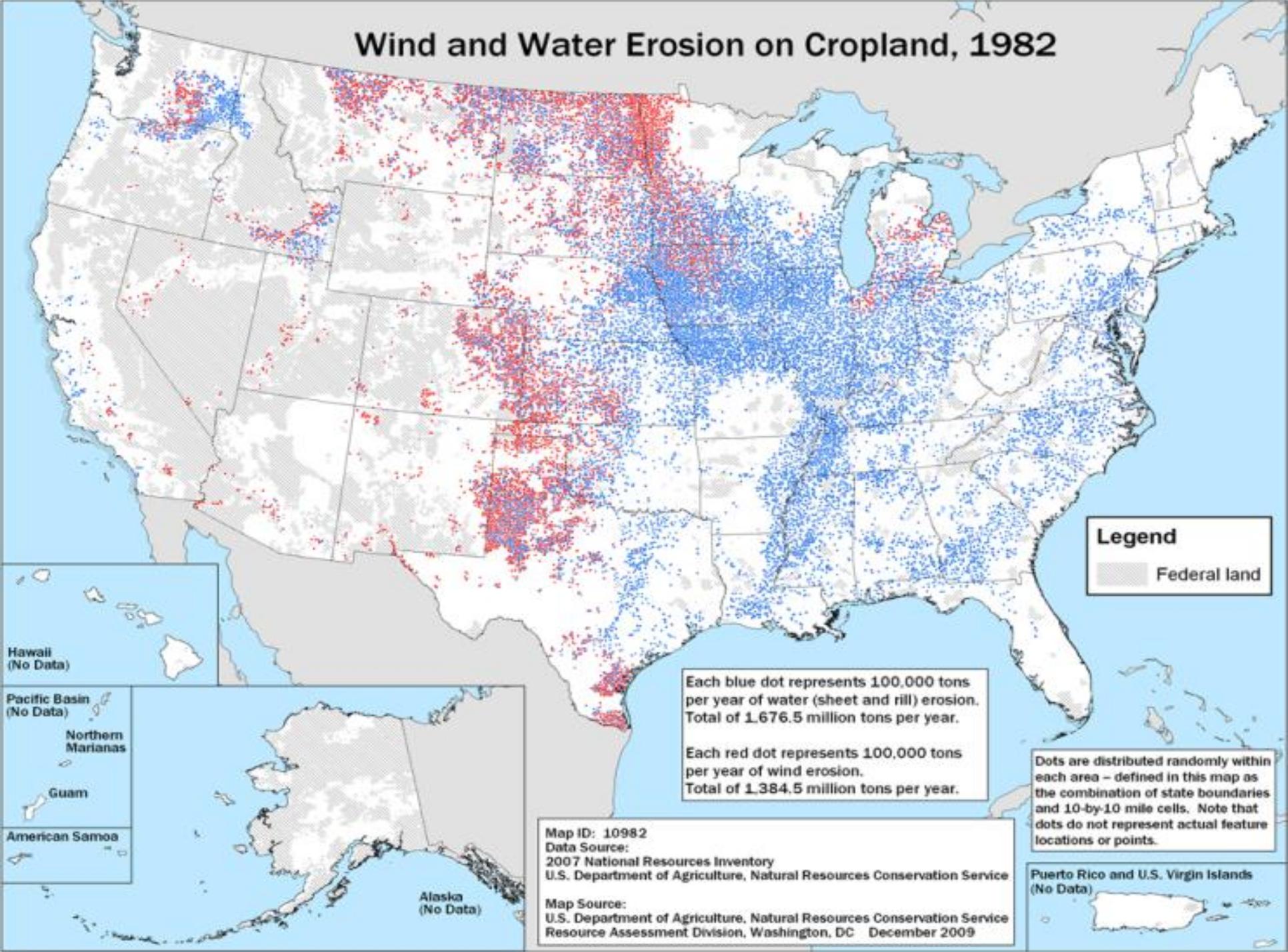


Land Terracing

Conservation Tillage



Wind and Water Erosion on Cropland, 1982



Legend
Federal land

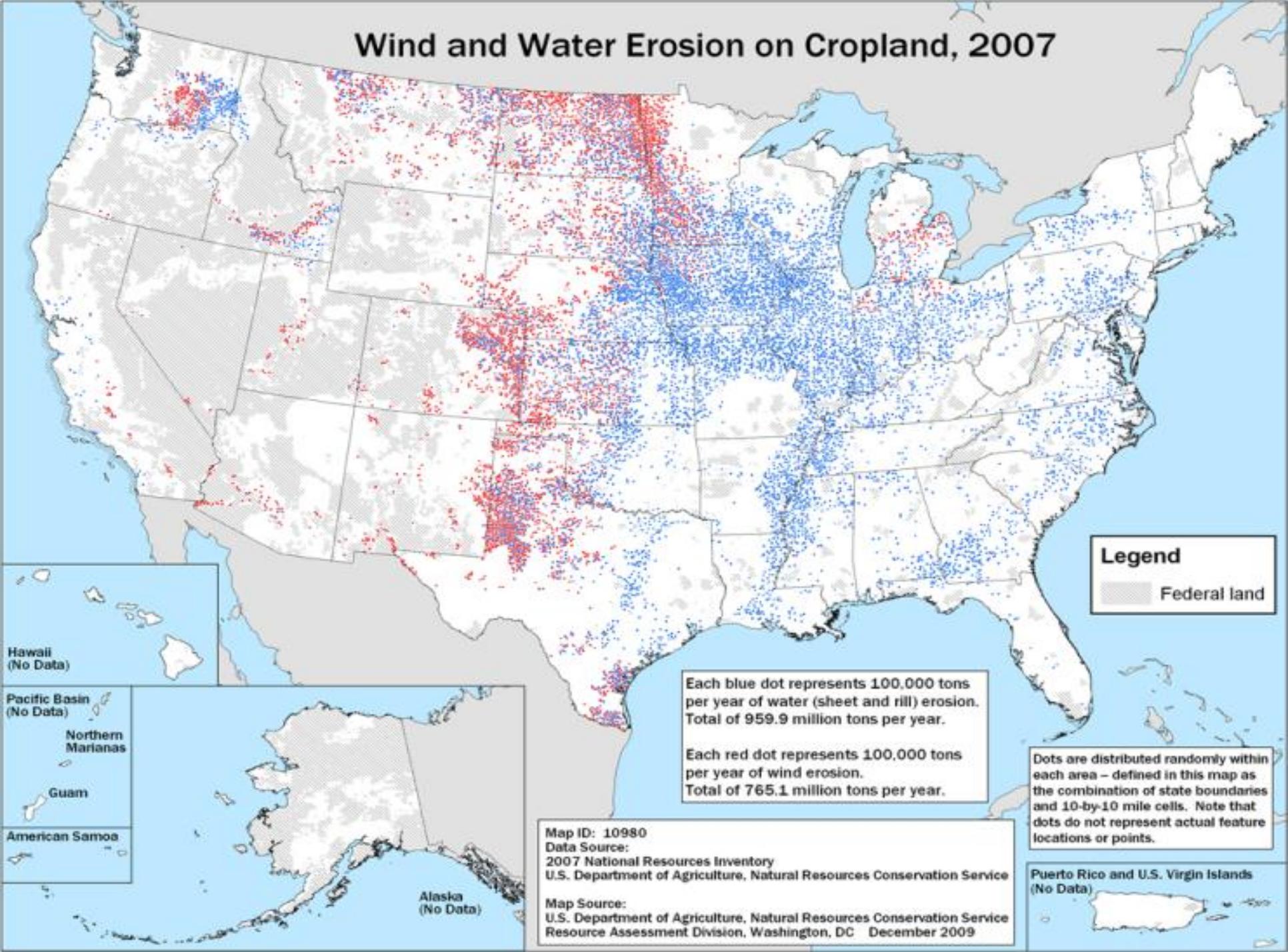
Each blue dot represents 100,000 tons per year of water (sheet and rill) erosion. Total of 1,676.5 million tons per year.

Each red dot represents 100,000 tons per year of wind erosion. Total of 1,384.5 million tons per year.

Dots are distributed randomly within each area – defined in this map as the combination of state boundaries and 10-by-10 mile cells. Note that dots do not represent actual feature locations or points.

Map ID: 10982
Data Source:
2007 National Resources Inventory
U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service
Map Source:
U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service
Resource Assessment Division, Washington, DC December 2009

Wind and Water Erosion on Cropland, 2007



Legend
Federal land

Each blue dot represents 100,000 tons per year of water (sheet and rill) erosion. Total of 959.9 million tons per year.

Each red dot represents 100,000 tons per year of wind erosion. Total of 765.1 million tons per year.

Dots are distributed randomly within each area – defined in this map as the combination of state boundaries and 10-by-10 mile cells. Note that dots do not represent actual feature locations or points.

Map ID: 10980
Data Source:
2007 National Resources Inventory
U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service
Map Source:
U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service
Resource Assessment Division, Washington, DC December 2009

Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands (No Data)

Swampbuster

- Part of Food Security Act of 1985 (Farm Bill)
 - Protects against conversion of wetlands to cropland use
 - Violators risk losing eligibility for USDA farm programs

What does Swampbuster protect?



USDA Permanent Easement Programs

- Grassland Reserve Program
- Wetlands Reserve Program
- Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program

Grassland Reserve Program

- Places permanent easements restricting development and cropping on grazing lands
- Keeps working lands working
- Reduces soil erosion and improves wildlife habitat

Wetlands Reserve Program

- Restores wetlands on agricultural lands and protects them in perpetuity through conservation easements
- Over 2.3 million acres currently enrolled
- Permanent water quality and wildlife benefits

Northern Everglades Watershed



Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program

- Places permanent conservation easements on productive farm and ranch lands
- USDA purchases development rights in perpetuity
- Over 340,000 ha protected through the program to date

Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program



USDA's IMPACT

- Conservation on more than 53 million acres
- Invested more than \$34.5 billion in the last decade
- Historic levels of conservation funding and program participation



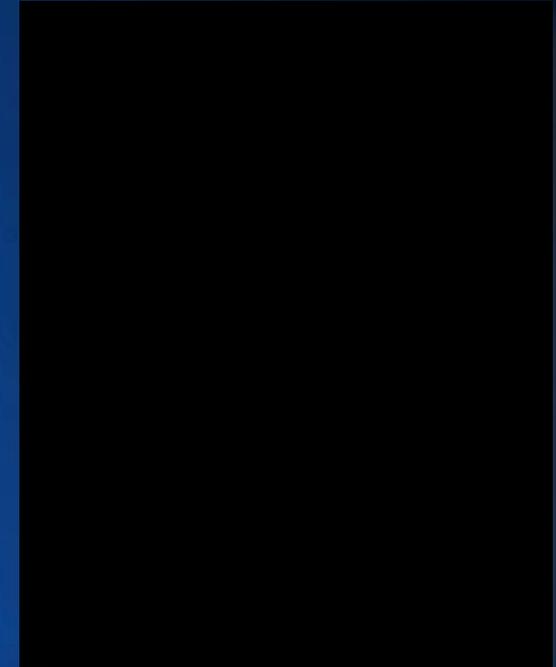
TODAY'S THEMES

- U.S. Public and Private Sustainability Efforts



Public Sustainability Efforts

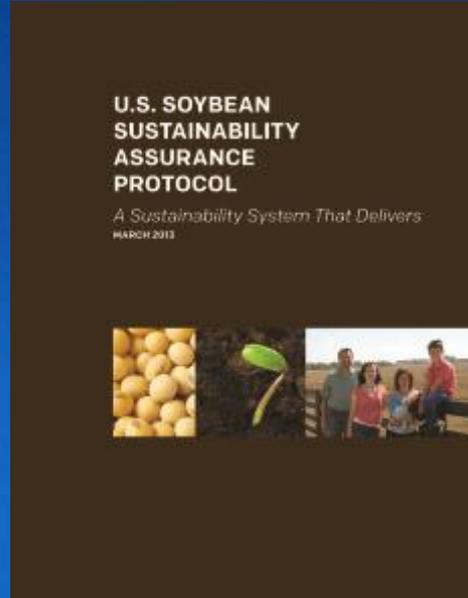
- What does the U.S. currently do?
 - The Energy Independence and Security Act (RFS2)
 - USDA – Sustainable Development Office
 - U.S. Participation with the Global Bioenergy Partnership (GBEP)



Private Sustainability Efforts



Seafood



Oilseeds



Forestry



Wineries



Wild, Natural & Sustainable®



Retailers

Ron Moore, Soybean Farmer and Illinois Soybean Association Vice President

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ya2fj6w0ZIE>

In Conclusion

- USDA Seeks to Balance the Goals of:
 - Enhancing environmental quality, the resource base, and ecosystem services;
 - Sustaining the economic viability of agriculture;
 - Enhancing the quality of life for farmers, ranchers, forest managers, workers and society as a whole.

In Conclusion

- USDA Philosophy Towards Resource Conservation and Landscape Management:
 - Policies and practices should be derived from the best possible science
 - Policies and practices must be appropriate to the location
 - Policies should promote continuous improvement of agricultural practices

In Conclusion

- FAS stance on Sustainability and Trade:
 - Sustainability is a “process” not an end state
 - No one-size-fits all approach
 - Sustainability should not block access to international markets