

Lancaster Farming

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Landis Weaver, Conservation Case History . . .



Landis Weaver, kneeling, marks a stake to guide the operator installing cropland terraces on his farm near Tayloria, in southern Lancaster County. Helping him with the alignment is Frank Harvatine, a civil engineering technician with the Lebanon County area office of the USDA's Soil Conservation Service.

Area Farmer Picks Tile Line Over Sod

As more and more farmers face the need to adopt conservation practices on their land, they will be looking for ever more efficient ways to farm with conservation. A tile line to carry runoff water away from cropland terraces is one method that's being tried this year for the first time by a southern Lancaster County farmer.

Landis Weaver, Tayloria, is the first farmer in this area to install the tile lines, which have been used extensively throughout the Midwest. "These tiles will do the same job as a sod waterway," Weaver explained this week on his farm, "but I won't have any of the problems you get with a waterway. Waterways can be hard to establish, and once they're going you've got to manage them right. "For example, say I'd have a field in corn, and I had cropland terraces and a waterway. If I sprayed the corn with weed killer, and if we got a heavy rain right after I sprayed, all the weed killer could go onto my waterway and kill the grass. I'd have to start all over."

Weaver decided to install the tile after discussing the practice with Abner Houseknecht and Frank Havatine. Houseknecht is recently retired from the Lancaster County SCS office and is now employed by the county as a conservation technician. Harvatine is a civil engineering technician working out of the Lebanon area office of the SCS. Houseknecht and Harvatine worked together on designing the system for Weaver.

Weaver has been farming with contour strips on his 172 acres for the past eight years. He decided this year to install

cropland terraces because, as said, "The government's going to make everybody do it sooner or later, anyway. I think my investment will pay for itself, though, in the long run. It'll help me keep the topsoil where it is, instead of down in the stream."

The tile which went into the Weaver farm are six-inch corrugated plastic. The lightweight material comes in big rolls, and is simply laid into a trench, three feet deep in Weaver's case. Perforations in the tile allow water to enter through its entire length, so that it's constantly draining water away from wet spots. Galvanized risers, installed at the lowest point behind each cropland terrace, feed water from heavy rains directly into the tile, so that during maximum rainfall, the line may be running full force. The risers are perforated, too, and are also open at the top. They stick two to three feet out of the ground.

After the tile is laid in the trench, it is simply covered over. The pressure of the soil which surrounds it gives the tile strength enough to bear the weight of heavy tractors and other field equipment. Weaver's tiles were installed using a rented backhoe.

Installing a tile line isn't cheap, Weaver pointed out. "It cost me 50-cents a foot just for the material, plus the cost of the risers, the tees and the bells. And I had to pay \$300 for the backhoe. That comes to a pretty good price for 2400-feet of tile. But it will last indefinitely, and it gets my fields into

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FARM TRENDS by Dick Wanner

Weevil Warning

Alfalfa weevils are out in force this year, and some local farmers aren't even aware they've got a problem, we were told Thursday by Don Robinson, young farmer advisor at Garden Spot High School.

"There's a tremendous amount of weevil around

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120 At FFA Leaders' Meet

About 120 FFA officers from Lancaster County chapters gathered Thursday afternoon at Solanco High School for their annual leadership training conference. All were newly elected to their offices, and they went to Solanco to hone their leadership skills.

Prizes awarded at the close of the conference went to a trio of youths who placed highest in the creed contests, and the two highest winners in the quiz contest. Steve Hershey, Maheim, took first place creed honors, while second place went to Bernadine Gish, Elizabethtown, and third went to Ray Stark of Penn Manor.

Curtis Martin, Ephrata, took first place in the quiz contest, with John Wyler, also of Ephrata, placing second.

Honorary Keystone Farmer degrees were presented after the con-

ference to Carl Graybill, a vo-ag teacher at Ephrata, and to Robert Bucher, farm loan officer at Commonwealth National Bank.

And, during the conference, the county Red Rose Chapter officers for the coming year were installed. The officers are: Barry Wissler, Ephrata, president; Donald Weaver, New Holland, vice-president; Brian Ober, Brownstown Vo-Tech, corresponding secretary; Robert Buckwalter, Penn Manor, sentinel; Jeff Glackin, Solanco, recording secretary; Nelson Martin, Pequea, chaplain; Kevin Rohrer, Manheim, reporter; Dwight Martin, Elizabethtown, parliamentarian; Dwight Houser, Lampeter - Strasburg, treasurer.

Installed as advisors were J. W. Hilton, Penn Manor, J. Phillips, Pequea Valley, and J. Kerr, Brownstown Vo-Tech.

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Fulton Grange Members Celebrate 100th Year

Over 250 members, guests and dignitaries turned out for the gala centennial celebration of the Fulton Grange last Saturday night at the Fulton Grange Hall in Oakryn.

After an opening song and an invocation by chaplain Gyles Brown, the assembled guests heard greetings from

Fulton Grange Master Charles G. McSparran, followed by an address by National Master John W. Scott. State Master A. Wayne Readinger also spoke. Among the listeners were state senator Richard Snyder and state Grange Overseer Clifford Tinkelpaugh.

Following the opening ceremonies, guests settled down to a long anniversary pageant, "100 Years With Fulton Grange".

In 10 different scenes, Grange members acted out the story of their organization, from its beginning as an item of

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Newly elected officers of Lancaster County's FFA chapters met Thursday afternoon at Solanco High School for their annual spring leadership training conference. At the close of the conference, prizes

were awarded to the winners of the creed and quiz contests. Winners shown here are, left to right, Steve Hershey, Ray Stark, Curtis Martin, Bernadine Gish and John Wyler.