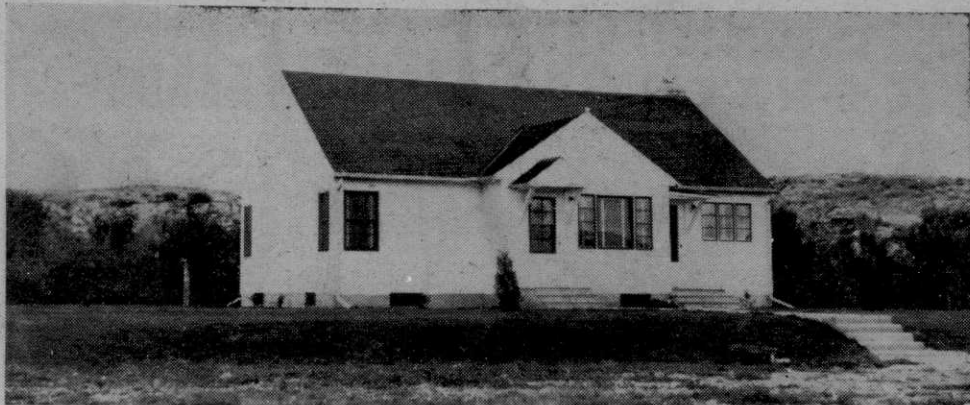


Farmer-Stockman



One evidence of the success of the program is this comfortable new home.



Joe Pilch, Sheridan County, Wyoming, farmer-stockman, finds conservation practices step up his wheat and cattle production.

Wheat, Cattle, Conservation Make Balanced Program for Wyoming Operation

By JERRY LESTER

JOE PILCH, Sheridan county, Wyoming, farmer-stockman, didn't have to be told the value of irrigated land to balance his wheat and cattle operation. He had rented the 2,800-acre farm for eight years during which time it was all dryland production. In 1944 he bought the place and one of the first things he did was to start re-building a washed out diversion dam in Prairie Dog creek that would allow him to irrigate some 90 acres of creek bottom hay land.

\$1,600 Plus Labor

The new dam with head gate diversion structure cost \$400 plus Joe's labor in getting enough large boulders to push into the creek. A 1½-mile long ditch was dug at a cost of \$1,200.

His plans for the future also call for installation of an electric pump to lift water onto another 130 acres of land above the creek. Bringing water to the 90 acres of hay land resulted in doubling his hay production. An alfalfa seed crop from about 40 acres netted him \$90 an acre last year. He is enthusiastic about seed production and reports that in the last 15 years only two

produced no alfalfa seed crop. He has about 200 acres of winter wheat on a 50-50 summer-fallow basis.

Joe keeps 175 head of cattle on the ranch and sells yearlings in the spring. The range land includes about 2,300 acres and is rotated with half used one year and the other half the next. He has noticed a real improvement in the grass since starting this system and believes it well worth while.

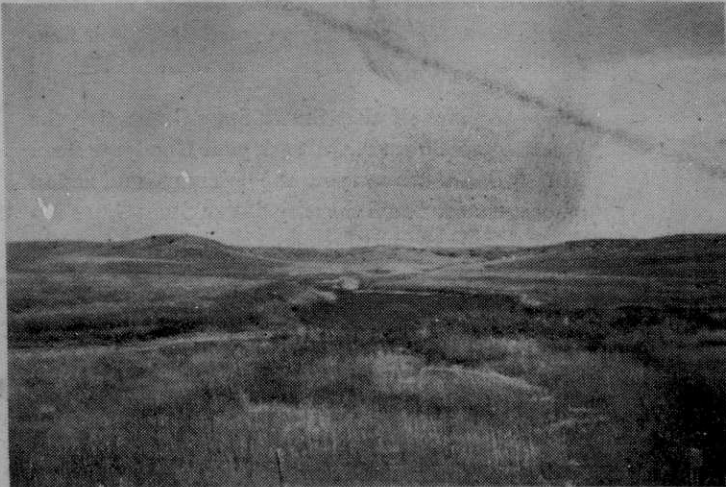
Stock Water, Gully Control Dams

There are also 10 combination stock water and gully control dams on the place, created with the help of the Dutch Creek-Clear Creek soil conservation district and conservationist J. Newton Scott. The SCS also helped lay out ditches and design the diversion dam for the irrigation system.

Spring calving pasture is obtained from 30 acres of crested wheatgrass. Another conservation practice Pilch has turned to is stubble mulch tillage. He uses an offset, disc once over to break down the stubble a little in the fall and then again a couple times in the summer before seeding it to winter wheat again.



A diversion dam across Prairie Dog creek plus a 1½-mile ditch enables Pilch to irrigate 90 acres of bottom hay land. A planned pumping installation will irrigate another 130 acres.



—SCS Service Photo

Here's an easy way to take care of part of surplus wheat acreage and build a better farm. This grassed waterway, seen in the center of the picture, is through a wheat field on the Joe Pilch farm. It was seeded to alfalfa and brome grass, which produces good hay and prevents gully erosion.



Another conservation practice Pilch has turned to is stubble mulch tillage. He uses an offset disc once over to break down the stubble a little and take care of weed growth in the fall. Usually two more operations in the summer control the weeds without destroying too much of the stubble cover.