TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

REPORT 257

ANALYTICAL STUDY OF THE OGALLALA AQUIFER IN HANSFORD COUNTY, TEXAS

Projections of Saturated Thickness, Volume of Water in Storage,

Pumpage Rates, Pumping Lifts, and Well Yields

By

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October 1980

Published and distributed
by the
Texas Department of Water Resources
Post Office Box 13087
Austin, Texas 78711

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ANALYTICAL STUDY OF THE OGALLALA AQUIFER IN HANSFORD COUNTY, TEXAS

Projections of Saturated Thickness, Volume of Water in Storage, Pumpage Rates, Pumping Lifts, and Well Yields

CONCLUSIONS

The Ogallala aquifer in Hansford County contained approximately 17.6 million acre-feet (21.7 km^3) of water in 1974. Historical pumpage has exceeded 250,000 acre-feet (0.3 km^3) annually, which is approximately eleven times the rate of natural recharge to the aquifer in the county. This overdraft is expected to continue, ultimately resulting in reduced well yields, reduced acreage irrigated, and reduced agricultural production.

There is a very uneven distribution of ground water in the county. Some areas have ample ground-water resources to support current usage through the year 2020; whereas, in other areas of the county, ground water is currently in short supply.

To obtain maximum benefits from the remaining ground-water resources, Hansford County water users should implement all possible conservation measures so that the remaining ground-water supply is used in the most prudent manner possible and with the least amount of waste.

INTRODUCTION

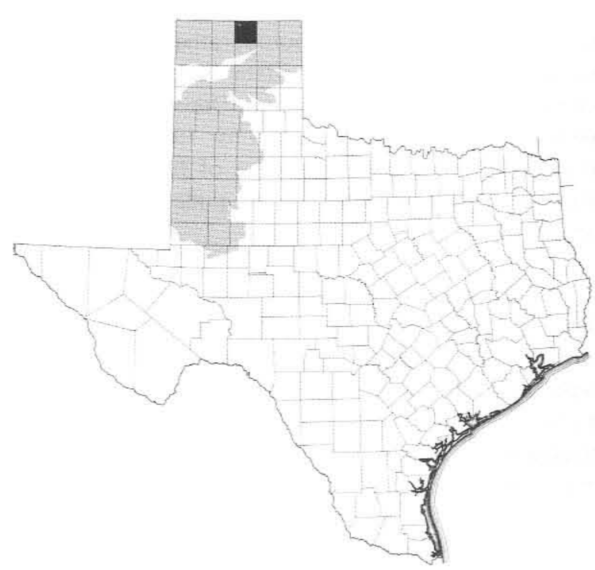
Hansford County is situated in the Northern High Plains of Texas. Spearman, the county seat, is located approximately 90 miles (145 km) northeast of Amarillo. The county contains an area of about 907 square miles (2,349 km^2) and has a total population of approximately 6,000.

Hansford County produces a total farm income averaging $75 million annually (Texas Almanac and State Industrial Guide 1978-79). Leading crops in the county are grain sorghums, wheat, corn, oats, and hay. Numerous agribusinesses, including large cattle feeding operations, grain storage, and sale of irrigation equipment supplies, feed and seed, and fertilizer, also make significant contributions to the total county income.

Ground water is extremely important to the economy of the county inasmuch as most of the crops are irrigated with ground water. Additionally, the water used by rural residents, municipalities, and local industries is mostly ground water.

The principal source of fresh ground water in the county is the Ogallala aquifer. During the past three decades, the withdrawal of ground water has greatly exceeded the natural recharge to the aquifer. If this overdraft continues, the aquifer ultimately will be depleted to the point that it may not be economically feasible to produce water for irrigation.

This is one of numerous planned county studies covering the declining ground-water resource of the



Location of Hansford County, and Extent of the Ogallala Aquifer in Texas

Ogallala aquifer in the High Plains of Texas. The report contains maps, charts, and tabulations which reflect estimates of the volume of water in storage in the Ogallala aquifer in Hansford County and the projected depletion of this water supply by decade periods through the year 2020. The report also contains estimates of pumpage, pumping lifts, and other data related to current and future water use in the county. However, the report does not attempt to project that portion of the volume of water in underground storage which may be ultimately recoverable.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF STUDY

This study resulted from an immediate need for information to illustrate to the High Plains water users that the ground-water supply is being depleted. It is hoped that this study will help persuade the water users to implement all possible conservation measures, so that the remaining ground-water supply will be used in the most prudent manner possible and with the least amount of waste.

The study was also conducted to provide information to local, State, and federal officials for their use in implementing plans to alleviate the water-shortage problem in the High Plains of Texas.

These immediate needs for current information have resulted in a concerted effort by the Texas Department of Water Resources to utilize high-speed computers to conduct evaluation and projection studies of ground-water resources. The results of one of these computer studies is contained in this report.

This report does not represent a detailed ground-water study of the county; rather, the report was prepared using only those data which were readily available in the files of the Texas Department of Water Resources. Information provided for 1974 is considered reliable; however, the projections of future conditions should be used only as a guide to reasonable expectations.

This study represents a new approach by the Department in making and presenting appraisals of ground-water resources. Consequently, a detailed explanation of the methods and assumptions used in the study is included. A complete set of tabulations and illustrations resulting from this study is presented at the end of the report.

The illustrations were prepared to answer four questions believed to be of prime importance to the Hansford County landowners and water users. These questions, and methods by which a set of answers can be obtained from the illustrations, are as follows:

1. Question: How much water is in storage under any given tract of land in the county and what is expected to happen to this water in the future?

   Answer: First, determine the approximate location of the tract on the most current (1974) map of saturated thickness. Read the value of the contour line at this location (if midway between two contour lines, take an average of the two). This thickness value can then be converted to the approximate volume of water in storage, in acre-feet per surface acre, by multiplying it by the coefficient of storage of 0.15, or 15 percent. To obtain estimates of what can be expected in the future, the same procedure can be followed by using the maps which illustrate projected saturated thickness in the years 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010, and 2020.

2. Question: What can be expected to happen to well yields if the saturated thickness diminishes as illustrated by the maps?

   Answer: Well yields are expected to decline as the aquifer thins; therefore, a map of estimated well yields has been prepared for each year of the study. The landowner need only find the approximate location of his property on the well-yield map that applies to the year in question and read the well-yield estimates directly from the map.

3. Question: With energy cost increasing, pumping lifts (pumping levels) are becoming more and more important. What are the estimates of current pumping lifts and what are they expected to be in the future?

   Answer: Contour maps depicting estimated pumping lifts have been prepared for each year of the study. These maps are contoured in feet below land surface. The landowner need only find the approximate location of his property on the map that applies to the year in question to read the pumping-lift estimates.

4. Question: If an all-out effort is made to conserve ground-water resources, how can landowners and water users determine

how they are doing compared to the projections in the study?

Answer: Using the maps that show rates of water-level declines, the landowners and water users can determine what the changes in water levels are in their area and what they are projected to be in the future. This can be accomplished by finding the approximate location of their property on the map pertaining to the year in question and by reading the estimates of water-level changes which are recorded in feet. To determine how he is doing from year to year, the landowner or water user can make measurements of depth to water in his own wells or obtain copies of measurements made by the Department or the ground-water district for his area. These measurements can then be compared to the projected values on the map nearest to the year of interest to obtain an estimate of the effectiveness of the conservation efforts.

NATURE OF THE OGALLALA AQUIFER

Because thorough understanding of the Ogallala aquifer is not necessary for the water user, the following discussion of aquifer geology and hydrology is rather general. Readers interested in pursuing the subject in more detail may do so from the numerous reports which have been published on the Ogallala. Many of these publications are included in the list of selected references of this report.

General Geology

Fresh ground water in Hansford County is obtained prinicipally from the Ogallala Formation of Pliocene age. Water in the Ogallala Formation is unconfined and is contained in the pore spaces of unconsolidated or partly consolidated sediments.

The Ogallala Formation principally consists of interfingering bodies of fine to coarse sand, gravel, silt, and clay—material eroded from the Rocky Mountains which was carried southeastward and deposited by streams. The earliest sediments, mainly gravel and coarse sand, filled the valleys cut in the pre-Ogallala surface. Pebbles and cobbles of quartz, quartzite, and chert are typical of these early sediments. After filling the valleys, deposition continued until the entire area that is now the Texas High Plains was covered by sediments from the shifting streams.

The upper part of the formation contains several hard, caliche-cemented, erosionally resistant beds called the "caprock." A wind-blown cover of fine silt, sand, and soil overlies the caprock.

The Ogallala deposits overlie rocks of Triassic and Permian ages. These rocks, principally red sand, clay, and shale, serve as a nearly impermeable floor for the aquifer. On a broad scale, the erosional surface at the top of the Triassic and Permian rocks dips gently (about 10 feet per mile [2 m/km]) toward the southeast, similar to the slope of the land surface. In general, however, this pre-Ogallala surface had greater relief than the present land surface. Low hills and wide valleys which contain deep, narrow stream channels are typical features of the Triassic and Permian erosional surface. Because the Ogallala was deposited on top of this irregular surface, the formation is very thin in some areas and very thick in others. Often this contrast occurs in relatively short distances.

The Canadian River has cut deeply through the Ogallala Formation in the northern part of the Texas High Plains area. The valley effectively separates the formation geographically into two units having little hydraulic interconnection. Erosion has also removed the Ogallala from much of its former extent to the east in Oklahoma, and to the west in New Mexico, and there is only a relatively narrow communication with the Ogallala to the north for a short distance at the Beaver River in the Oklahoma Panhandle. As a result, both the Northern and the Southern High Plains are virtually hydraulically independent of adjacent areas. For this reason, coupled with the scarcity of local rainfall, water that is being withdrawn from the aquifer cannot be replaced quickly by natural recharge and is in effect being mined.

Storage Properties

The coefficient of storage of an aquifer is defined as the volume of water released from or taken into storage per unit surface area of the aquifer per unit change in the component of head normal to that surface. In water-table aquifers such as the Ogallala, the coefficient of storage is nearly equal to the specific yield, which is defined as the quantity of water that a formation will yield under the force of gravity, if it is first saturated and then allowed to drain, the quantity of water being expressed as a percentage of the volume of the material drained.

A coefficient of storage of 15 percent has been selected for use in this study based on past studies and the results of numerous aquifer tests published in Texas

Water Development Board Report 98 (Myers, 1969). The following chart shows the volumes of water corresponding to various amounts of aquifer saturated thickness, based on a storage coefficient of 15 percent. These are the approximate amounts of water that would drain from the aquifer material by gravity flow if the entire saturated thickness could be drained.

SATURATED THICKNESS (feet)	VOLUME OF WATER IN STORAGE (acre-feet, per surface acre)
25	3.75
50	7.50
75	11.25
100	15.00
150	22.50
200	30.00
250	37.50
300	45.00
400	60.00
500	75.00

Natural Recharge and Irrigation Recirculation

Recharge is the addition of water to an aquifer by either natural or artificial means. Natural recharge results chiefly from infiltration of precipitation. The Ogallala aquifer in Hansford County receives natural recharge by precipitation that falls within the county and in adjoining areas.

The amount and rate of natural recharge from precipitation depend on the amount, distribution, and intensity of the precipitation; the amount of moisture in the soil when the rain or snowmelt begins; and the temperature, vegetative cover, and permeability of the materials at the site of infiltration. Because of the wide variations in these factors, it is difficult to estimate the amount of natural recharge to the ground-water reservoir. Estimates of annual natural recharge to the Ogallala aquifer made by Barnes and others (1949, p. 26-27) indicate only a fraction of an inch. Theis (1937, p. 546-568) suggested less than half an inch, and Havens (1966, p. F1), in a study of the Ogallala in New Mexico, indicated about 0.8 inch (2 cm) per year.

The authors of this report believe that recharge from precipitation may be more than these earlier estimates, due to changes in the soil and land surface that have accompanied large-scale irrigation development in the county. Some of the farming practices which are believed to have altered the recharge rate are: clearing the land of deep-rooted native vegetation; deep plowing of fields, which eliminates compacted zones in the soil (locally called "hard pans"), and the plowing of playa lake bottoms and sides; bench leveling, contour farming, and terracing; maintaining a generally higher soil moisture condition by application of irrigation water prior to large rains; and increasing the humus level in the root zone by plowing under a large amount of foliage from crops grown under irrigation.

Obtaining a reliable estimate of the present recharge rate is further complicated by the consideration which must be given to irrigation recirculation. A substantial portion of the water pumped from the Ogallala for irrigation percolates back to the aquifer. This does not constitute an additional supply of water, but reduces the net depletion of the aquifer. As with natural recharge, many factors are involved in making estimates of recirculation. Some of these factors are the rate, amount, and type of irrigation application; the soil type and the infiltration rate of the soil profile in the root zone; the amount of moisture in the soil prior to the irrigation application; the type of crop being grown, its root development, and its moisture extraction pattern; and the climatic conditions during and following the irrigation application. Tentative estimates of the actual amounts of recharge and irrigation recirculation in Hansford County will be found in a subsequent section on "Calculating Pumpage."

PROCEDURES USED TO OBTAIN PROJECTIONS

Hydrologic Data Base

The Texas Department of Water Resources and the North Plains Ground Water Conservation District No. 2 cooperatively maintain a network of water level observation wells in Hansford County. Records from these wells provided the principal data base used in this study. This data base was supplemented in some areas with records from water well drillers' logs collected by both the District and the Department.

The data base included: (1) measurements of the depth to water below land surface, which have been made annually in the wells in the observation network; (2) the dates these measurements were made; and (3) the depth from land surface to the base of the Ogallala aquifer (In many cases, this was identical to the well depth). To facilitate automatic data processing with modern, high-speed computers, the data base also included a unique number for each well and the geographical coordinates of each well location.

Wells chosen from the data base for use in obtaining projections of future conditions were those in which depth to the base of the aquifer could be determined or estimated, and those needed to provide spaced data coverage in the county. Locations of the wells that were selected and used for control are shown on the various maps in this report.

Projecting the Depletion of Saturated Thickness

The water-use patterns between 1960 and 1972 as reflected in the changes in water levels in wells measured in the High Plains of Texas were used as the principal data source for developing an aquifer depletion schedule. The depletion schedule generally reflects average precipitation and precipitation distribution in the area for the duration of the study period. Additionally, in developing and applying the depletion schedule, adjustments through time were made to reflect the effects of depletion of the aquifer on its ability to yield water. That is, as the aquifer's saturated thickness decreases, its ability to yield water to wells is reduced, the well yields decline, less water is pumped, and there results a lessened rate of further aquifer depletion.

The aquifer's hydraulics are such that if a well penetrates the total saturated section and the pump is sized to produce the maximum the aquifer will yield, the well yield will decline at a disproportionately greater rate than the reduction in saturated thickness. Actually, the remaining well yield expressed as a percentage of former yield will be only about half of the remaining saturated thickness expressed as a percentage of former thickness. For example, a well with 60 feet (18.3 m) of saturated section and a maximum yield of 900 gallons per minute (56.8 l/s) will probably yield only 225 gallons per minute (14.2 l/s) when the saturated section is reduced to 30 feet (9.1 m).

The depletion schedule for Hansford and surrounding counties was developed in the following manner:

1. The records for all water level observation wells for the years 1960 through 1972 in Dallam, Hansford, Hartley, Hemphill, Hutchinson, Lipscomb, Moore, Ochiltree, Roberts, and Sherman Counties were separated from the master file. These counties have similar soil types, cropping patterns, depths to water, saturated thickness, and climatic conditions.

2. These well records were then sorted into groups according to the saturated thickness in each well as of 1966 (the middle year). Each group included records of all wells in a 20-foot (6.1-meter) range of saturated thickness. (Ranges are shown in the tabulation below.)

3. The average decline in water level was calculated for each year for each well group, and these decline values were adjusted to remove the effects of each year's deviation from long-term average precipitation.

4. The average annual decline in water level for the total period (1960-72) was calculated for each well group, incorporating the adjustments for departure from average precipitation.

From the foregoing procedure, the following depletion schedule was developed (no depletion was allowed for areas with 10 feet or less of saturated thickness):

RANGE OF SATURATED THICKNESS (feet)	AVERAGE ANNUAL WATER-LEVEL DECLINE, 1960-72 (feet)
0 to 10	0.00
10 to 20	.50
20 to 40	1.00
40 to 60	1.50
60 to 80	2.00
80 to 100	2.25
100 to 120	2.50
120 to 140	2.75
140 to 160	3.08
160 to 180	2.95
180 to 200	3.04
200 to 220	3.07
220 to 240	2.93
240 to 260	3.15
260 to 280	3.36
280 to 300	3.13
300 to 320	3.27
320 to 340	3.37
340 to 360	3.47
360 to 380	3.57
380 to 400	3.66
400 to 420	3.66
420 to 440	3.50
440 to 460	4.00
460 to 480	4.00

Based on this depletion schedule, a computer program was written to calculate future saturated thickness at individual well sites. The following problem is presented to show the computational procedures used.

Problem: A well has a saturated thickness of 100 feet in 1974 and one wants to project what the saturated thickness will be in this well for every year to the year 2020.

Factors: 1. The beginning saturated thickness is 110 feet in 1974.

2. The average decline rate is 2.50 feet per year for wells with saturated sections of 100 to 120 feet.

3. The average decline rate is 2.25 feet per year for wells with saturated sections of 80 to 100 feet.

4. The average decline rate is 2.00 feet per year for wells with saturated sections of 60 to 80 feet.

5. The average decline rate is 1.50 feet per year for wells with saturated sections of 40 to 60 feet.

6. The average decline rate is 1.00 foot per year for wells with saturated sections of 20 to 40 feet.

7. The average decline rate is 0.50 foot per year for wells with saturated sections of 10 to 20 feet.

8. The time interval is 1974 through 2020.

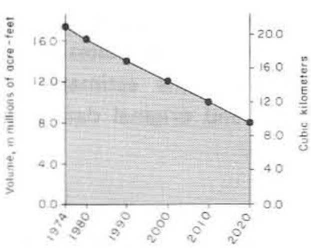
The projected saturated thicknesses in the subject well are calculated and shown in the following table:

YEAR	SATURATED THICKNESS, BEGINNING OF YEAR (feet)	AVERAGE DECLINE RATE (feet)	SATURATED THICKNESS, END OF YEAR (feet)
1974	110.00	2.50	107.50
1975	107.50	2.50	105.00
1976	105.00	2.50	102.50
1977	102.50	2.50	100.00
1978	100.00	2.25	97.75
1979	97.75	2.25	95.50
1980	95.50	2.25	93.25
1981	93.25	2.25	91.00
1982	91.00	2.25	88.75
1983	88.75	2.25	86.50
1984	86.50	2.25	84.25
1985	84.25	2.25	82.00
1986	82.00	2.25	79.75
1987	79.75	2.00	77.75
1988	77.75	2.00	75.75
1989	75.75	2.00	73.75
1990	73.75	2.00	71.75
1991	71.75	2.00	69.75
1992	69.75	2.00	67.75
1993	67.75	2.00	65.75
1994	65.75	2.00	63.75
1995	63.75	2.00	61.75
1996	61.75	2.00	59.75
1997	59.75	1.50	58.25
1998	58.25	1.50	56.75
1999	56.75	1.50	55.25
2000	55.25	1.50	53.75
2001	53.75	1.50	52.25
2002	52.25	1.50	50.75
2003	50.75	1.50	49.25
2004	49.25	1.50	47.75
2005	47.75	1.50	46.25
2006	46.25	1.50	44.75
2007	44.75	1.50	43.25
2008	43.25	1.50	41.75
2009	41.75	1.50	40.25
2010	40.25	1.50	38.75
2011	38.75	1.00	37.75
2012	37.75	1.00	36.75
2013	36.75	1.00	35.75
2014	35.75	1.00	34.75
2015	34.75	1.00	33.75
2016	33.75	1.00	32.75
2017	32.75	1.00	31.75
2018	31.75	1.00	30.75
2019	30.75	1.00	29.75
2020	29.75	1.00	28.75

Similar computations were made for each of the selected data-control wells in Hansford County, and the saturated-thickness values for 1974, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010, and 2020 were extracted from this data set for use in further calculations and mapping.

Mapping Saturated Thickness, and Calculating Volume of Water in Storage

To obtain estimates of the volume of water in storage in the Ogallala aquifer, an electronic digital computer was used to construct maps which reflect the saturated thickness of the aquifer for those years included in the study. These maps were then refined by the computer to reflect the number of acres corresponding to each range of saturated thickness. The number of acres for each range was multiplied by the saturated thickness in feet for that range and then by the coefficient of storage (0.15 or 15 percent), to yield an estimate of the volume of water in storage in each saturated-thickness range. Totaling these volumes produced an estimate of the volume of water in storage in the county. The current (1974) and projected volume estimates are shown in the following graph:



Year	Acre - Feet
1974	17,600,000
1980	16,320,000
1990	14,100,000
2000	11,850,000
2010	9,770,000
2020	7,900,000

Estimated Volume of Water in Storage

Preparing a data base and writing the necessary programs for the computer to use in constructing the saturated-thickness maps and in making the necessary calculations is time consuming; however, once the data base is prepared and programs written, the computer can perform in a few hours calculations that would have required many years of manual effort.

A generalized description of the methodology used in mapping and in computing water volume follows: A base map with a scale of 1 inch equals 2 miles (1:125,000) was selected to prepare data for computer processing. All data points (observation wells) were plotted on these base maps by hand and assigned identifying numbers. A machine called a *digitizer* was then used to translate these mapped location data (well locations, county boundaries, etc.) into information processible by the computer. To accomplish this, a latitude and longitude coordinate was recorded on each base map as a central reference point, and all data points and county boundaries were then digitized; that is, measurements were made by the digitizer to reference these data points and boundaries to the initial latitude and longitude coordinate. Then the digitized information was processed by the computer and the maps were re-created by a computer-driven plotter. The computer-plotted image maps were ultimately checked against the hand-constructed maps to verify that the data were plotted accurately.

The assignment of a unique number to each data point (observation well) on the base maps made it possible to machine process the data related to these points and to plot these data back on the maps at the proper location.

To compute the volume of water in storage, the computer was instructed to subdivide the county into squares measuring approximately 0.5 mile (0.8 km). The known saturated-thickness values obtained from the data points were filled into the squares in which the data points were located. Based on these known values, the computer filled in a weighted-average value for each remaining square, taking into consideration all known values within a radius of 7 miles (11 km). After this step was completed, the computer then counted the numbers of squares having equal values, thus obtaining the approximate area in square miles (later converted to acres) corresponding to each range of saturated thickness. As previously stated, the number of acres in each 25-foot (7.6-meter) range of saturated thickness was multiplied by the corresponding saturated-thickness value and the storage coefficient (0.15 or 15 percent) to obtain the approximate volume of water in acre-feet in that saturated-thickness range.

Although the calculations were made by the computer from information stored in its image field, the data in the image field were printed out in the form of contoured saturated-thickness maps, which are reproduced in this report. Facing each saturated-thickness map in the report is a corresponding tabulation of the approximate volume of water in storage.

Calculating Pumpage

Estimates of current pumpage were obtained in this study by calculating the storage capacity of the dewatered section of the Ogallala aquifer as reflected in changes in the annual depth-to-water measurements made in the water level observation wells. Factors for natural recharge and irrigation recirculation were then added to these volumetric figures to obtain more realistic pumpage estimates.

The step-by-step procedure involved in making pumpage estimates is similar to the procedures used in calculating the estimates of volume of water in storage; therefore, a more general explanation follows.

Change in water level (decline) maps for the aquifer were made by the computer for the years considered. From these maps, the volume of desaturated material was multiplied by the number of acres corresponding to each 0.25-foot (.076-meter) range of decline and then multiplied by the storage coefficient of the aquifer (0.15 or 15 percent), which resulted in an estimate of the volume of water taken from storage for each decline range. Estimates for natural recharge and irrigation recirculation were added to these values to obtain estimates of pumpage.

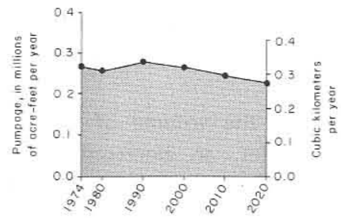
An attempt was made to obtain a reliable estimate of the natural recharge and recirculation for use in this study. This involved obtaining an estimate of the amount of water required by each of the major crops grown in the area. These values, generally referred to as "duty of water," were obtained from Texas Agricultural Experiment Stations located in the High Plains area. The duty of water figure for each major crop was multiplied by the number of crop acres, and the resulting numbers were added together to yield an estimate of the total crop water demand.

The amount of precipitation which fell just prior to and during the growing season was subtracted from the total water demand estimate. The difference between these values should equal that amount which would have been supplied by irrigation, which will be referred to as irrigation makeup water.

The volume figure represented by the dewatered section was then compared to the volume of water which should have been supplied to crops by irrigation makeup water. In all tests, the volume of water represented by the depletion of the aquifer was considerably less than the makeup water estimate. This difference was attributed to irrigation recirculation and natural recharge.

Various combinations of estimates for natural recharge and recirculation were added to the volume represented by aquifer depletion, in an attempt to obtain comparable values with the makeup water estimated for the test years. One-half inch (1.3 cm) per year of natural recharge added to the volume represented by the depletion of the aquifer, and then adding 10 percent of this for recirculation, most nearly equaled the makeup water estimated in the largest number of instances in Hansford County and in adjoining counties with similar conditions.

These amounts were added to the previously calculated storage capacity of the dewatered section to obtain estimates for current (1974) and future pumpage. The following graph shows the current and projected estimates of pumpage:



Year	Acre - Feet
1974	265,000
1980	257,000
1990	280,000
2000	264,000
2010	243,000
2020	221,000

Estimated Pumpage

Calculating Pumping Lifts

The pumping lift (pumping level) is the depth from land surface to the water level in a pumping well; it is equal to the depth of the static water level plus the drawdown due to pumping. The amount of pumping lift largely determines the amount of energy required to produce the water, and thus strongly affects the pumping costs.

In calculating pumping lifts, procedures were used that are similar to those used in making estimates of the volume of water in storage and the estimates of pumpage. Again, the computer and original data base were used as previously described.

In making estimates of pumping lifts, it was assumed (1) that the yield of each pumping well is 900 gallons per minute (56.8 l/s) except as limited by the capacity of the aquifer (this conforms with the historical trend of equipping new wells with 8-inch [20-centimeter] or smaller pumps), (2) that the specific well yield is 15 gallons per minute per foot of drawdown (3.1 [l/s] /m), and (3) that once the well yield equals the capacity of the aquifer, the well will continue to be produced at a rate near the capacity of the aquifer until pumping lifts are within 10 feet (3 m) of the base of the aquifer. After that time, it is assumed that the pumping lift will remain constant because of greatly diminished well yields. It should be noted that this 10-foot (3-meter) minimum is somewhat arbitrarily chosen, as one cannot predict accurately the minimum saturated thickness that will be feasible for producing irrigation water under future economic conditions.

The above assumptions restrict the drawdown in wells to a maximum of 60 feet (18.3 m); that is, the maximum well yield of 900 gallons per minute (56.8 l/s) divided by specific well yield of 15 gallons per minute per foot (3.1 [l/s] /m) equals 60 feet (18.3 m) of maximum drawdown.

Based on the above assumptions, pumping lifts were calculated separately for each of the selected data-control wells in the county. The factors involved were the historical and projected saturated-thickness values, the historical and projected static water levels, and the drawdown value assigned to the Hansford County area.

In all areas where the aquifer's saturated thickness was 70 feet (21.3 m) or greater (areas where a well, pumped at full capacity, would be drawn down 60 feet [18.3 m] to yield 900 gallons per minute [56.8 l/s]), the computer was instructed to add 60 feet (18.3 m)—the drawdown—to the static water level to determine pumping lift. For a well with a saturated thickness of less than 70 feet (21.3 m), the pumping lift was calculated by subtracting 10 feet (3 m) from the depth of the well (base of the aquifer). These calculations were made for each year of record to be reported (1974, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010, and 2020) for each well. The pumping-lift values were stored in the computer and printed out in the form of contour maps. Additionally, the surface area corresponding to each interval between the mapped contours was calculated and printed out in tabular form.

Well-Yield Estimates

Estimates of the rate, in gallons per minute, at which the Ogallala aquifer should be capable of yielding water to wells in various areas of the county are presented on maps for each year of record reported (1974, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010, and 2020). These well-yield estimates are based on capabilities of the aquifer to yield water to irrigation wells of prevailing construction as reflected by the very large number of aquifer tests which have been conducted in various saturated-thickness intervals in the Texas High Plains. The estimates are adjusted to reflect the expected decreases in well yields through time due to the reduced saturated thickness as depletion of the aquifer progresses.

The well-yield estimates are subject to deviations caused by localized geological conditions. The Ogallala is not a homogeneous formation; that is, the silt, clay, sand, and gravel which generally comprise the formation vary from place to place in thickness of layers, layering position, and grain-size sorting. The physical composition of the formation material can drastically affect the ability of the formation to yield water to wells. As an example, in areas where the saturated portion of the formation is comprised of thick beds of coarse and well-sorted grains of sand, the well yields probably will exceed the estimates shown on the maps. In other localized areas, the saturated portion of the formation may be comprised principally of thick beds of silt and clay which can be expected to restrict well yields to less than those shown on the maps.

The following can be used as a general guide in Hansford County in estimating well yields based on saturated thickness:

SATURATED THICKNESS (feet)	WELL YIELD (gallons per minute)
Less than 20	Less than 100
20 to 30	100 to 250
30 to 40	250 to 500
40 to 60	500 to 800
60 to 80	800 to 1,000
More than 80	More than 1,000

The maps presented in this report are intended for use as general guidelines only and are not recommended for use in determining water availability when buying and selling specific tracts of land. Inasmuch as the availability of ground water constitutes a large portion of the price of land bought and sold in this area, it is recommended that a qualified ground-water hydrologist be consulted to make appraisals of ground-water conditions when such transactions are contemplated.

DISTINCTION BETWEEN PROJECTIONS AND PREDICTIONS

The actions of the Hansford County water user will determine whether the projections of this study come to pass, as the rate of depletion of the ground-water resource is determined by the rate of water use. The authors have not made predictions of what will occur, but have furnished projections based on past trends and presently available information.

There are many unpredictable factors which can influence the future rates of withdrawal of ground water from the Ogallala aquifer for irrigation farming. These factors include: (1) the amounts and distribution of precipitation which will be received in the area in the future; (2) federal crop acreage controls or the lack of these; (3) the price and demand for food and fiber grown in the area; (4) the cost and availability of energy to produce water from the aquifer; (5) farm labor cost and availability of farm labor; (6) results of continuing research that seeks to develop more frugal water-application methods for irrigation, crops having less water demand, and methods for inducing clouds to yield more water as rain; and (7) most important, the degree to which feasible soil and water conservation measures are employed by the High Plains irrigator. Any of these factors could appreciably influence the rate of use of ground water in the future; however, the projections in this study provide a reasonable set of general expectations on the further depletion of the aquifer.

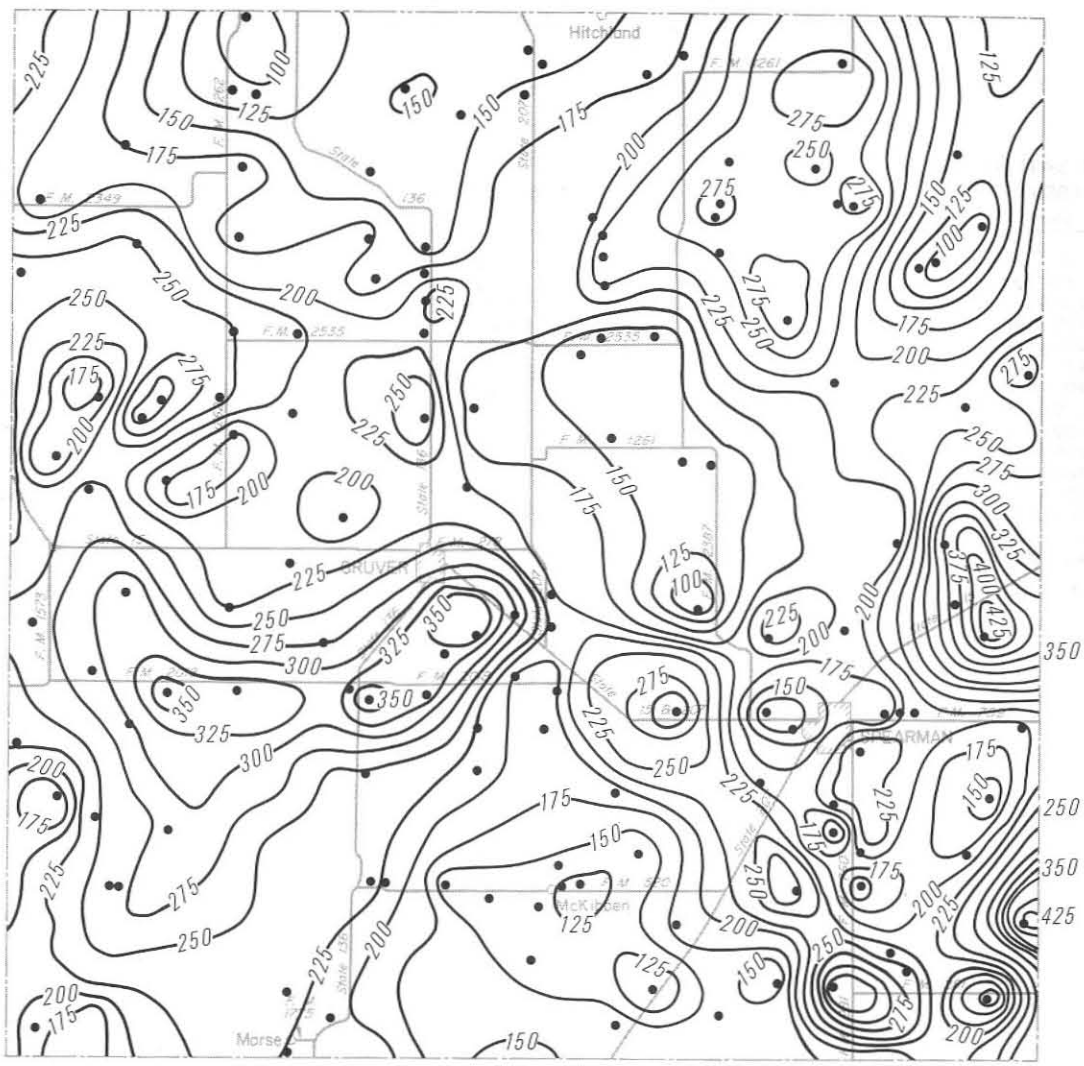
SATURATED THICKNESS AND VOLUME OF WATER IN THE OGALLALA AQUIFER

1974

Volume of Water in Storage Corresponding to Mapped Saturated-Thickness Intervals

(Coefficient of Storage: 15 percent)

MAPPED SATURATED-THICKNESS INTERVAL (feet)	SURFACE AREA (acres)	VOLUME OF WATER IN STORAGE (acre-feet)
75–100	3,428	44,822
100–125	12,379	210,640
125–150	50,191	1,047,926
150–175	77,156	1,886,119
175–200	95,250	2,678,838
200–225	87,891	2,800,381
225–250	74,317	2,651,250
250–275	70,414	2,763,854
275–300	29,883	1,282,591
300–325	20,258	945,641
325–350	12,188	617,690
350–375	4,970	268,660
375–400	4,112	238,437
400–425	2,056	127,357
425–450	515	33,292
TOTAL	545,008	17,597,498

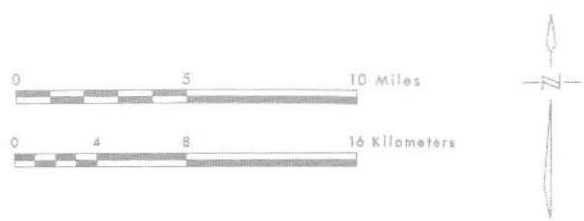


EXPLANATION

•
Well used for control

——— 150 ———
Line showing approximate saturated thickness of the Ogallala aquifer, in feet.

Interval is 25 feet (7.62m)



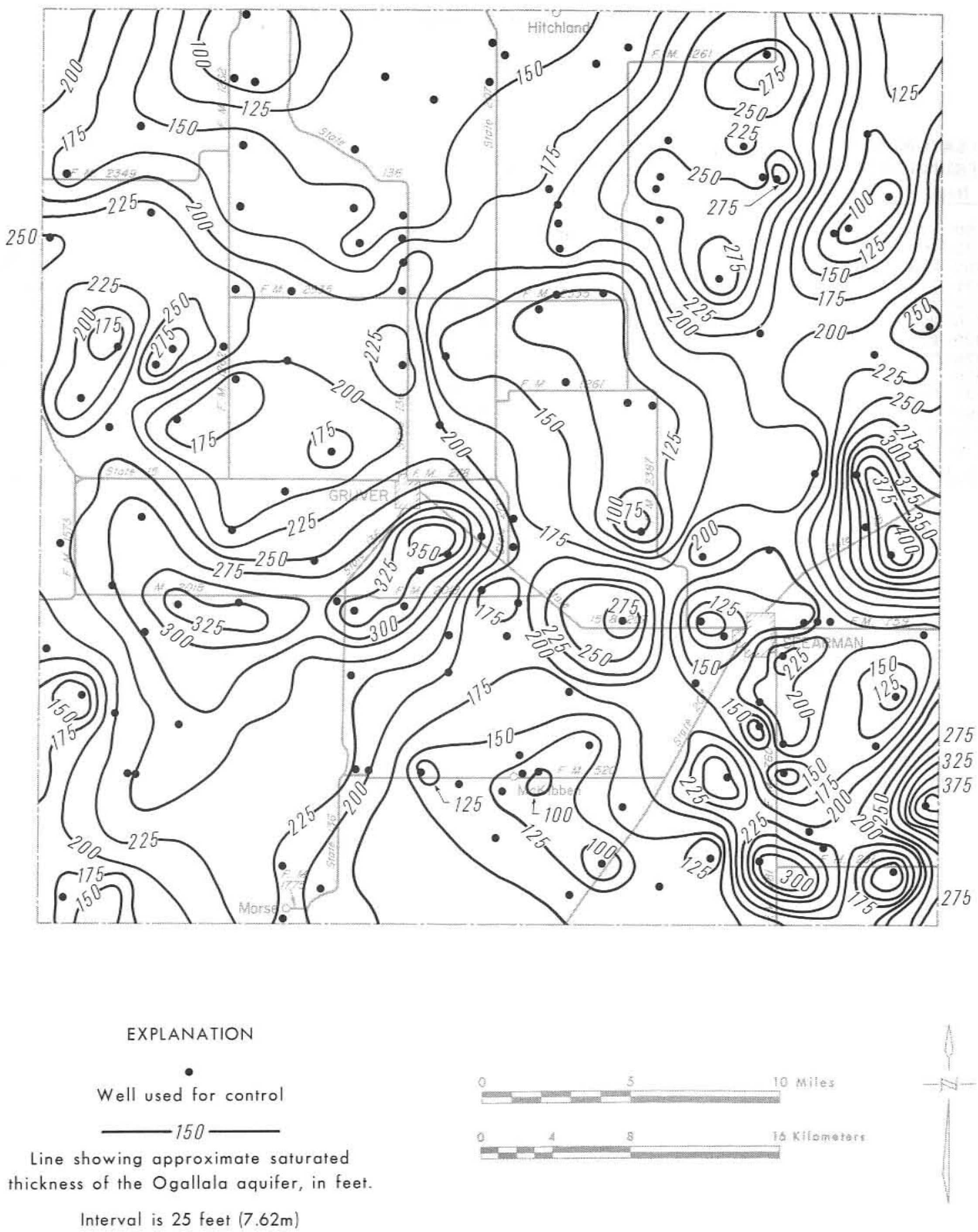
1974
Estimated Saturated Thickness

1980

Volume of Water in Storage Corresponding to Mapped Saturated-Thickness Intervals

(Coefficient of Storage: 15 percent)

MAPPED SATURATED-THICKNESS INTERVAL (feet)	SURFACE AREA (acres)	VOLUME OF WATER IN STORAGE (acre-feet)
50– 75	1,019	9,824
75–100	7,737	105,098
100–125	29,058	505,378
125–150	64,275	1,338,534
150–175	101,511	2,483,775
175–200	91,333	2,563,788
200–225	78,684	2,502,242
225–250	79,617	2,828,025
250–275	41,484	1,622,162
275–300	23,877	1,028,781
300–325	12,008	562,849
325–350	7,206	360,938
350–375	3,940	213,795
375–400	2,400	138,930
400–425	859	52,306
TOTAL	545,008	16,316,425



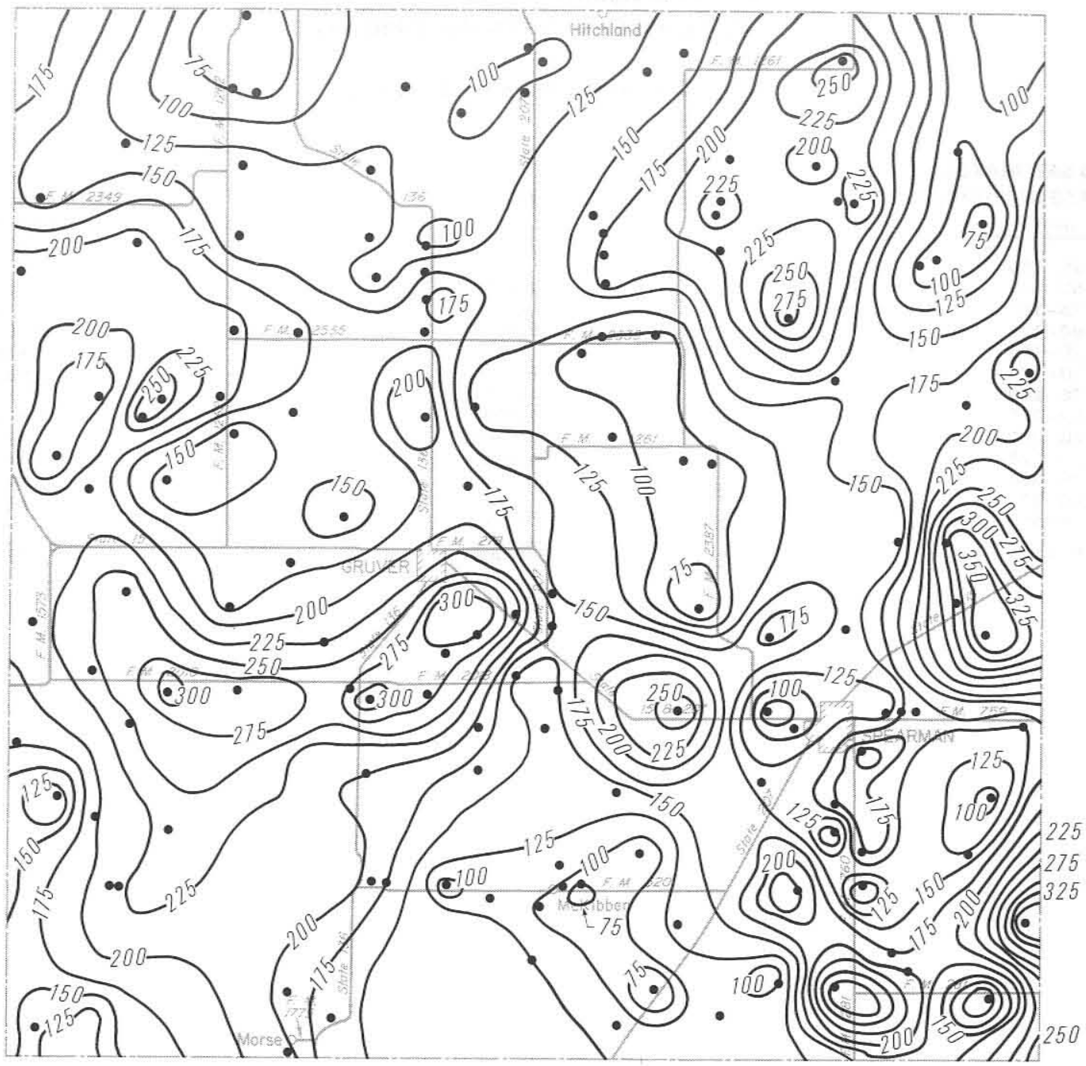
1980
Projected Saturated Thickness

1990

Volume of Water in Storage Corresponding to Mapped Saturated-Thickness Intervals

(Coefficient of Storage: 15 percent)

MAPPED SATURATED-THICKNESS INTERVAL (feet)	SURFACE AREA (acres)	VOLUME OF WATER IN STORAGE (acre-feet)
50– 75	6,351	61,977
75–100	28,714	393,821
100–125	62,743	1,070,751
125–150	113,342	2,350,531
150–175	93,403	2,265,511
175–200	80,215	2,251,415
200–225	80,778	2,561,767
225–250	34,675	1,229,792
250–275	21,805	853,436
275–300	12,188	524,788
300–325	5,300	247,319
325–350	3,610	182,635
350–375	1,884	102,843
TOTAL	545,008	14,096,586



EXPLANATION

•

Well used for control

——— 150 ———

Line showing approximate saturated thickness of the Ogallala aquifer, in feet.

Interval is 25 feet (7.62m)

0 5 10 Miles

0 4 8 16 Kilometers

N

1990

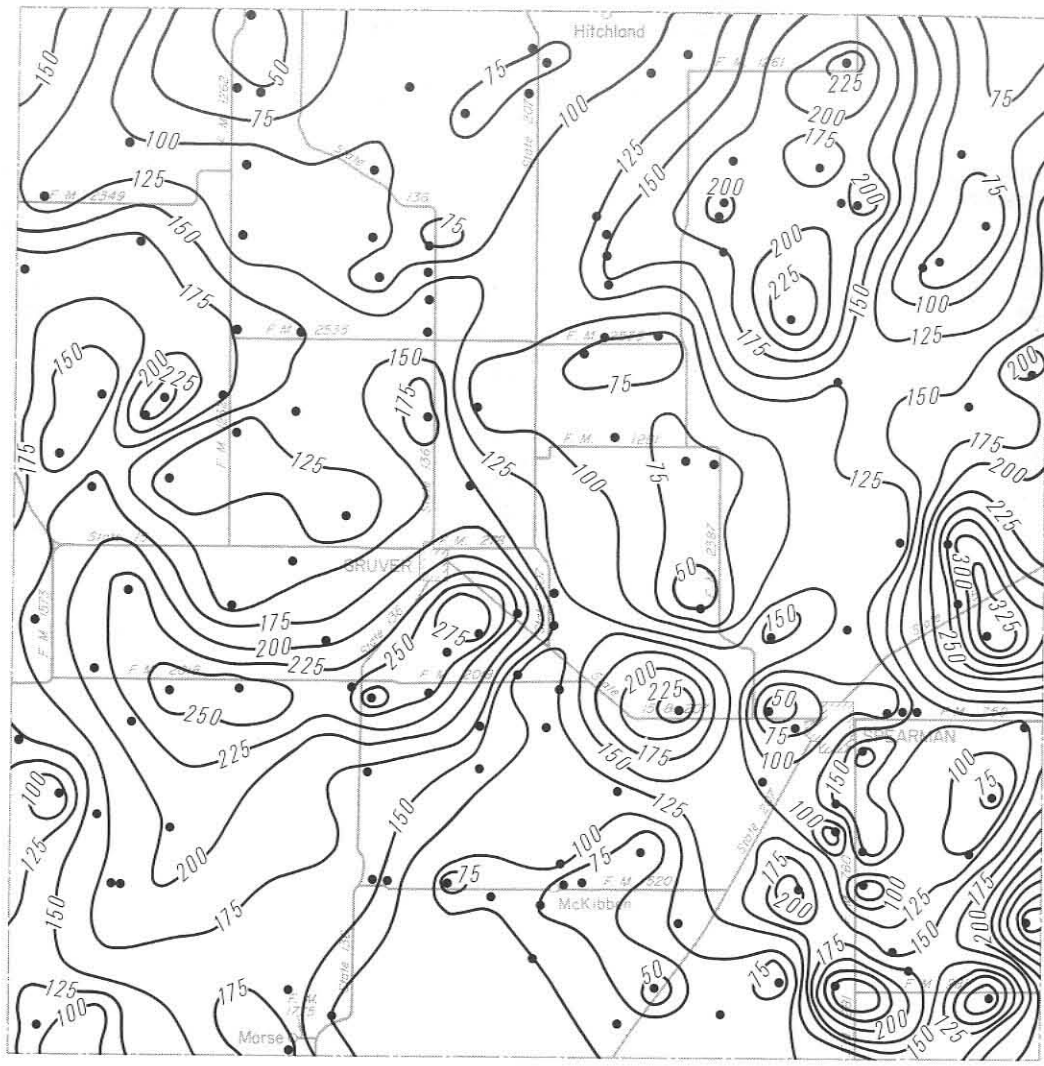
Projected Saturated Thickness

2000

Volume of Water in Storage Corresponding to Mapped Saturated-Thickness Intervals

(Coefficient of Storage: 15 percent)

MAPPED SATURATED-THICKNESS INTERVAL (feet)	SURFACE AREA (acres)	VOLUME OF WATER IN STORAGE (acre-feet)
25– 50	3,084	20,301
50– 75	24,415	245,080
75–100	70,480	939,276
100–125	127,577	2,169,771
125–150	93,935	1,938,852
150–175	83,396	2,038,021
175–200	71,071	1,977,108
200–225	32,608	1,033,799
225–250	18,898	667,280
250–275	10,985	430,095
275–300	4,440	191,613
300–325	2,747	128,145
325–350	1,372	68,392
TOTAL	545,008	11,847,733



EXPLANATION

•
Well used for control

——— 150 ———
Line showing approximate saturated thickness of the Ogallala aquifer, in feet.

Interval is 25 feet (7.62m)

0 5 10 Miles

0 4 8 16 Kilometers

N

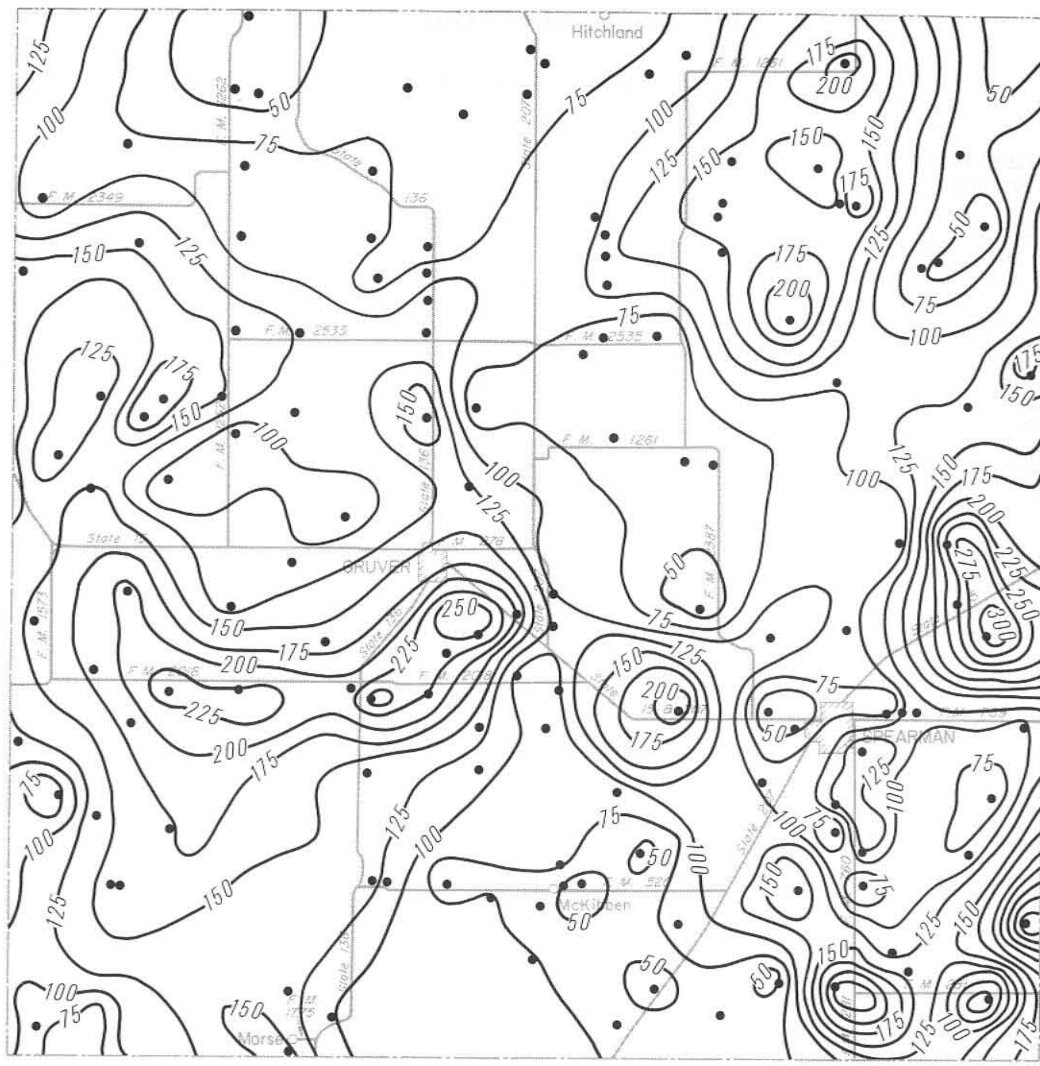
2000
Projected Saturated Thickness

2010

Volume of Water in Storage Corresponding to Mapped Saturated-Thickness Intervals

(Coefficient of Storage: 15 percent)

MAPPED SATURATED-THICKNESS INTERVAL (feet)	SURFACE AREA (acres)	VOLUME OF WATER IN STORAGE (acre-feet)
25– 50	11,853	73,962
50– 75	71,340	682,165
75–100	140,989	1,869,728
100–125	99,747	1,678,017
125–150	94,711	1,955,532
150–175	62,369	1,499,539
175–200	31,400	880,486
200–225	15,631	494,385
225–250	9,425	330,904
250–275	4,456	174,914
275–300	2,744	118,261
300–325	343	15,752
TOTAL	545,008	9,773,645

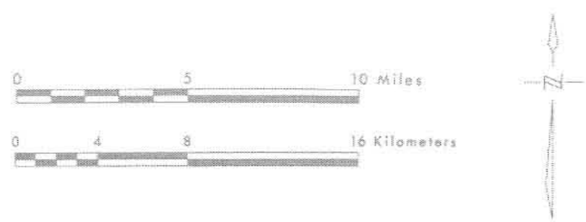


EXPLANATION

Well used for control

——150——
Line showing approximate saturated thickness of the Ogallala aquifer, in feet.

Interval is 25 feet (7.62m)



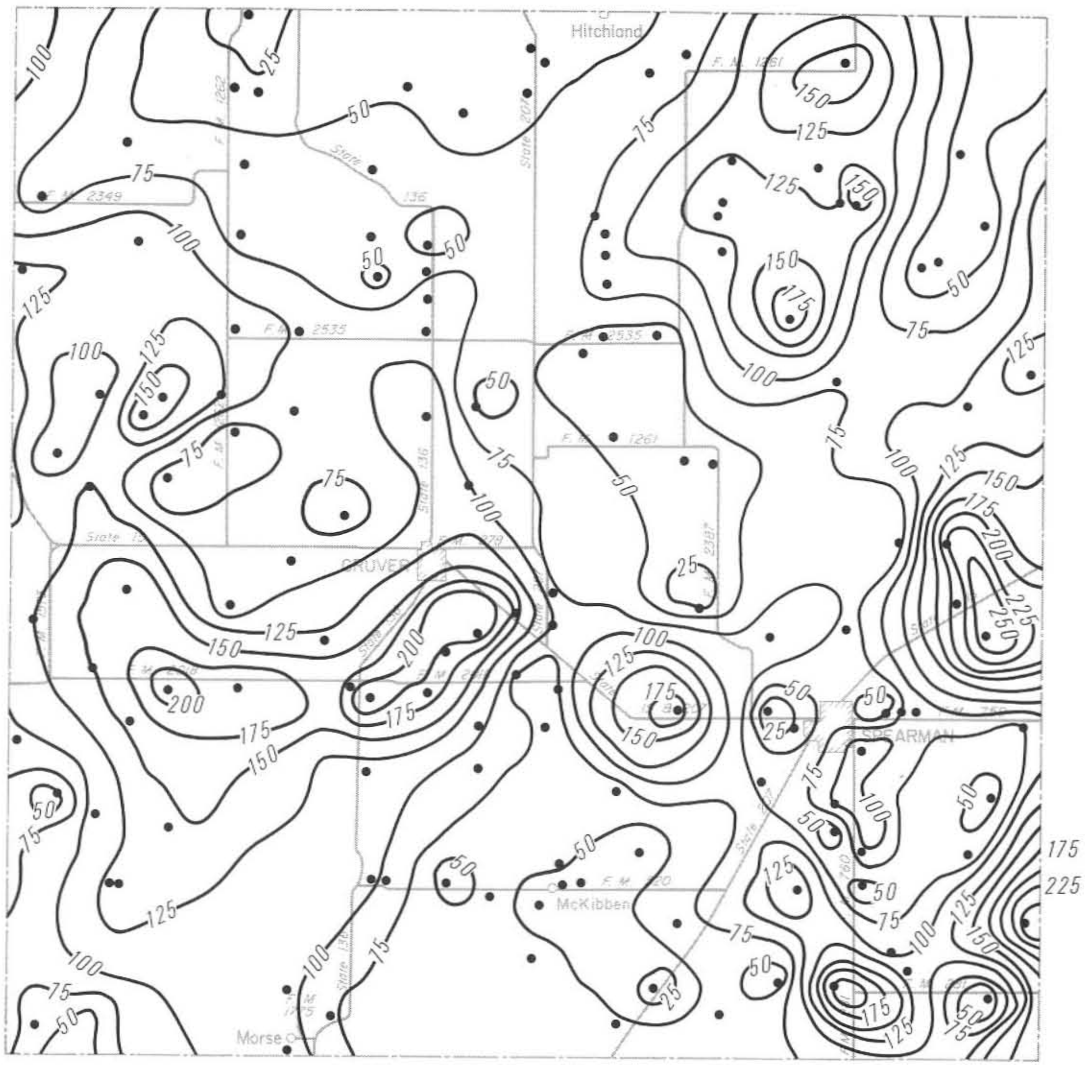
2010
Projected Saturated Thickness

2020

Volume of Water in Storage Corresponding to Mapped Saturated-Thickness Intervals

(Coefficient of Storage: 15 percent)

MAPPED SATURATED-THICKNESS INTERVAL (feet)	SURFACE AREA (acres)	VOLUME OF WATER IN STORAGE (acre-feet)
0– 25	2,049	6,728
25– 50	52,270	325,229
50– 75	146,168	1,401,623
75–100	122,599	1,590,950
100–125	108,014	1,830,423
125–150	54,702	1,114,505
150–175	30,044	729,175
175–200	15,624	438,822
200–225	6,846	215,439
225–250	4,464	158,009
250–275	2,228	87,649
TOTAL	545,008	7,898,552



EXPLANATION

• Well used for control

——— 150 ——— Line showing approximate saturated thickness of the Ogallala aquifer, in feet.

Interval is 25 feet (7.62m)

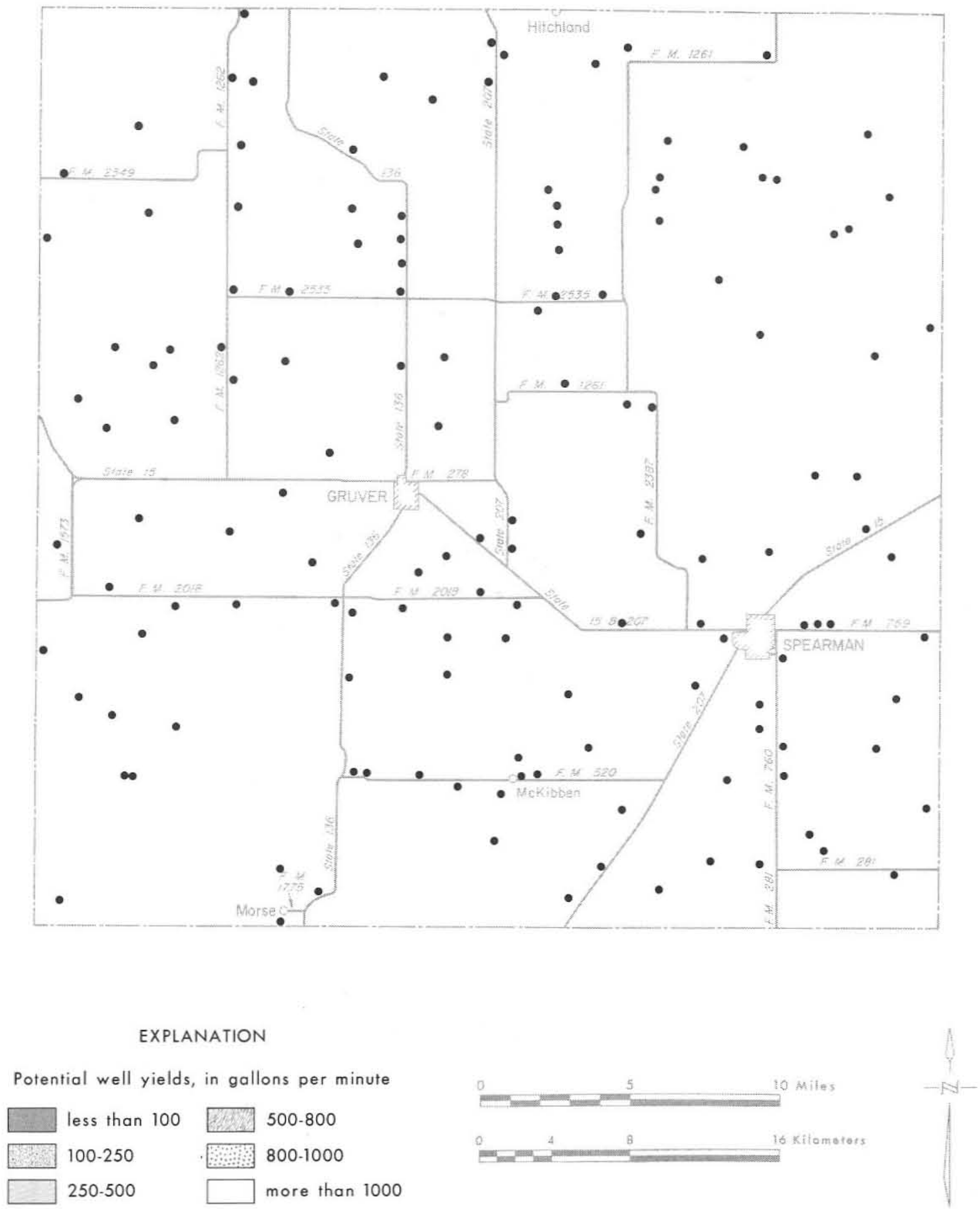
0 5 10 Miles

0 4 8 16 Kilometers

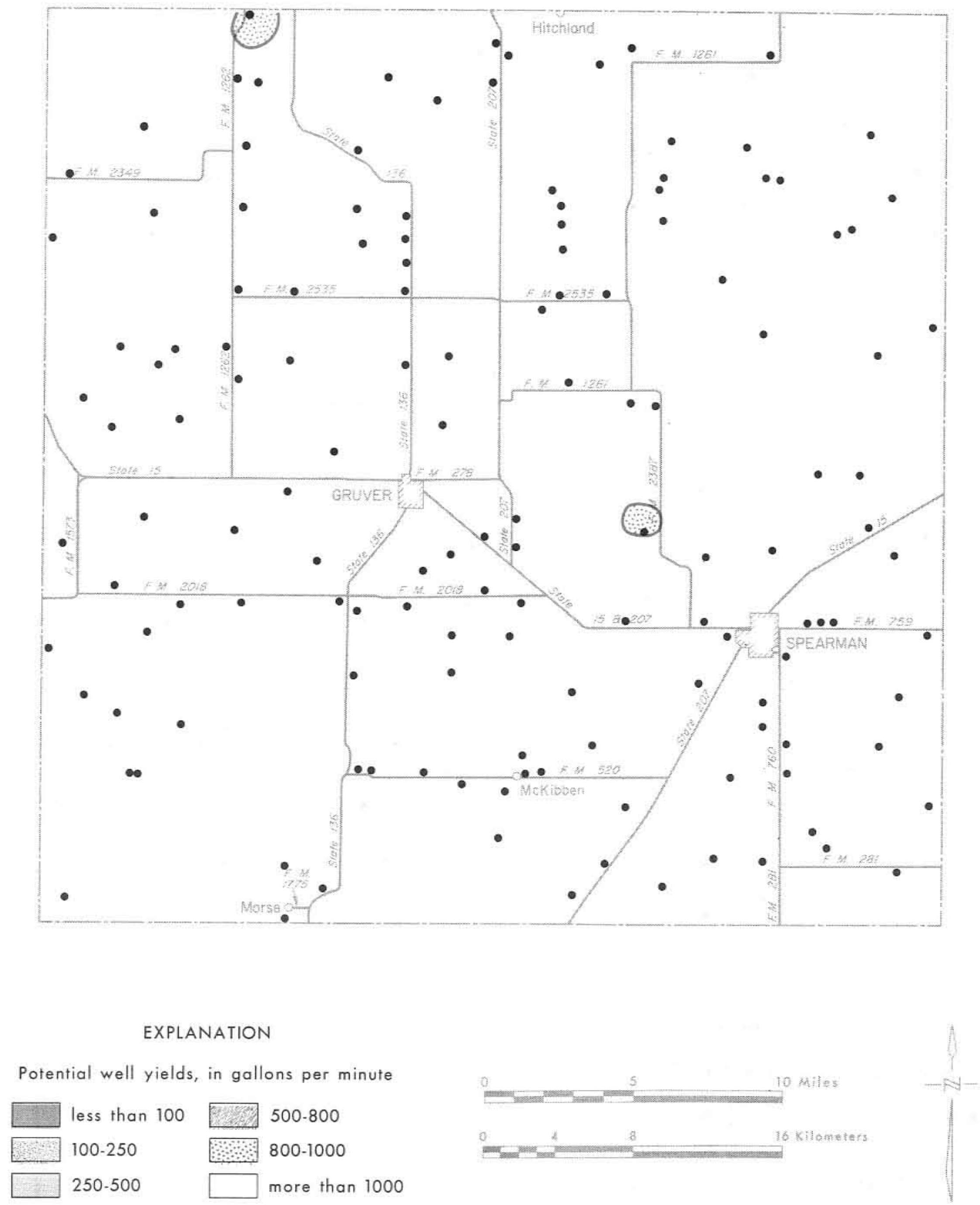
N

2020
Projected Saturated Thickness

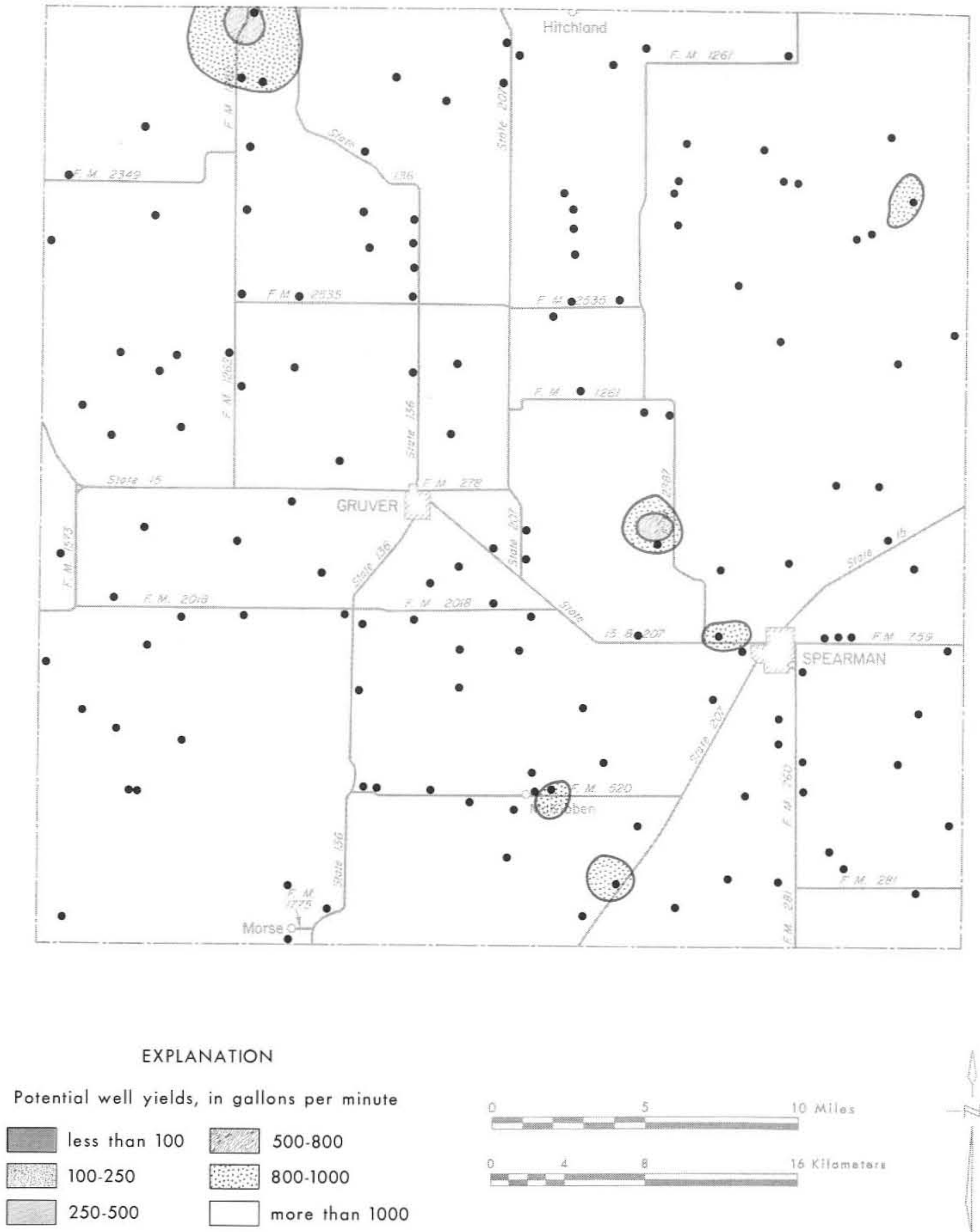
POTENTIAL WELL YIELD OF THE
OGALLALA AQUIFER



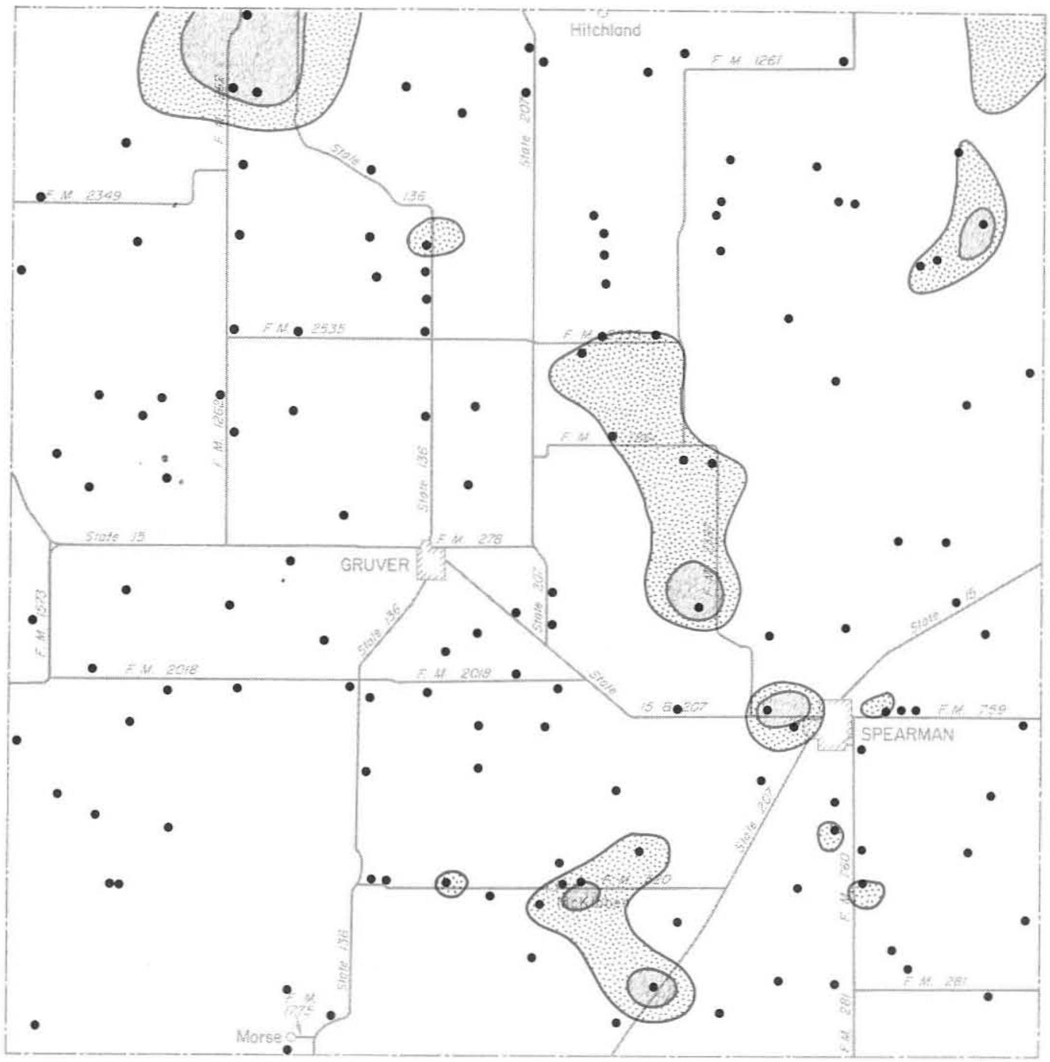
1974
Estimated Potential Yield



1980
Projected Potential Yield



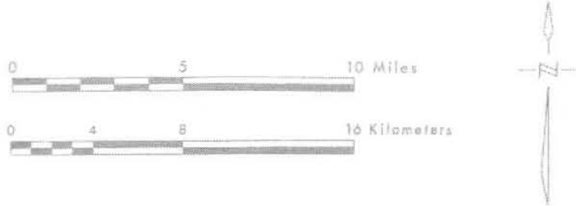
1990
Projected Potential Yield



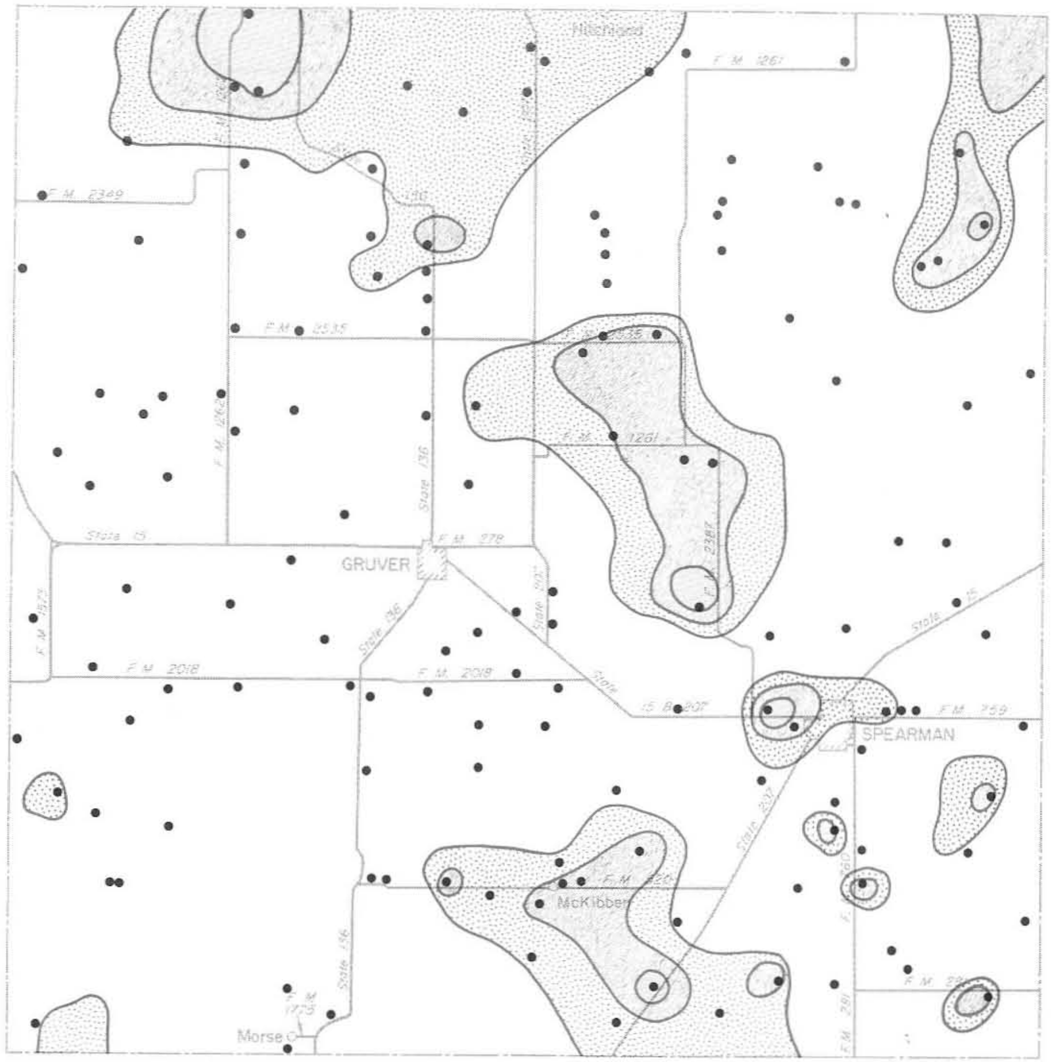
EXPLANATION

Potential well yields, in gallons per minute

less than 100	500-800
100-250	800-1000
250-500	more than 1000



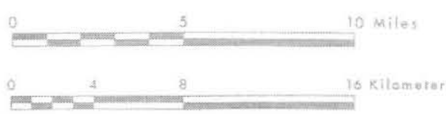
2000
Projected Potential Yield



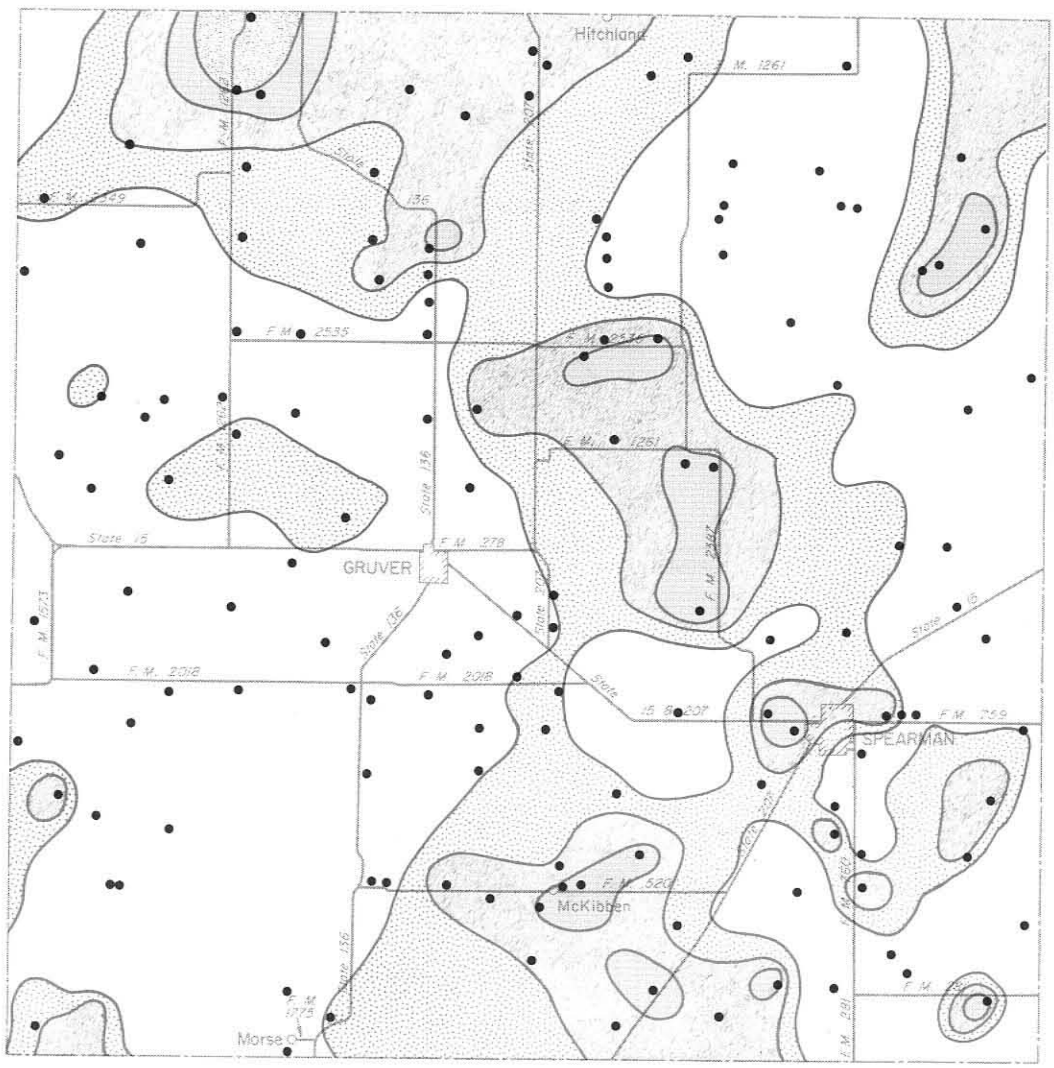
EXPLANATION

Potential well yields, in gallons per minute

less than 100	500-800
100-250	800-1000
250-500	more than 1000



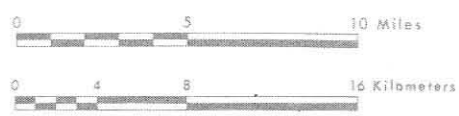
2010
Projected Potential Yield



EXPLANATION

Potential well yields, in gallons per minute

- less than 100
- 100-250
- 250-500
- 500-800
- 800-1000
- more than 1000



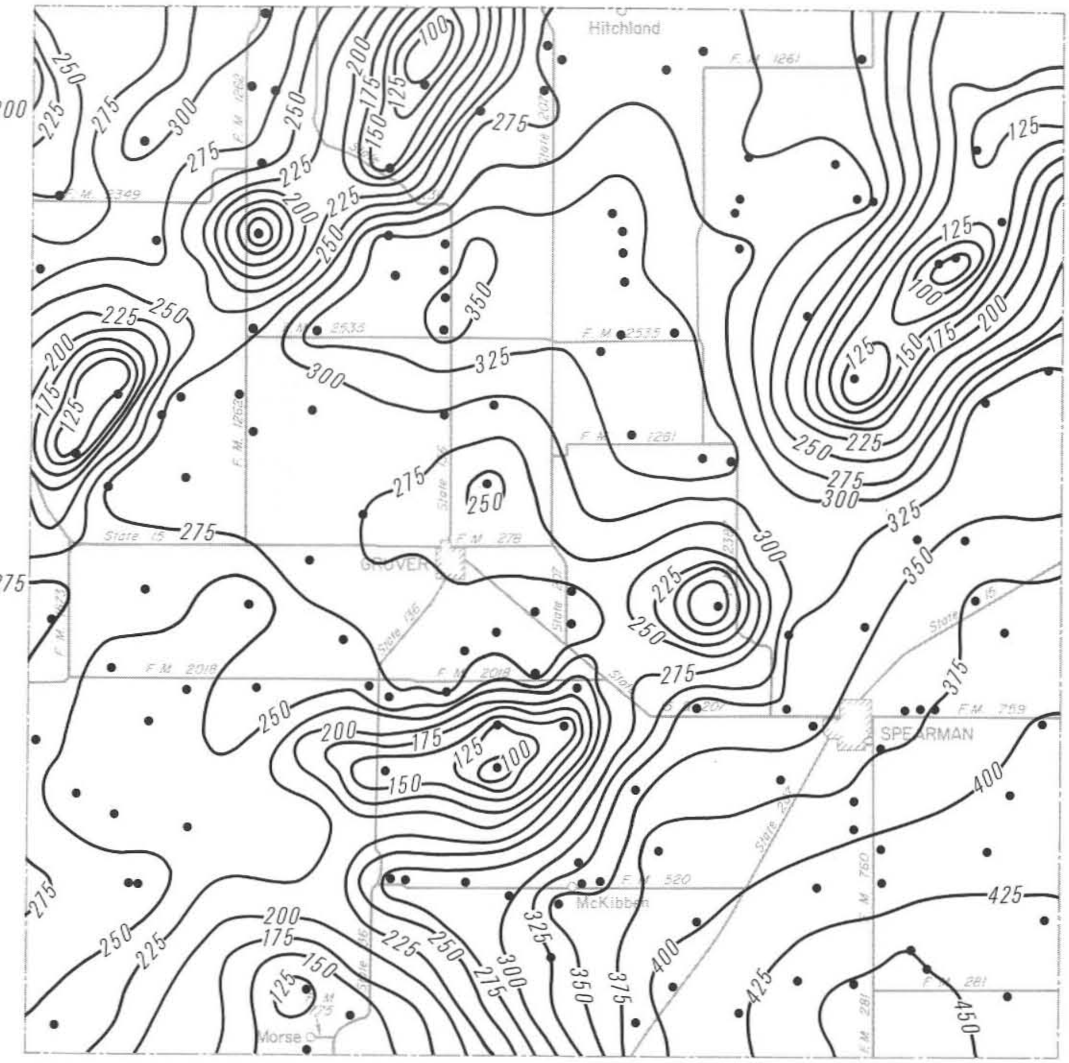
2020
Projected Potential Yield

PUMPING LIFTS IN THE OGALLALA AQUIFER

1974

Surface Area Corresponding to Mapped Pumping-Lift Intervals

MAPPED PUMPING-LIFT INTERVAL (feet)	SURFACE AREA (acres)
50– 75	174
75–100	2,063
100–125	8,738
125–150	21,114
150–175	18,898
175–200	22,345
200–225	33,595
225–250	65,577
250–275	90,801
275–300	92,838
300–325	47,431
325–350	54,927
350–375	22,841
375–400	27,624
400–425	21,272
425–450	12,363
450–475	2,407
TOTAL	545,008

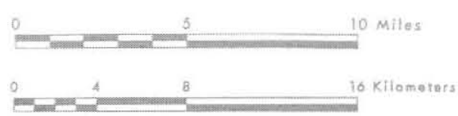


EXPLANATION

•
Well used for control

———200———
Line showing approximate pumping lift, in feet.

Interval is 25 feet (7.62m)

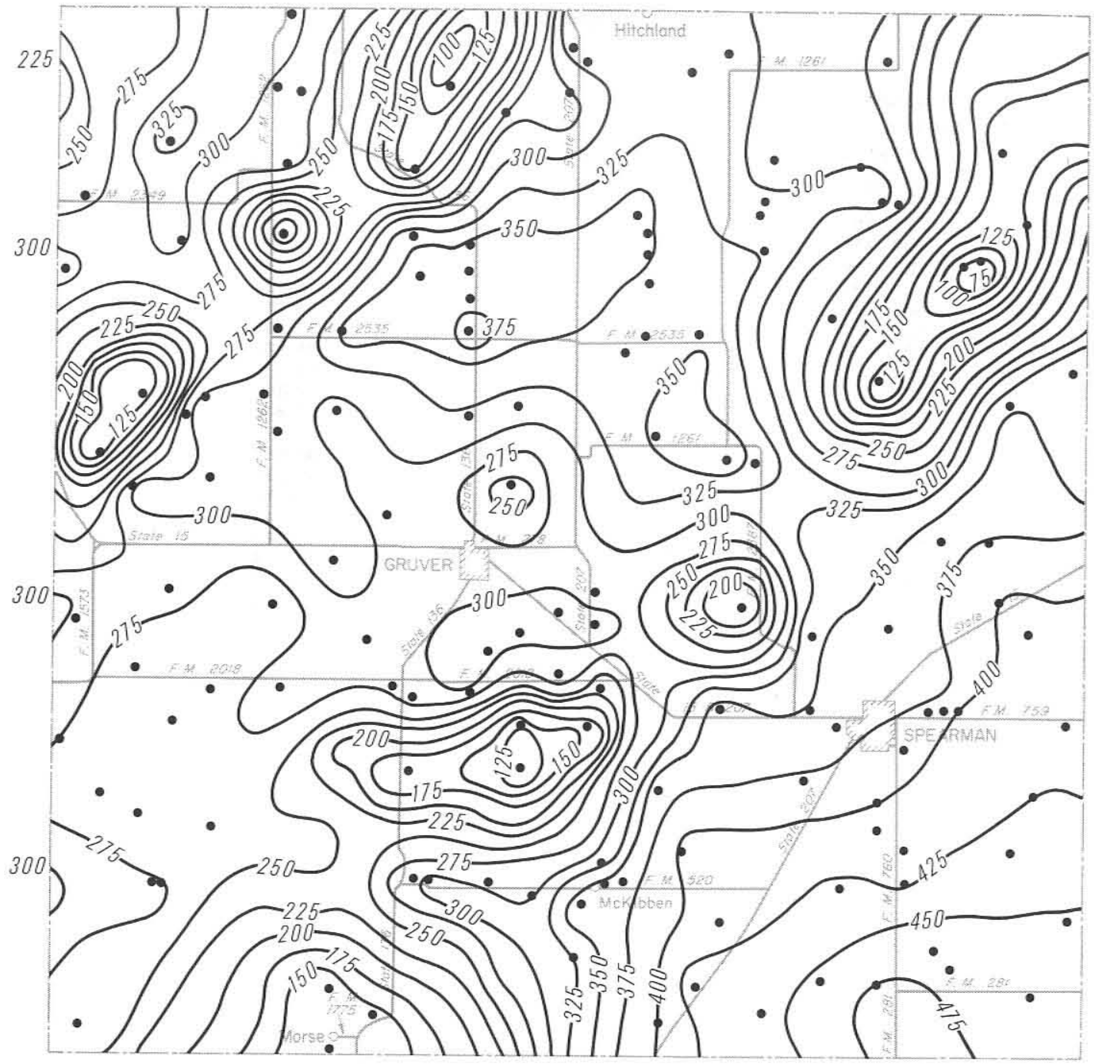


1974
Estimated Pumping Lifts

1980

Surface Area Corresponding to Mapped Pumping-Lift Intervals

MAPPED PUMPING-LIFT INTERVAL (feet)	SURFACE AREA (acres)
50– 75	348
75–100	1,719
100–125	4,454
125–150	17,316
150–175	17,867
175–200	18,486
200–225	26,457
225–250	36,130
250–275	80,377
275–300	96,685
300–325	77,955
325–350	49,595
350–375	40,397
375–400	20,254
400–425	28,120
425–450	17,173
450–475	10,816
475–500	859
TOTAL	545,008



EXPLANATION

• Well used for control

——200—— Line showing approximate pumping lift, in feet.

Interval is 25 feet (7.62m)

0 5 10 Miles

0 4 8 16 Kilometers

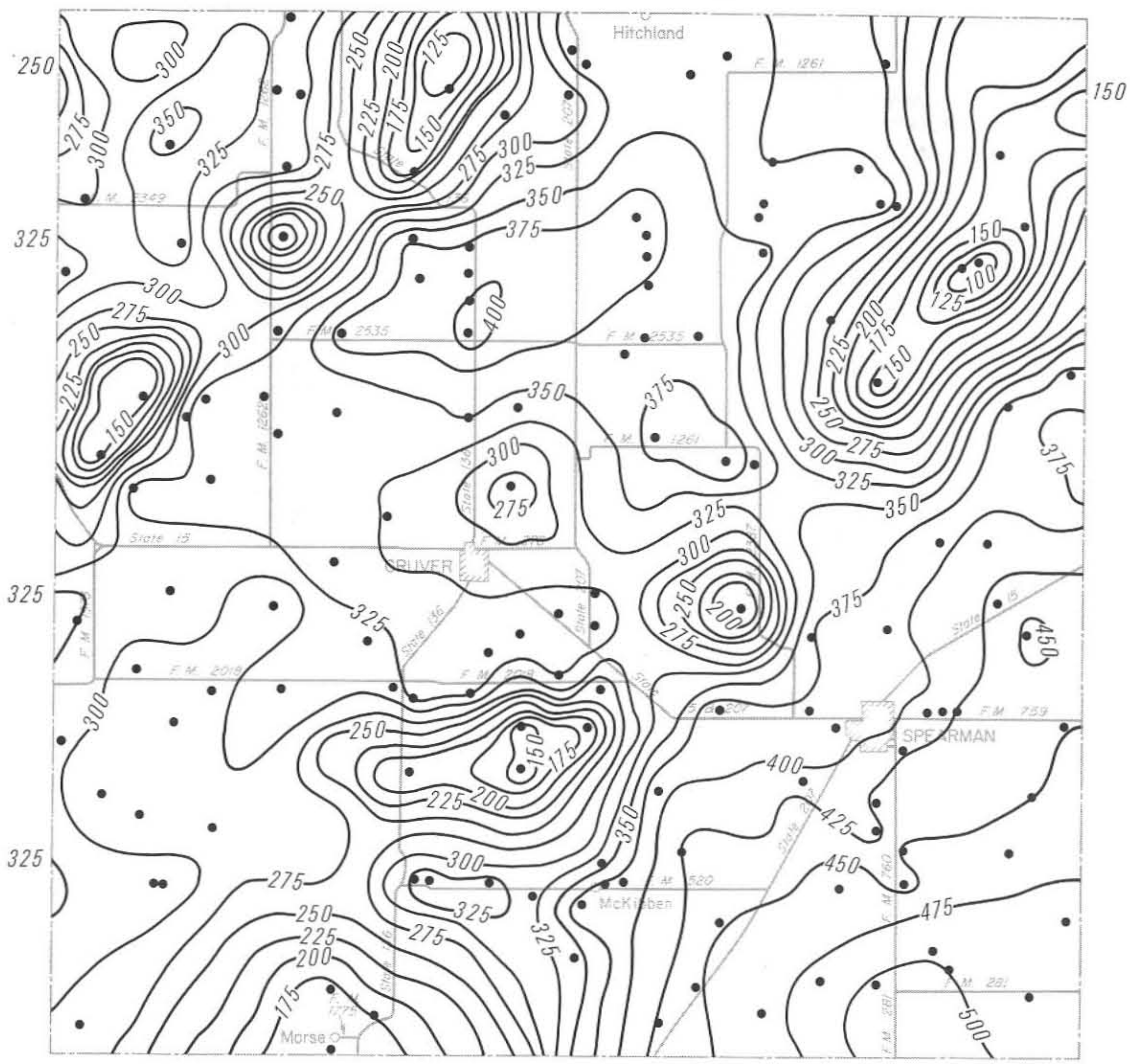
N

1980
Projected Pumping Lifts

1990

Surface Area Corresponding to Mapped Pumping-Lift Intervals

MAPPED PUMPING-LIFT INTERVAL (feet)	SURFACE AREA (acres)
75–100	1,206
100–125	1,891
125–150	5,299
150–175	16,987
175–200	18,726
200–225	17,283
225–250	25,806
250–275	32,186
275–300	74,855
300–325	93,805
325–350	86,827
350–375	46,694
375–400	42,265
400–425	20,950
425–450	28,312
450–475	18,181
475–500	11,844
500–525	1,891
TOTAL	545,008



EXPLANATION

• Well used for control

——200—— Line showing approximate pumping lift, in feet.

Interval is 25 feet (7.62m)

0 5 10 Miles

0 4 8 16 Kilometers

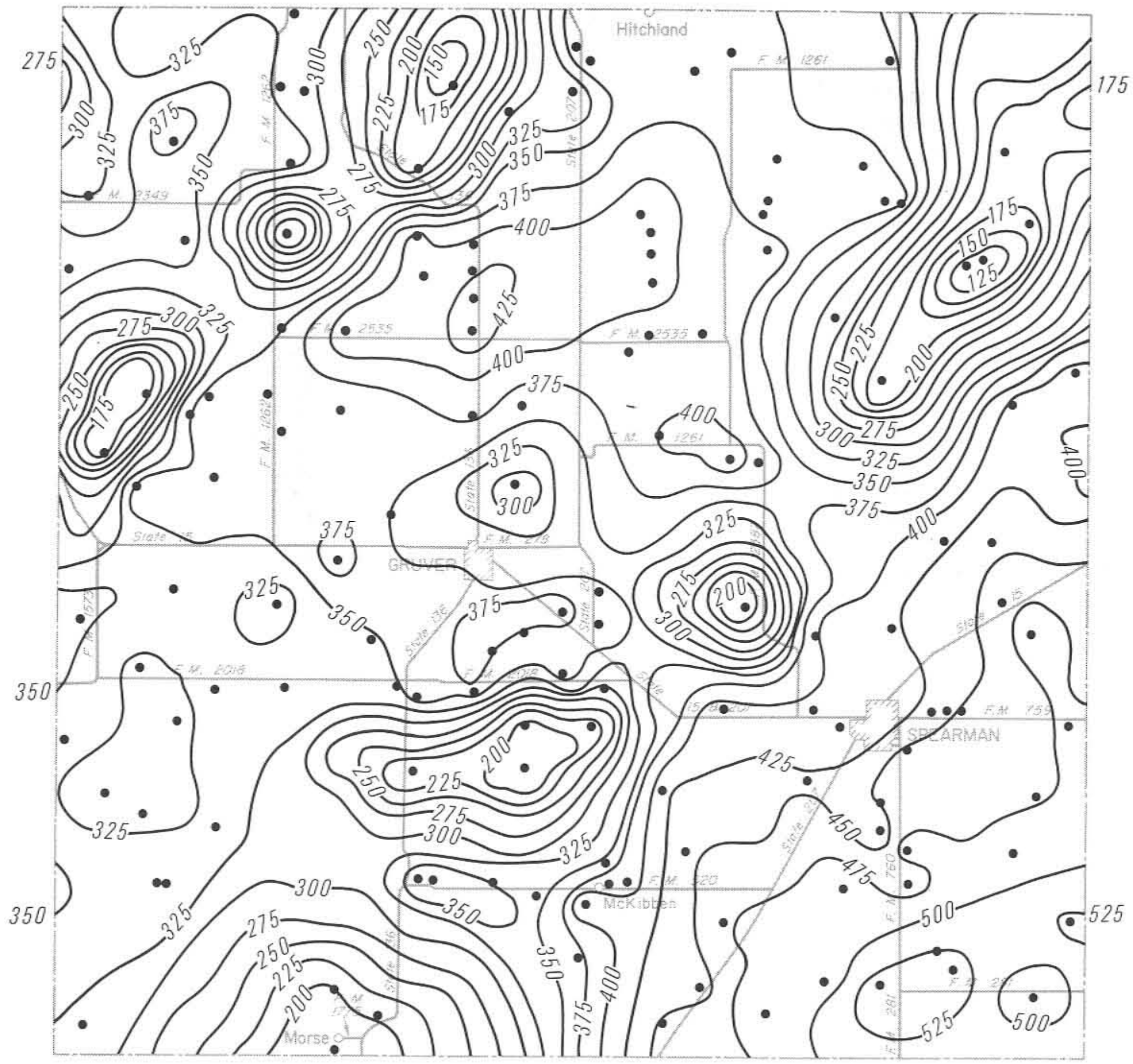
N

1990
Projected Pumping Lifts

2000

Surface Area Corresponding to Mapped Pumping-Lift Intervals

MAPPED PUMPING-LIFT INTERVAL (feet)	SURFACE AREA (acres)
100–125	1,035
125–150	2,235
150–175	4,783
175–200	16,643
200–225	18,383
225–250	16,641
250–275	25,231
275–300	31,741
300–325	63,818
325–350	98,780
350–375	91,283
375–400	49,638
400–425	42,761
425–450	22,506
450–475	25,558
475–500	21,101
500–525	9,952
525–550	2,919
TOTAL	545,008



EXPLANATION

•
Well used for control

——200——
Line showing approximate pumping lift, in feet.

Interval is 25 feet (7.62m)

0 5 10 Miles

0 4 8 16 Kilometers

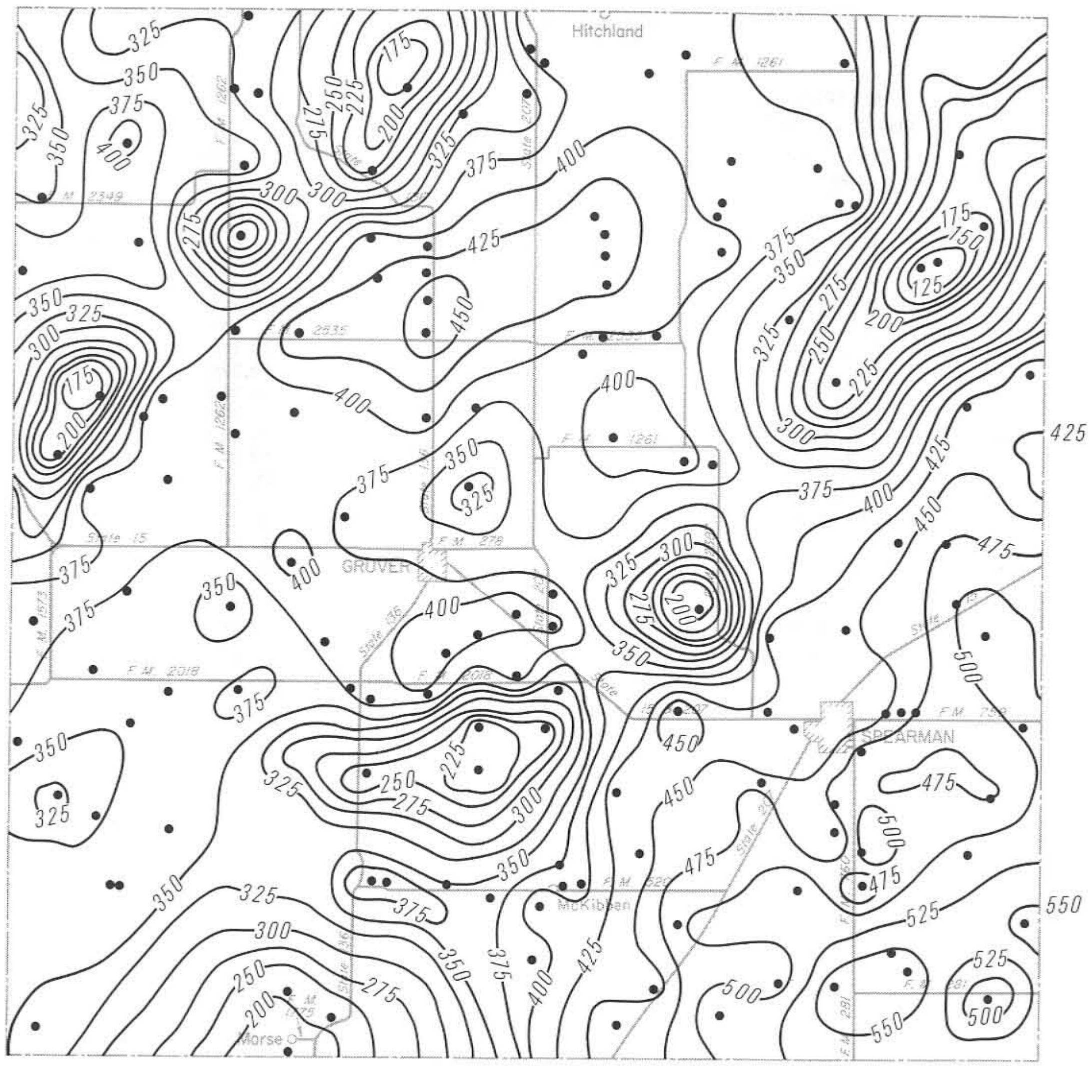
N

2000
Projected Pumping Lifts

2010

Surface Area Corresponding to Mapped Pumping-Lift Intervals

MAPPED PUMPING-LIFT INTERVAL (feet)	SURFACE AREA (acres)
100–125	859
125–150	1,031
150–175	2,923
175–200	8,550
200–225	14,596
225–250	17,351
250–275	17,500
275–300	24,991
300–325	32,338
325–350	60,711
350–375	99,374
375–400	102,037
400–425	44,490
425–450	40,868
450–475	19,583
475–500	29,347
500–525	17,476
525–550	7,551
550–575	3,432
TOTAL	545,008

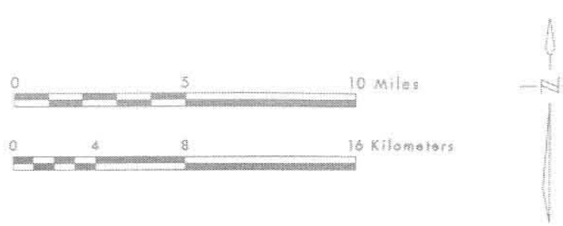


EXPLANATION

• Well used for control

——200—— Line showing approximate pumping lift, in feet.

Interval is 25 feet (7.62m)

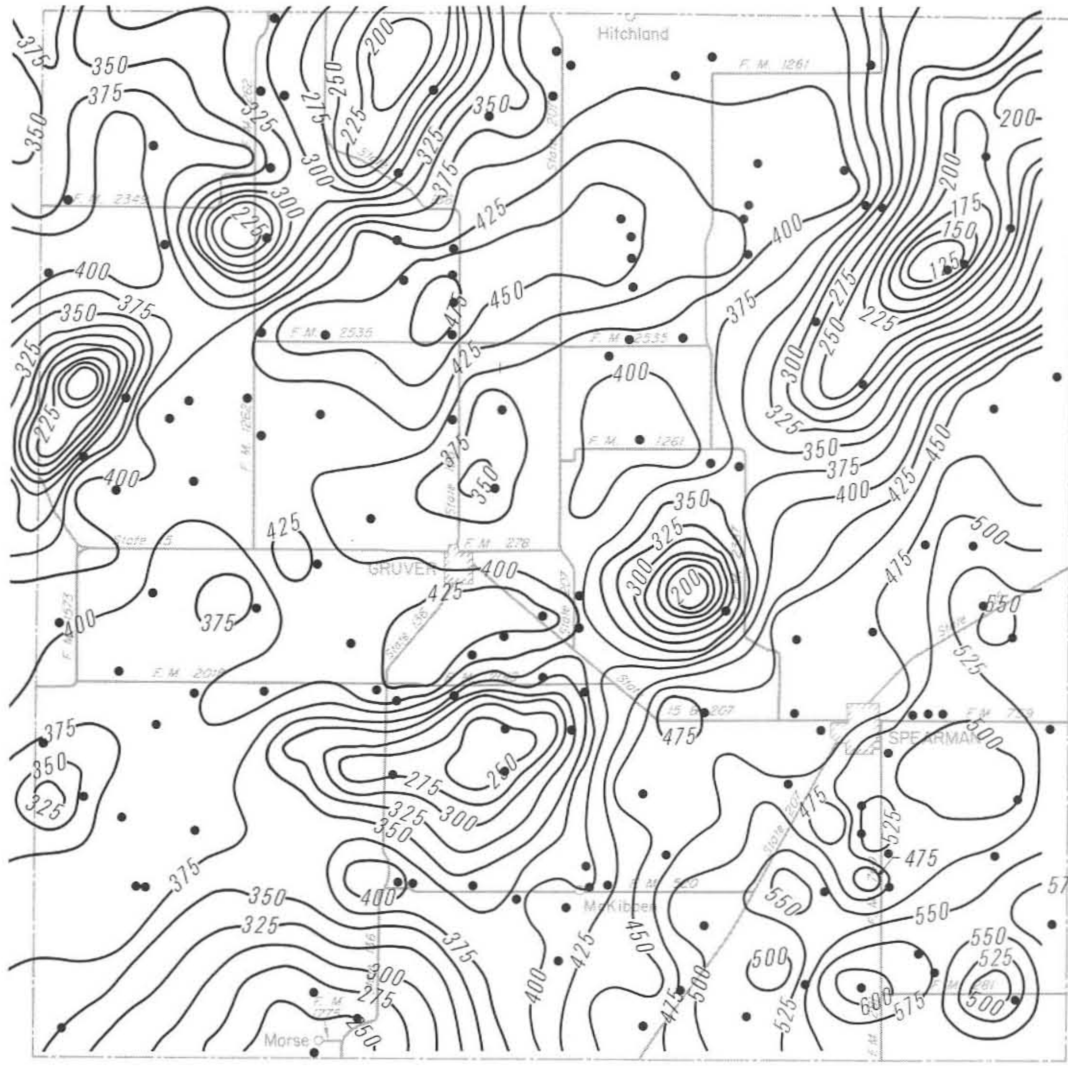


2010
Projected Pumping Lifts

2020

Surface Area Corresponding to Mapped Pumping-Lift Intervals

MAPPED PUMPING-LIFT INTERVAL (feet)	SURFACE AREA (acres)
100–125	859
125–150	687
150–175	2,235
175–200	5,126
200–225	9,770
225–250	12,877
250–275	17,179
275–300	19,220
300–325	25,980
325–350	38,538
350–375	59,880
375–400	110,372
400–425	96,566
425–450	37,795
450–475	36,721
475–500	22,850
500–525	23,856
525–550	15,233
550–575	5,664
575–600	3,085
600–625	515
TOTAL	545,008



EXPLANATION

• Well used for control

——200—— Line showing approximate pumping lift, in feet.

Interval is 25 feet (7.62m)

0 5 10 Miles

0 4 8 16 Kilometers

N

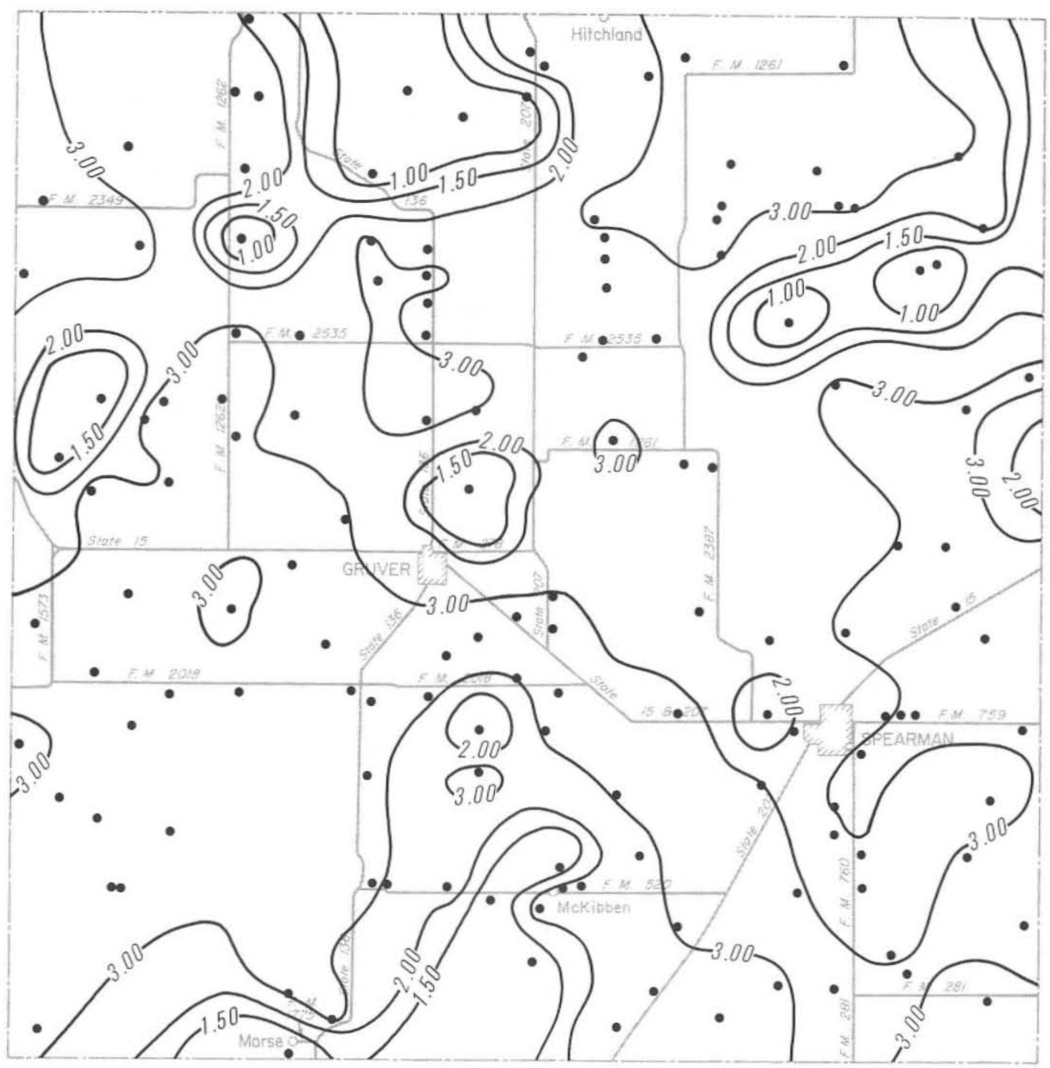
2020
Projected Pumping Lifts

PUMPAGE FROM THE OGALLALA AQUIFER

1974

Pumpage Corresponding to Mapped Decline-Rate Intervals

MAPPED DECLINE-RATE INTERVAL (feet)	SURFACE AREA (acres)	STORAGE CAPACITY OF DEWATERED SECTION (acre-feet)	ESTIMATED PUMPAGE RATE, INCLUDING NATURAL RECHARGE AND IRRIGATION RECIRCULATION (acre-feet per year)
0.75–1.00	21,635	2,118	3,320
1.00–1.50	30,472	4,508	6,356
1.50–2.00	32,857	8,747	11,127
2.00–3.00	221,072	89,481	108,562
3.00–4.00	235,707	113,283	135,415
TOTAL	541,743	218,137	264,780



EXPLANATION

•
Well used for control

——1.25——
Line showing approximate rate of decline in water level, in feet per year.

Interval is variable

0 5 10 Miles

0 4 8 16 Kilometers

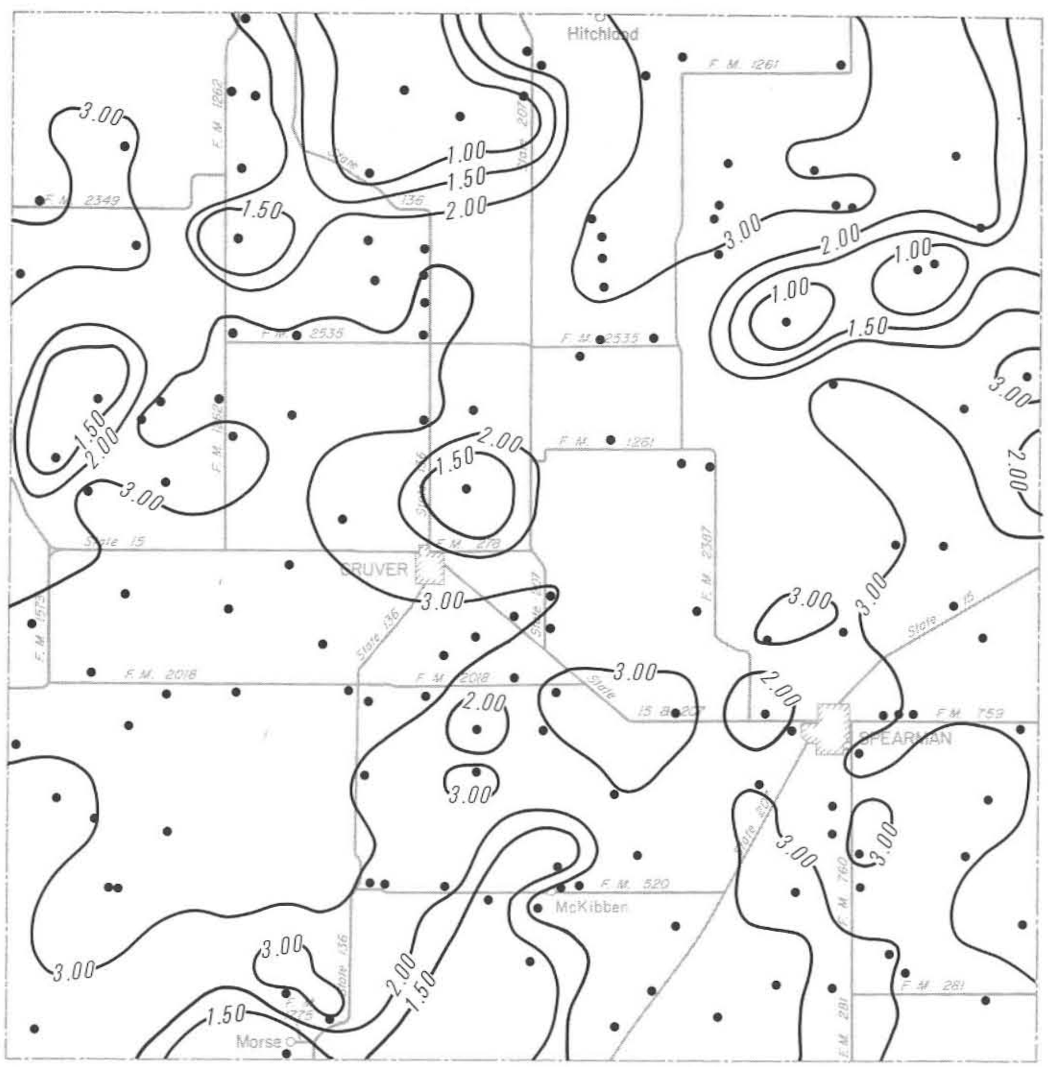
N

1974
Estimated Rates of Water-Level Decline

1980

Pumpage Corresponding to Mapped Decline-Rate Intervals

MAPPED DECLINE-RATE INTERVAL (feet)	SURFACE AREA (acres)	STORAGE CAPACITY OF DEWATERED SECTION (acre-feet)	ESTIMATED PUMPAGE RATE, INCLUDING NATURAL RECHARGE AND IRRIGATION RECIRCULATION (acre-feet per year)
0.75–1.00	30,389	2,423	4,056
1.00–1.50	24,265	4,514	6,078
1.50–2.00	36,788	9,782	12,446
2.00–3.00	268,268	108,196	131,311
3.00–4.00	182,205	86,209	103,181
TOTAL	541,915	211,124	257,072

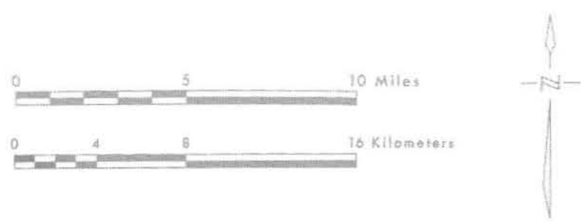


EXPLANATION

•
Well used for control

——— 1.25 ———
Line showing approximate rate of decline in water level, in feet per year.

Interval is variable



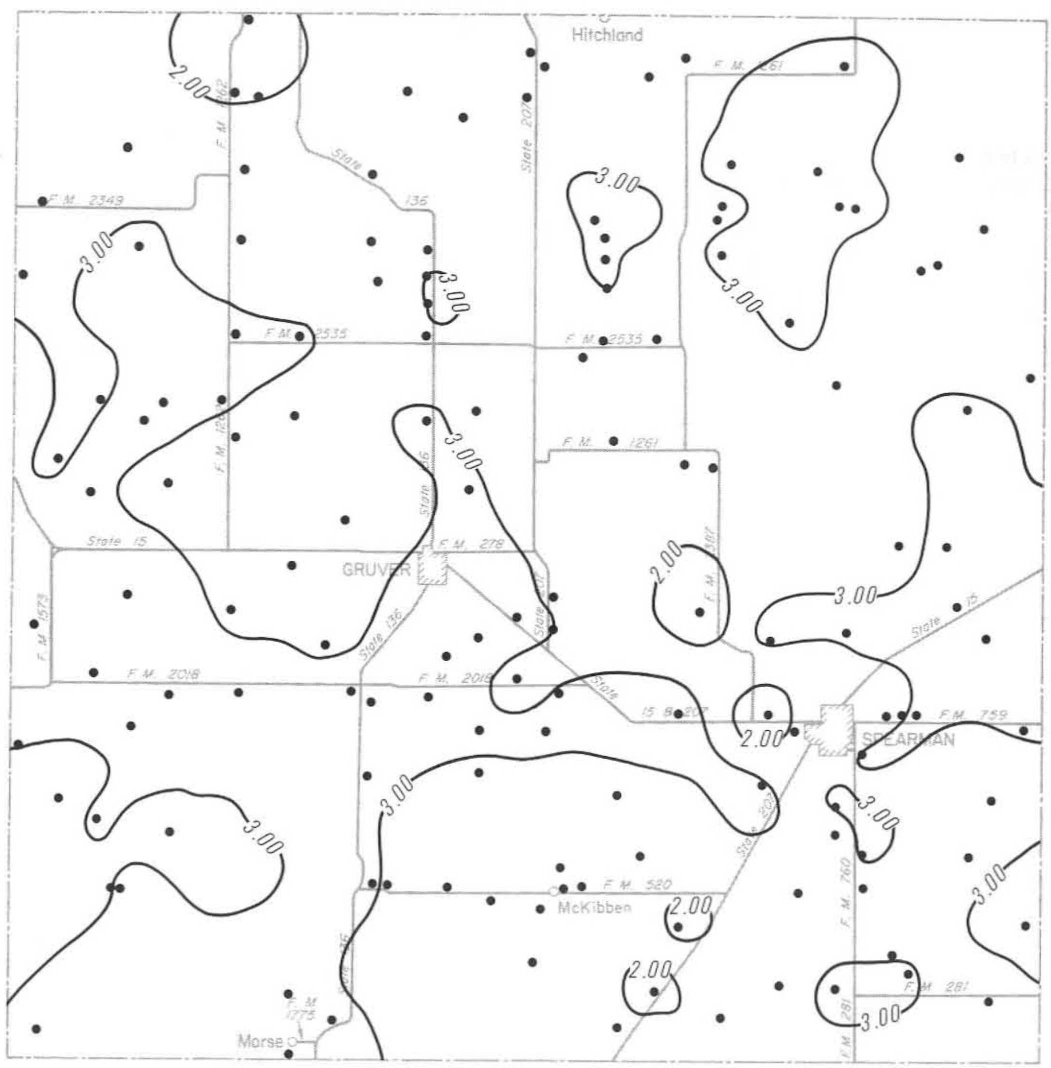
1980

Projected Rates of Water-Level Decline

1990

Pumpage Corresponding to Mapped Decline-Rate Intervals

MAPPED DECLINE-RATE INTERVAL (feet)	SURFACE AREA (acres)	STORAGE CAPACITY OF DEWATERED SECTION (acre-feet)	ESTIMATED PUMPAGE RATE, INCLUDING NATURAL RECHARGE AND IRRIGATION RECIRCULATION (acre-feet per year)
1.50–2.00	10,130	2,606	3,330
2.00–3.00	349,269	142,953	173,256
3.00–4.00	185,609	86,613	103,782
TOTAL	545,008	232,172	280,368



EXPLANATION

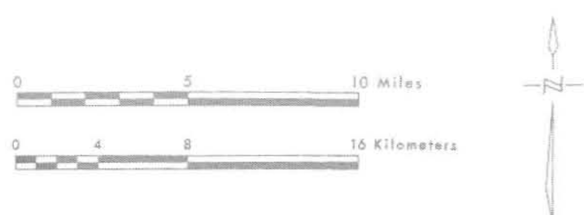
•

Well used for control

——1.25——

Line showing approximate rate of decline in water level, in feet per year.

Interval is variable



1990
Projected Rates of Water-Level Decline

2000

Pumpage Corresponding to Mapped Decline-Rate Intervals

MAPPED DECLINE-RATE INTERVAL (feet)	SURFACE AREA (acres)	STORAGE CAPACITY OF DEWATERED SECTION (acre-feet)	ESTIMATED PUMPAGE RATE, INCLUDING NATURAL RECHARGE AND IRRIGATION RECIRCULATION (acre-feet per year)
1.00–1.50	4,629	847	1,142
1.50–2.00	24,243	6,634	8,409
2.00–3.00	413,778	162,636	197,864
3.00–4.00	102,358	47,448	56,884
TOTAL	545,008	217,565	264,299

EXPLANATION

•
Well used for control

——1.25——
Line showing approximate rate of decline in water level, in feet per year.

Interval is variable

0 5 10 Miles

0 4 8 16 Kilometers

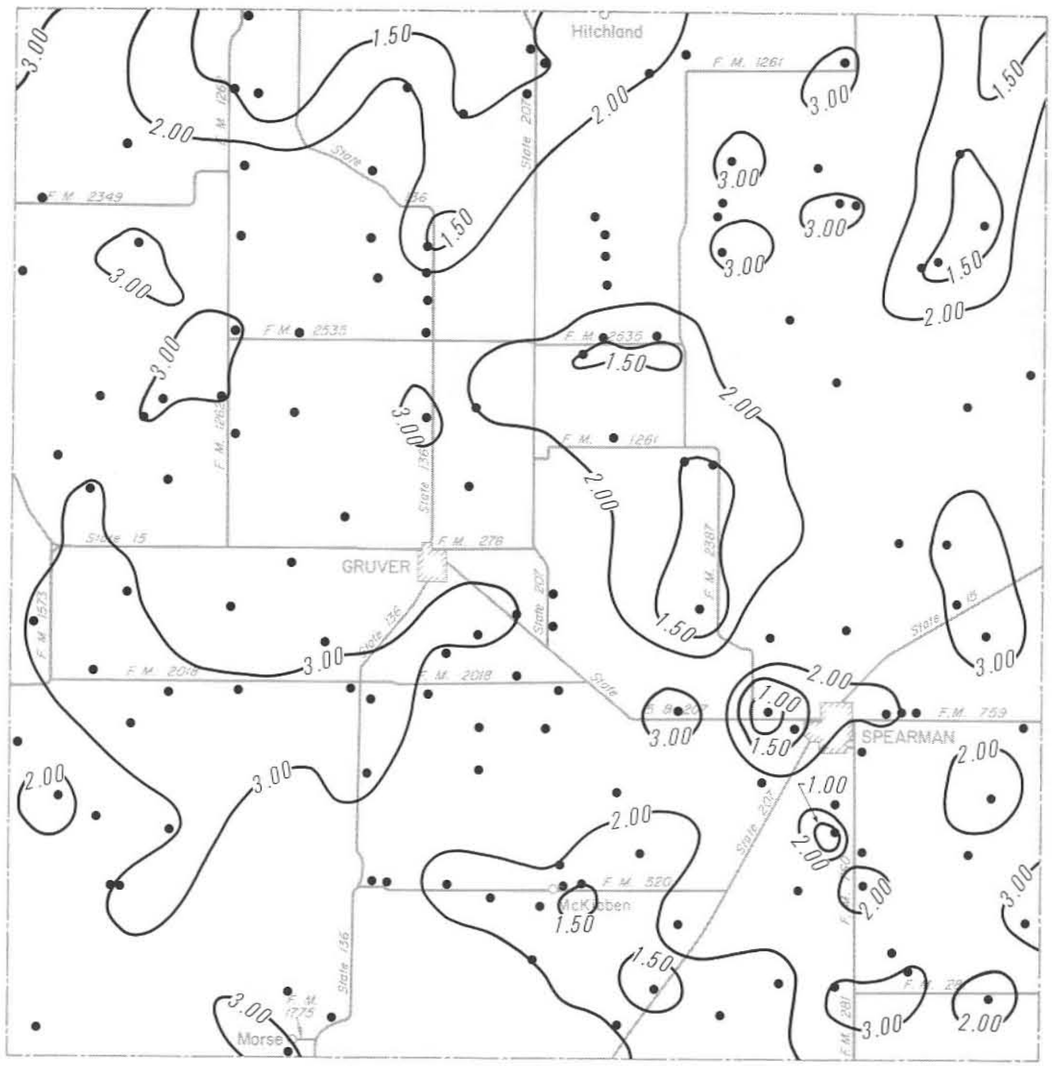
N

2000
Projected Rates of Water-Level Decline

2010

Pumpage Corresponding to Mapped Decline-Rate Intervals

MAPPED DECLINE-RATE INTERVAL (feet)	SURFACE AREA (acres)	STORAGE CAPACITY OF DEWATERED SECTION (acre-feet)	ESTIMATED PUMPAGE RATE, INCLUDING NATURAL RECHARGE AND IRRIGATION RECIRCULATION (acre-feet per year)
0.75–1.00	1,032	115	172
1.00–1.50	15,117	3,000	3,993
1.50–2.00	80,437	21,391	27,217
2.00–3.00	395,048	149,393	182,439
3.00–4.00	53,374	24,645	29,556
TOTAL	545,008	198,544	243,377



EXPLANATION

•
Well used for control

——— 1.25 ———
Line showing approximate rate of decline in water level, in feet per year.

Interval is variable

0 5 10 Miles

0 4 8 16 Kilometers

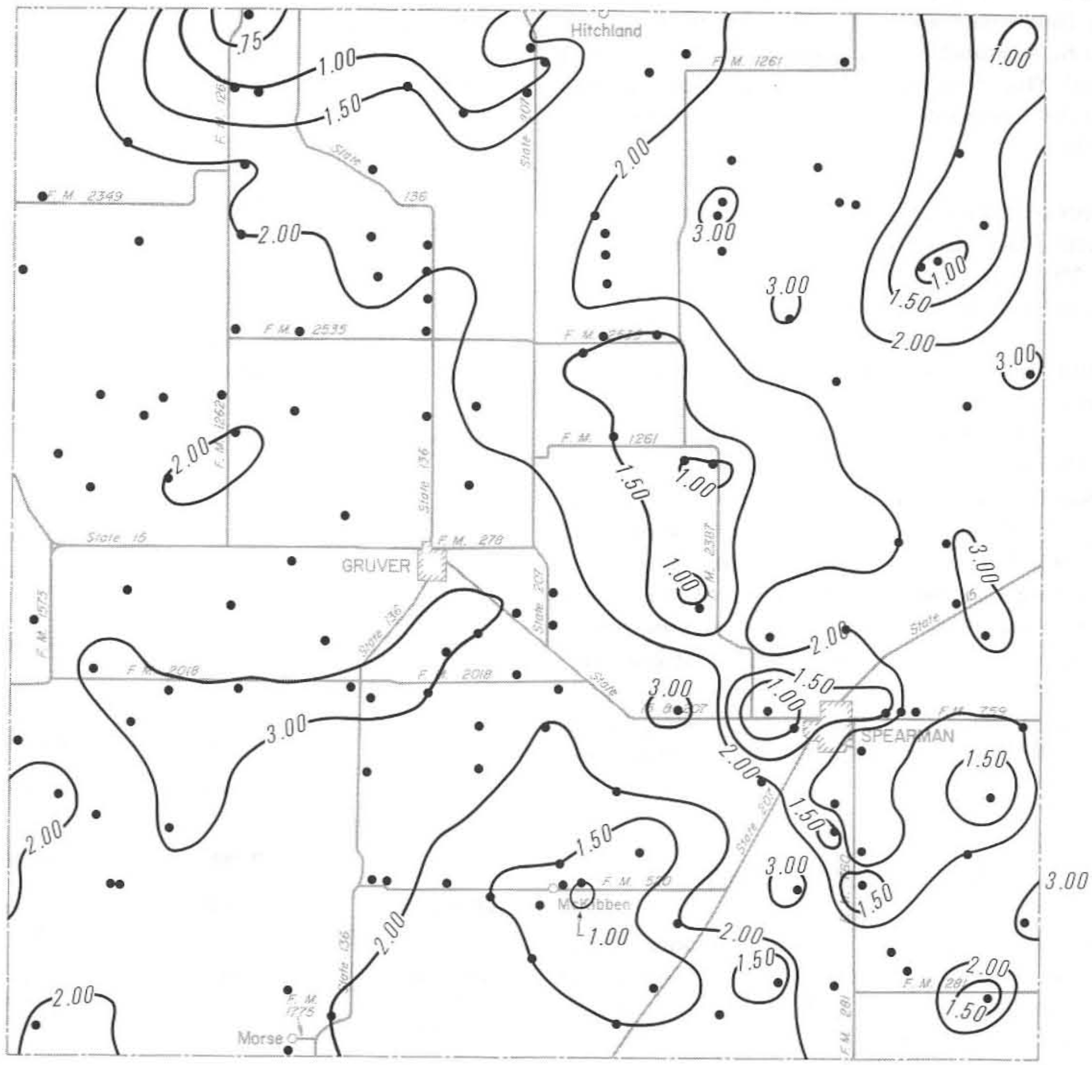
N

2010
Projected Rates of Water-Level Decline

2020

Pumpage Corresponding to Mapped Decline-Rate Intervals

MAPPED DECLINE-RATE INTERVAL (feet)	SURFACE AREA (acres)	STORAGE CAPACITY OF DEWATERED SECTION (acre-feet)	ESTIMATED PUMPAGE RATE, INCLUDING NATURAL RECHARGE AND IRRIGATION RECIRCULATION (acre-feet per year)
0.50–0.75	1,534	137	218
.75–1.00	3,438	456	660
1.00–1.50	53,302	10,471	13,962
1.50–2.00	134,814	36,269	46,075
2.00–3.00	332,684	122,150	149,613
3.00–4.00	19,236	8,858	10,625
TOTAL	545,008	178,341	221,153



EXPLANATION

•
Well used for control

——— 1.25 ———
Line showing approximate rate of decline in water level, in feet per year.

Interval is variable

0 5 10 Miles

0 4 8 16 Kilometers

N

2020
Projected Rates of Water-Level Decline

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special appreciation is expressed to the Hansford County landowners and water users for allowing their wells to be measured by Department and Water District personnel. This study could not have been accomplished without their cooperation and the records obtained from their wells.

Special thanks are also expressed to the staff of the North Plains Ground Water Conservation District No. 2, Mr. J. W. Buchanan, manager, for providing records and consultation during the study.

Additionally, appreciation is expressed to several individuals for consultation and for review and comment on the methodology and techniques employed in this study: Mr. Frank A. Rayner, former manager of the High Plains Underground Water Conservation District No. 1; Dr. Donald Reddell, associate professor of Engineering, Texas A&M University; Mr. Leon New, irrigation specialist, Texas Agriculture Extension Service, Lubbock, Texas; Mr. Shelby Newman, superintendent, Texas Agricultural Experiment Station, Stephenville, Texas; Dr. C. C. Reeves, Jr., professor of Geosciences, Texas Tech University; and Dr. James Osborn, former chairman of the Department of Agricultural Economics, Texas Tech University.

STAFF INVOLVEMENT

This report is one of a series of county reports being published under the title "Analytical Study of the Ogallala Aquifer." Former staff member A. Wayne Wyatt was instrumental in initiating the study and coauthored a number of the previously published reports of this series.

The Hansford County report was prepared under the supervision of Bernard B. Baker, head of the Ground Water Data Unit in the Texas Department of Water Resources' Data Collection and Evaluation Section, Dr. Tommy R. Knowles, chief. Numerous staff members of this Section assisted the authors in assembling and evaluating data and information. Overall technical supervision of the Ogallala study is exercised by C. R. Baskin, director, Data and Engineering Services Division. The Department's Information Systems and Services Office, David L. Ferguson, director, provided automated data processing and computational services, and prepared the manuscript copy of tabular and graphical displays.

METRIC CONVERSIONS TABLE

For those readers interested in using the International System (SI) of Units, the metric equivalents of English units of measurement have been given in parenthesis in the text. The English units used in tables of this report may be converted to metric units by the following conversion factors:

MULTIPLY ENGLISH UNITS	BY	TO OBTAIN SI UNITS
inches	2.540	centimeters (cm)
feet	.3048	meters (m)
miles	1.609	kilometers (km)
square miles	2.590	square kilometers (km^2)
gallons	3.785	liters (l)
gallons per minute	.06309	liters per second (l/s)
gallons per minute per foot	.207	liters per second per meter ([l/s] /m)
acres	.4047	square hectometers (hm^2)
acres	.004047	square kilometers (km^2)
acre-feet	1,233.	cubic meters (m^3)
acre-feet	1.233×10^{-6}	cubic kilometers (km^3)
million acre-feet	1.233	cubic kilometers (km^3)

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