



## Native Grass Success Told by Ranchers

### EXPERIENCES OF 3 PROVE SEEDING OF MISUSED LAND IS PROFITABLE

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Unit Conservationist Holt Soil Conservation District

Grass and more grass. That is what we like in this section of the state. It is a God-given crop. The native species were here before we were. We now have the finest vegetative cover that can be found anywhere.

There was a time, especially in the era of the early arrivals, when this wonderful vegetative cover was threatened by the lack of knowledge on the wise use of the land. The

5 years after which it became their own.

The Timber Culture act of 1873 gave title to 160 acres if you planted and established 40 acres of trees. Although this act was passed just one year preceding the first recorded settlement in Holt county, it is doubtful if very much Holt county land was claimed under this act.

Then there was the Desert Land act of 1877, chiefly applicable to irrigated lands and the land grants to various states of 1894. However, neither of these acts affected the lands of Holt county.

The Kinkaid Homestead act of 1904, sponsored by Holt county's own Moses P. Kinkaid, allowed entry on 640 acres of western Nebraska land. It was under this act that much of Holt county land was settled.

The Kinkaid act, which provided a larger acreage of this land not suited for intensive farming, was the first indication that the influence of a true westerner, who understood the problems, was beginning to show up in congress on land legislation.

The Enlarged Homestead act of 1909 increased the homestead size to 320 acres in nine western states, but mistakenly required that one-fourth of the land should be cultivated.

There were several other land acts, but Stoddard and Smith in their book, "Range Management," state that the government failed to determine and specify proper land use in the West, which resulted in plowing of thousands of acres of land unsuitable for cultivation. They state that the federal government is not alone responsible for the deterioration of a lot of land, but that state and county governments likewise made many serious errors in administration and taxation.

#### Nature at Work

Throughout the thousands of years nature, through its favorable factors of soil, fertility, moisture and temperature as opposed to the adverse factors of fires, heavy grazing, drouth and moving soil, has

developed a unique complex of vegetation as a cover to hold and stabilize the soil and produce a revenue or income for the citizenry. There are many different kinds of grasses each of which has its peculiarities as to growth habits,

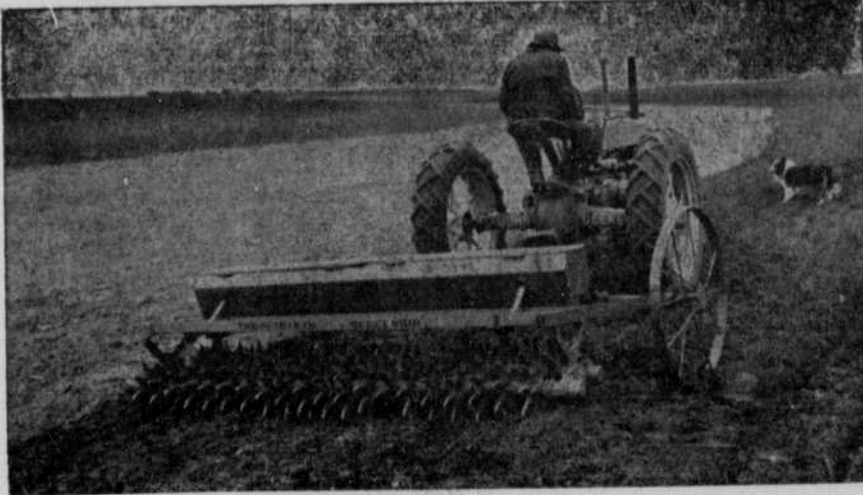
soil and moisture requirements, and value for grazing and hay.

Our experiment stations are working on and developing new varieties and strains of grasses that, for

the most part, are improvements over that with which they started.

However, most of this work has been done with the culti-

(Continued on page 8-B.)



A grass seeder is shown in operation seeding land to permanent grass on the Hans Mathieson farm in Boyd county.

pioneers, being energetic and resourceful as well as coming from the East, where farming meant plowing, planting and cultivating, quite naturally tried to do the things they knew how to do.

You can talk about grass and the sandhills of Nebraska, and be speaking of synonymous things: Most people associate these with this section of the state. Holt and Rock counties are famous for their exportation of prairie hay, having some of the best native hay producing valleys in the world.

Not all the blame should be assessed against the pioneers. The government also was lacking in a thorough understanding of the proper handling of this new land of the West.

that the Eastern congressmen carried the balance of power in congress.

The first was the Pre-emption act of 1841, which gave individuals privilege to buy 160 acres of the public land at a reasonable fee. The Homestead Act passed in 1862, gave a person a chance to take 160 acres to improve and live on

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