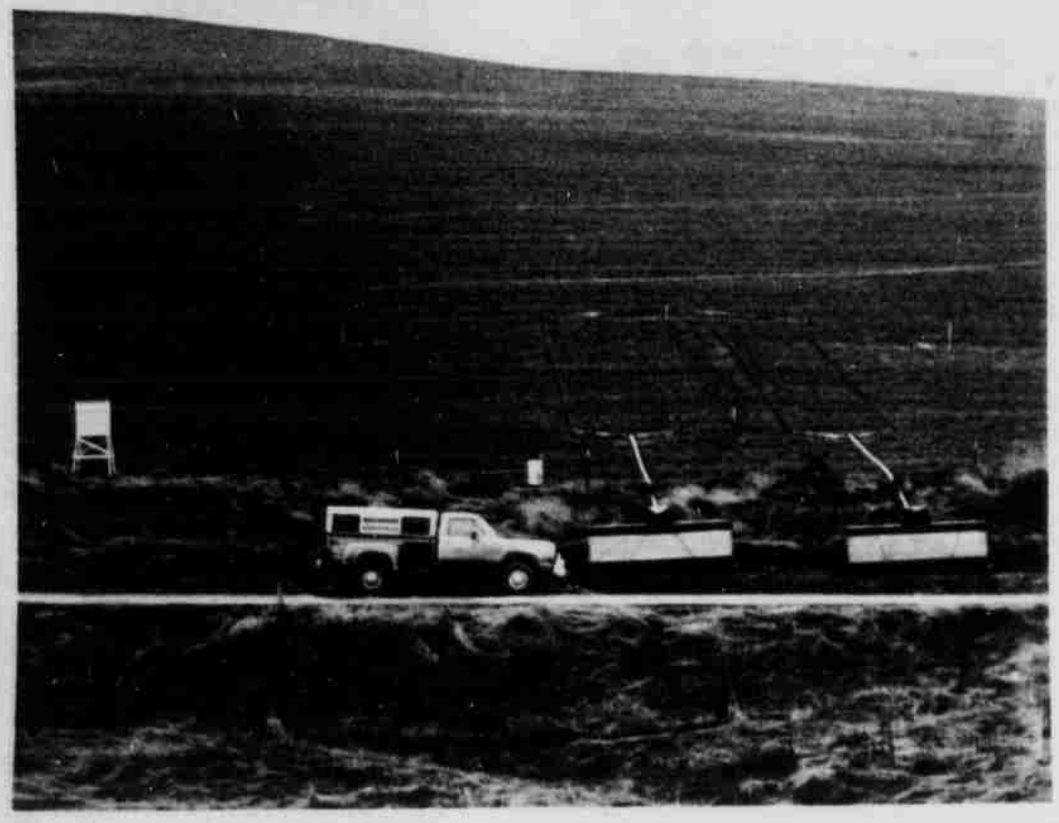

Research site on Monte Evans (Floyd Jones) farm

Soil erosion factors studied

A soil erosion research site has been established in Morrow County on land farmed by Monte Evans (Floyd Jones Farm) in the Stingle Canyon area four miles northeast of Heppner. It is one of five sites installed in northeastern Oregon. Similar sites are located in Gilliam, Sherman, Umatilla and Wasco Counties. The project is under the direction of John Zuzel, hydrologist with the USDA-SEA-AR (Science and Education Administration-Agricultural Research), in Pendleton.

Each site is designed to collect into holding tanks all of the runoff and erosional materials produced from each of two 10 x 60 foot plots. The plots are installed in the fall after planting operations are complete and removed before harvest begins. The holding tanks are instrumented with continuously recording water level sensors. Each site is also equipped with instruments which continuously record soil temperature, air temperature, relative humidity and precipitation. Frost depth is recorded weekly as is snow depth and snow water equivalent. When a runoff event occurs, water and sediment samples are collected from the holding tanks and analyzed for soil and fertilizer type chemical concentrations.

The objectives of this research are to document the climatic, soil and physiographic factors responsible for runoff and erosion producing events in the dryland grain regions of the Pacific Northwest. The effects of surface residue, canopy cover, surface roughness and tillage practices are also being studied with the goal of developing a predictive soil loss equation specific to the Pacific Northwest. Several more winters of research are needed to isolate the factors involved in soil erosion and to suggest management techniques for erosion control.

Abrams and Kuhn
Attorneys at Law
267 N. Main
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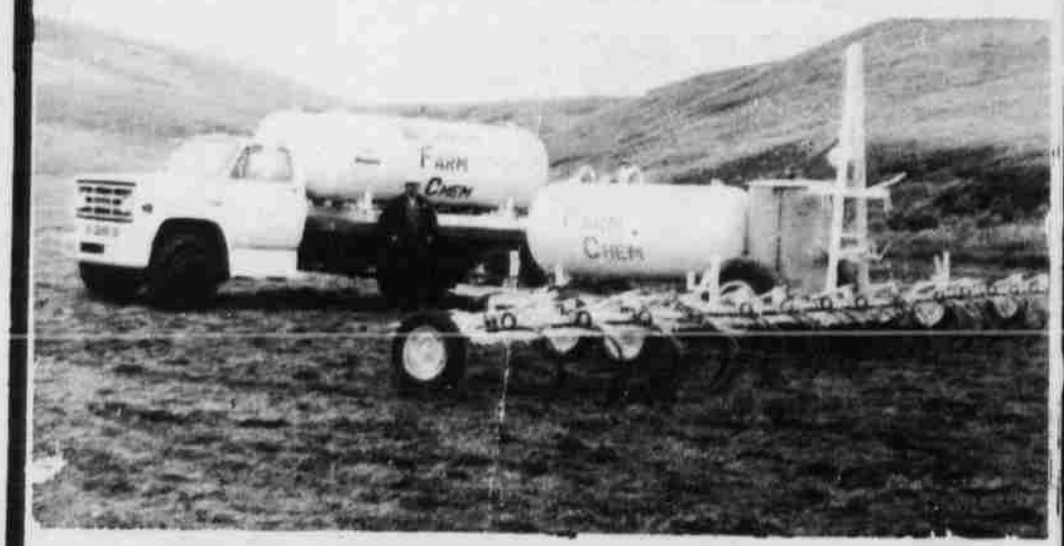

Herb Ekstrom, Jr.
Ekstrom Farm Chemicals
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