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The Role Of The City In The War Against Waste

Editor's Note: This is the last of five articles describing how the Lancaster County Soil Conservation District came into being.

Soil Conservation and the City

One thing Nikita Khrushchev wanted to see during his visit to the United States was an example of American agriculture. Here was a field in which he readily admitted we were way ahead of Russia. Why was he concerned? Today in Russia almost half of

the total labor force is employed in agriculture. In the United States only one person in 25 is needed to grow a surplus of food for the nation.

Agriculture is an essential part of our national economy. In a nation with more than 90 percent of its labor force removed from the land and in abundance of food at the corner grocery store it is easy to forget agriculture's vital role. Even in the 'industrial' state of Pennsylvania agric-

ulture and processing of agricultural products remain one of the state's biggest businesses.

Despite today's surplus the American farmer cannot afford to be complacent. Future population projections indicate there will be no surpluses by 1975 at our current agricultural production level. In the meantime more of our good farmland will be paved with superhighways or be planted with housing or industrial developments. If farmers are to meet future demands for food they must preserve and improve the productivity of their land today.

Soil Conservation Aids Urbanites

By projecting the work of soil conservation districts into the future we find that many of their accomplishments will be of direct benefit to urban and suburban residents as well as the farmer. This is primarily due to the fact that water rather than soil, is becoming the first concern of conservationists. Of course, the two are hard to separate when one talks about conservation of the land but as the problems of flooding and greater demands for water have become more serious a switch in conservation emphasis has occurred. Controlling water in order to keep it out of our cities and storing it for dry periods is a main objective.

Twenty years of soil conservation work in this country have shown that all the water can't be controlled on the farm. Despite strip cropping, diversion terraces and other practices surplus water still leaves the farm and finds its way into city basements. The principle that the spaces between each particle of soil are our best reservoirs is still sound but these reservoirs must be augmented.

In 1954 Congress attacked this problem by passing the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act. Now floodwater can be held in the headwaters of our streams by small and medium-size earthen dams built with federal funds. The program is the responsibility of local sponsors. If, for example, they decide they need water storage as well as water control dams can be slightly increased in size at local expense to provide additional water for irrigation, industrial and municipal water supply, recreation or other local purposes.

The federal government is well aware that poor land management practices allow silt to pollute our streams and fill water reservoirs. Thus in order to insure the life of these dams and their investment in them, the federal government requires that the land above the dams receive conservation treatment through the regular land treatment program of the local soil conservation district.

Planning For Development

The soil survey used in planning each soil conservation district cooperators farm has also found its way to the city. Failure to use a soil survey in Fairfax County, Virginia, recently resulted in the waste of \$230,000 in the construction of a high school. After it was built additional excavations and footings became necessary because the school was built on poorly drained soil. Fairfax County now has completed a county-wide soil survey to insure proper septic tank disposal, choose public building sites, locate highways, assess land

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Local Broiler Grower Gives The Facts About HORNCO!

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Mr. Miller adjusting a water fountain in 1 of his 2 houses.

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