

Conservation Farming

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stalled diversion terraces on his farm in 1969, and he has never regretted that decision. "I can grow continuous corn on my terraced fields and not worry about losing topsoil," Smoker said. "During Agnes, for example, we had an awful lot of rain, and we had a lot of water running out of our cornfields. But it was clear water."

Besides slowing runoff water, Smoker feels the terraces help to conserve water, an important factor in his sandy loam, Class 2 soil. Because the flow of the water is slowed, it has more time to sink into the ground, where it becomes available as the surface soil dries out during dry spells.

Manure from Smoker's 43-cow Holstein dairy herd is spread daily on the fields. This is a practice which has come in for ever closer scrutiny by environmental groups and government bodies in the past few years, and which could pose nearly insoluble problems for many dairymen, especially those with streams running through their farms. Again, Smoker's terraces might help prevent some possible problems. "I hardly ever see any evidence of manure in our runoff water," he said. "The water just moves too

slowly to pick anything up."

In all, Smoker farms about 112 acres, 24 of which are terraced. He grows 80 acres of corn, 30 of alfalfa and also plants some barley every year. His corn yields are about 90 bushels to the acre, and he gets 3.5 to 4 acres of alfalfa hay to the acre. The fields that aren't terraced are strip-cropped.

Minimum till planting is one of the techniques Smoker hopes to do more of in the future. He feels it conserves both labor and soil. He owns half of a no-till planter, used it last year and liked it. Eventually, he plans to buy a chisel plow.

"I borrowed a chisel plow this fall and went over 20 acres with it. I planted barley and rye in that ground and it just did great. In the spring, I'm going to spray the rye to kill it, then I'll plant corn with the no-till planter. I'm anxious to see how it works."

Winter cover crops, like rye, are an important part of Smoker's conservation philosophy. "I just don't like to see soil lying bare over the winter, and plowing down that green manure is one of the best things you can do for the land. It doesn't cost that much, and I think it definitely pays in the long

run."

Smoker keeps his terraces in shape with a tumble plow that pushes the soil uphill no matter which way the tractor's headed. "You've got to learn how to farm with terraces," he said, "or you'll tear them down. One thing you've got to guard against is letting the terraces silt shut, or plowing them carelessly. If they overflow, you've got yourself a lot of trouble."

There's also a one-acre pond on the Smoker farm, used mostly for recreation, but he feels it's good fire insurance, too. Field runoff is diverted away from the pond, which is fed by a spring on the property.

Another interesting feature of the Smoker farm is a 14-acre woodlot which supplies much of the lumber for farm buildings. A shed and a barn have all been built with mostly Smoker lumber, and there's at least one cedar chest in the works, too.

Smoker has been a farmer all his life. He and his wife, Vera, were both brought up on farms and agree it's the best way to live and the best place to raise children. There are four Smoker children. Jay is a 1973 graduate of Penn State where he majored in animal husbandry, Charlene is a secretary at the Ephrata Community Hospital, Marlin graduated from Ephrata High School in 1973, and Kevin attends

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area beermen say they'll need to break even. We've heard a lot of gripes lately about the price of beef in retail stores. The precipitous plunge in live prices has resulted in only a gentle dip in grocers' prices.

Recession in the Offing?

Consumer pessimism has reached a 25-year high (or low, depending on how you look at it), according to the prestigious Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan. The Center says a recession is now "quite possible", and says part of the trouble stems from "the traumatic experience millions of Americans had while shopping for food and other products in recent months". This has caused a great change in people's beliefs and expectations about their own and the economy's prospects, the Center reports.

Flower Growers Asked To Report Production

Beginning in early January, the Pennsylvania Crop Reporting Service will ask flower growers to report 1973 area in production and value of sales for carnations, roses, chrysanthemums, gladioli and foliage plants. Growers will also be asked to report their intentions to produce these crops in 1974. Production statistics must be kept up to date to be of maximum benefit to the floriculture industry. This annual flower and foliage survey is designed to do this job.

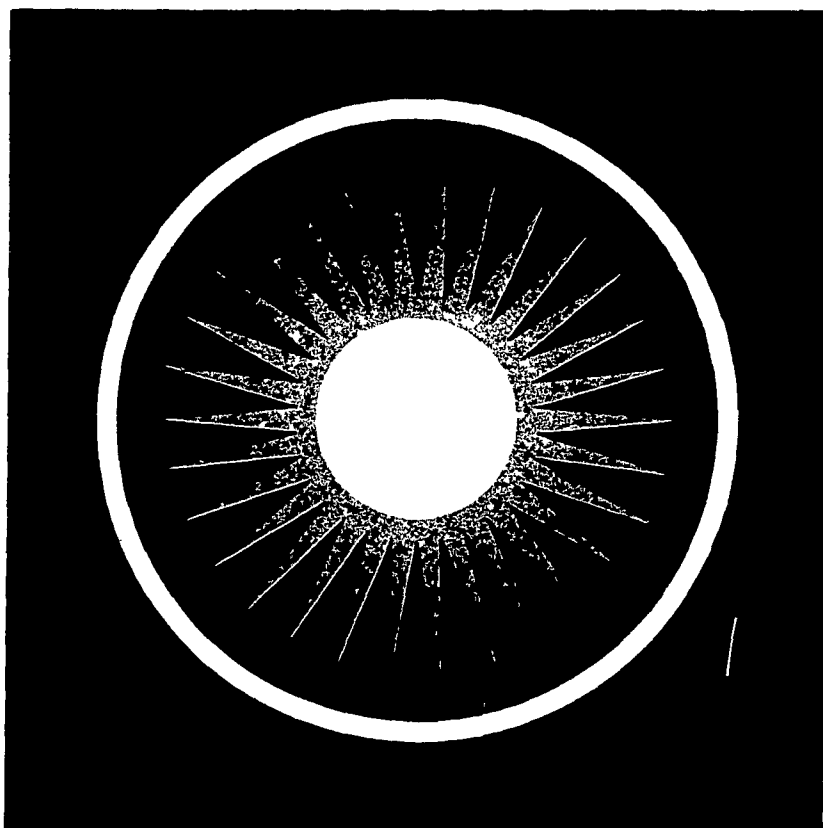
Results of this survey will be published by the Statistical

Reporting Service, USDA, on March 27, 1974. This report will aid growers and florists in measuring industry changes and in making operational decisions based on up-to-date statistics.

The flower business in the Commonwealth State is sizeable. In 1972, total value at wholesale of the four important flowers and of foliage plants estimated in Pennsylvania amounted to \$17.8 million.

Continued success of the survey program depends upon the voluntary cooperation of flower producers. Information supplied by each individual operation will be kept confidential.

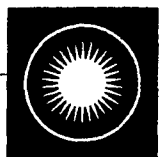
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