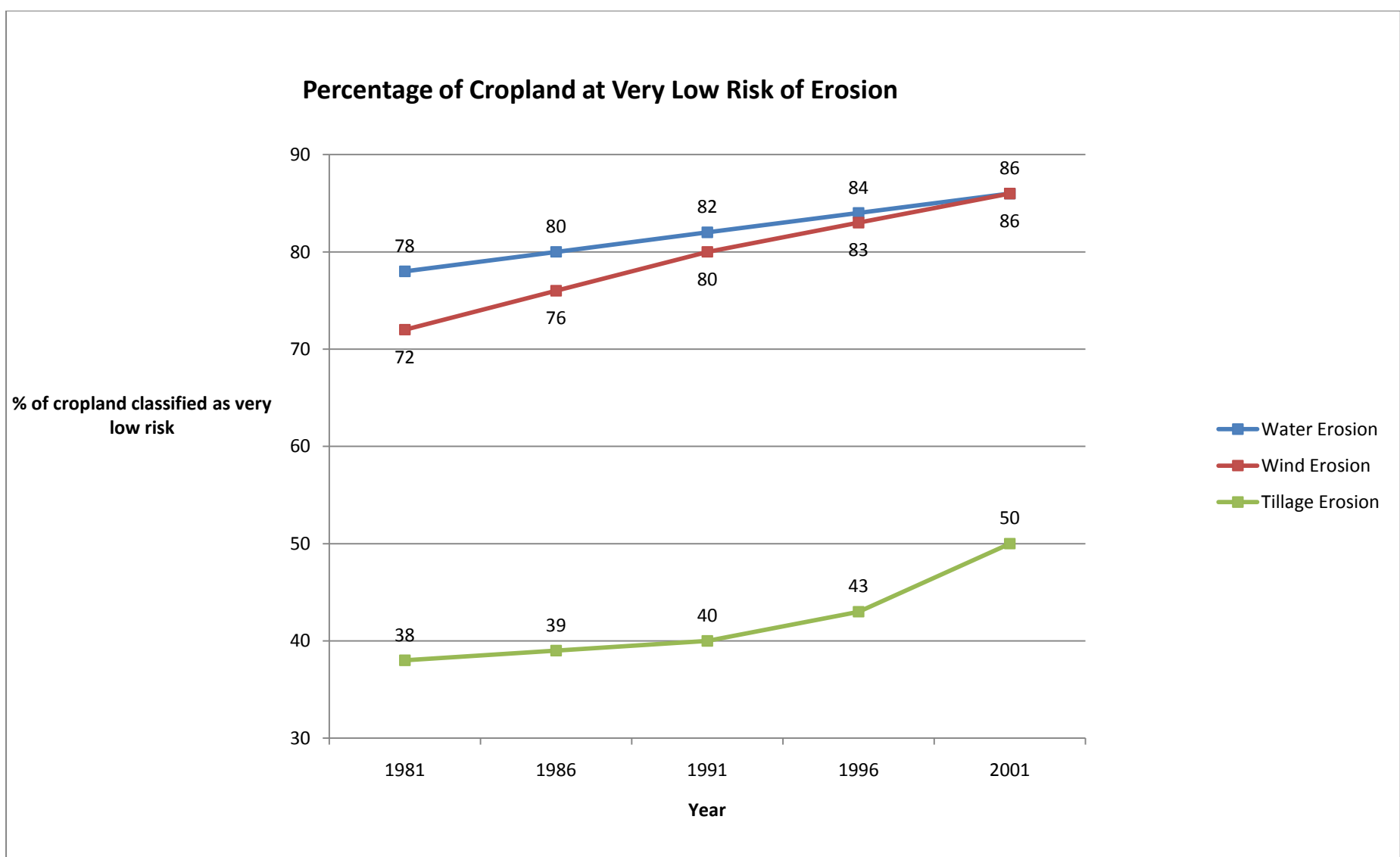


Canada's Cropland: Becoming Better Protected From Erosion

Contrary to the common perception Canada's natural environment is approaching a crisis point, one of the many areas in which Canada has made impressive progress in recent years is in the protection of soil. Perhaps the single most important indicator of soil well-being is the extent to which cropland is protected from erosion as rapid soil erosion can have several negative effects, including reducing soil fertility and harm to wildlife.

Canada's record of improvement has been impressive over the past 25 years. The federal government monitors cropland across the country, and rates different agricultural areas according to how well the soil there is protected from the risk of the three major types of erosion: water erosion, wind erosion and tillage erosion. Cropland is rated on a five-tiered scale with "very high risk" at one end and "very low risk" at the other. The government's stated performance objective is to bring as much cropland as possible into the "very low risk" class.

- In the case of wind erosion, the amount of cropland receiving the top rating (very low risk) increased by 20 per cent.
- For water erosion, the amount of cropland receiving the very low risk rating increased by 10 per cent.
- For tillage erosion, the amount of cropland receiving the top rating increased by 32 per cent.



Source: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada