

Conservation and Alfalfa Are Among Topics at Soils Day

Oval Bass, Lancaster County soil conservationist, spoke on the need for good soil conservation practices last week at the annual Crops and Soils Day.

He explained that forest land loses 20 to 100 tons of soil in a storm, compared with 100 to 500 tons from crop land and 1,000 to 2,500 from land in urban use.

He noted that the Pennsylvania clean Streams Law has redefined sediment as an industrial pollutant and manure as a sewage pollutant, making the farmer subject to fines of \$100 to \$1,000

for first offense and \$1,000 to \$5,000 for second offenses. He quoted Norman Reber of the Pennsylvania Farmer magazine as stating that whereas the state formerly had a carrot to lead the farmer to better conservation practices, the state now has a switch to get behind him and push a little.

Bass noted that farmers in Lancaster County are "headed to more corn." While strip cropping has been good and still is for the farmer who still uses hay, the strips in general have been "getting narrower."

The strips are now so narrow they are ineffective on many farms, Bass said.

As Lancaster County farmers have in the past five years gone toward a continuous corn crop, he said that terraces and sod waterways have become the type of conservation practices that have been effective with this type of land use.

Terraces and sod waterways make production of continuous corn feasible on slopes of up to four per cent, he said.

Alfalfa Potential

Dr. John E. Baylor, Penn State Extension agronomist, spoke on new ideas in silage and hay making. He was introduced by master of ceremonies John Yocum of the Penn State Research Farm at Landisville, as "one of the country's foremost forage specialists."

Baylor noted that the type of conservation programs as outlined by Bass make much more intensive type of farming practices workable.

The two crops that have the most potential use for farmers, according to Baylor, are corn and alfalfa.

The essential ingredients of a sound feeding program, Baylor noted, are energy, protein, vitamins and minerals.

Corn is the best source of energy and alfalfa ranks highest in protein, he said.

Baylor emphasized that the highest potential for both corn silage and alfalfa is much greater than is now being realized by farmers. While farmers produce an average of about 12.5 tons of corn silage per acre, the potential is 30 tons and some farmers can possibly achieve 45 tons, Baylor said. While alfalfa yield is now an average of about 2.5 tons per acre, Baylor thinks the potential is an average of

six tons with as much as nine more tons possible.

In addition to high yields per acre of quality feed, the farmer must be concerned about long lived alfalfa stands.

Good fertilization, insect control and weed control are ne-

cessary to achieve long lived stands, he emphasized.

Baylor said the time and frequency of cutting is also an important management practice with alfalfa.

The first harvest for maximum production should be at the early (Continued on Page 19)

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