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**Review of *Soils of the Great Plains: Land Use, Crops, and Grasses*
By Andrew R. Aandahl**

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Soils of the Great Plains: Land Use, Crops, and Grasses. By Andrew R. Aandahl. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982. Maps, tables, figures, photographs, index. xv + 282 pp. \$28.95.

Andrew R. Aandahl provides a visual and descriptive overview of the soils of the Great Plains, a region that accounts for approximately one-third of the cropland and one-half of the grassland pasture in the United States. Its soils are a basic resource for the region's productivity.

Aandahl examines this soil resource in seventy high-quality color photographs of soil profiles and associated landscapes, accompanied by a text that thoroughly describes and classifies the soils. In addition, the soils of the Great Plains are delineated on a map that accompanies the book. The 195 mapping units are color coded in order to identify soil-moisture and soil-temperature conditions used in the soil classification system.

To understand soil conditions in a given area, the reader first identifies the appropriate mapping unit by number and then refers to the description of this unit in the text. Here, information is given about soil series within the mapping unit as well as land use and principal crops or grasses.

In the descriptions of many of the mapping units, certain soil series, identified by bold-face type, are illustrated with color photographs. Other soil series within the mapping units are compared to the soils illustrated.

In this manner, Aandahl leads the reader from the geographic pattern of the mapping unit to a visual perception of the soil and, thus, to the logic of the classification system used in

identifying the mapping unit. In addition, the text outlines the major agricultural uses of soils within the unit and estimates the potential productivity of native grasslands.

The map of the soils of the Great Plains that accompanies the book was published in 1972, ten years prior to the publication of the book. Advances in soil classification during that time have resulted in a few revisions in the names of the mapping units listed on the map legend. These changes are noted clearly in the descriptions of the relevant mapping units in the text.

Readers from a variety of disciplines will find important information in this book and its accompanying map. During recent years, experts have become concerned about the deterioration of soil resources and the possible reduction of inherent soil productivity in the United States. Losses of agricultural soils to housing, highways, shopping centers, airports, recreational areas, dams, and reservoirs, as well as reduced soil productivity from soil erosion, compaction, salinization, and ground water depletion, may cause economic and social problems. As society grapples with these problems in the Great Plains, Aandahl's book will provide a baseline of information about the basic soil resource of the region.

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