

● Conservation

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on both sides of a township road.

Water from a hillside on the vegetable farm of Walter Himmelreich, Ronks R1, had three natural outlets to the roadside. Pipes under the road at a 1 three outlets carried the water onto the farm of Clarence and Emory Herr.

Because the natural surplus of water was spread out over such a wide area, the Herr Brothers were forced to abandon about an acre of cropland. The loss of the cropland was not as serious, however, as was the weed problem which developed because the area was not cultivated. The water channels even made mowing the area impractical.

Himmelreich, who has farmed on the contour for 15 years, felt that, even with his contour strips, he was losing too much water through runoff. In consultation with the local staff of the Soil Conservation Service, he decided to establish three cropland terraces on the hillside to try to hold as much of the water as possible. But

realizing that there will always be some runoff in extreme periods of rainfall, he decided to construct a diversion terrace at the foot of the slope to carry all the runoff to one outlet instead of three.

The township supervisors agreed to replace the three small, inadequate pipes under the road with one large pipe. This pipe was located so as to carry the runoff to the corner of the Herr Brothers' property where it could be channeled through a wooded area to the stream.

Through their cooperation the Herr Brothers reclaimed an area of land and eliminated a serious weed problem.

"The soil here is very susceptible to erosion," Himmelreich said this week, "I don't know how they farmed it before we put in the contour strips."

Abner Houseknecht, soil conservationist with the local S.C.S., said the intensive cultivation of vegetable farming makes soil conservation more difficult on any farm, but the construction of the cropland terraces should hold most of the excess water on the hillside until it has time to be absorbed into



PUSHING UP SOIL FOR A DIKE AND CLEARING OUT A CHANNEL for a cropland terrace is a job for horsepower and knowhow. After the contours were laid out by the Soil Conservation Service on the farm of Walter Himmelreich, Ronks R1, Donald Burkhardt, Strasburg R1, went to work with his "Dozer" to push out the channel with only enough slope to allow the water to "walk" around the hill and flow safely into a permanent grass and area. After the terraces are completed, they can be maintained by normal farming practices. —L. F. Photo

the soil. The excess will be gently washed off at the end of the terraces.

Cropland terraces, Houseknecht said, have a slope of only about 0.4 of a foot per 100 feet of terrace length. Any excess water collecting in such a terrace would move slowly and carry very little sediment with it. The end of the terraces will be constructed with a broad lip outlet, Houseknecht explained, to spread the runoff water over an area of permanent grass. Any water which reaches the foot of the hillside through this devious path will be channeled to the newly-constructed opening by a broad diversion terrace.

Cropland terraces are constructed on virtually the same contour lines followed in strip cropping, therefore no change in rotation will be required. While the construction of terraces is rather a severe measure, they pose no special problems to the farmer. Strip cropping with conventional farming tools will maintain the terraces.

Because the work was done

in cooperation with the soil conservation services, Himmelreich is eligible for assistance through the Agricultural Stabilization and conservation committee.

Many agencies and individuals cooperating have accomplished a project which would have been next to impossible for any of them alone.

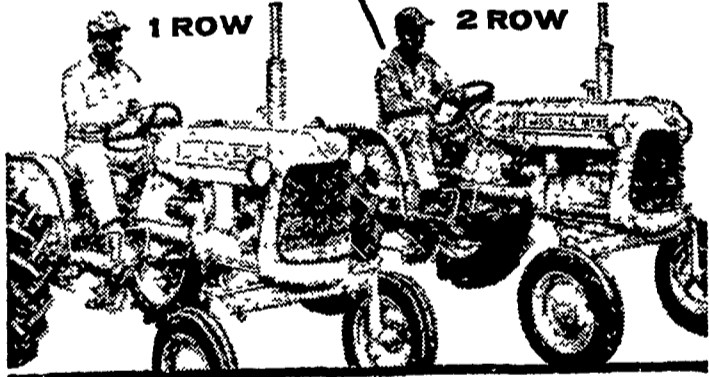


ABNER HOUSEKNECHT CHECKS THE DEPTH of a new cropland terrace on the farm of Walter Himmelreich, Ronks R1. The dike on the right is about 18 inches higher than the channel above it. A dike this high will not fill to overflowing with the most severe rainstorms in this area. These barriers, spaced about 85 feet apart on a hillside will prevent excessive runoff of rain water. —L. F. Photo

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