

# It's nearly unchanged

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 work around the clock, moving onto new customers in the middle of the night, (at two mph.) blowing their ear-splitting whistles to waken the farmer and warn the neighbors that "the steamer is in the neighborhood."  
 Steamers also worked in the Fall. However, autumn work only lasted for about two weeks.  
 Little has changed since then. A few things have been altered to account for the "progress" of the past 50 years. In the place of coal, oil is now burned to heat the water in the indomitable iron boilers which have been mounted on the beds of trucks for easier transport. And, instead of doing two pans together for 20 minutes,


today's steamer does one pan at a time for seven-and-a-half minutes. But, basically, that is where the differences stop.  
 Paul G. Nolt, Mount Joy R1, is a present day steamer who concentrates mainly in the Manheim, Mount Joy, Lititz, and East Petersburg areas. This week was his last for Spring steaming, having run a little later than planned due to rainy weather.  
 Nolt has owned and operated his rig for 11 years, having bought it from his brother, John, who ran it for three years after purchasing it from his grandfather.  
 "Grand dad had it for about 10 years, so all together we've been steaming for 24 years," Nolt recounted. Of those 24 years, Nolt has been involved with it since he was a 16-year-old, when he helped his grandfather.  
 Originally, the steamer had been a traction engine which was later pulled by a tractor when gasoline engines were invented, and then, in 1958, the Nolt's mounted it on a truck. About 20 years ago they changed over from coal to oil.  
 Nolt's schedule is about the same as the early

steamers. In the Fall, he works for about two weeks—during the day. He usually begins about November.  
 Then, in Spring, he begins in the middle of March and runs through to the second week of April, depending on the weather.  
 "My wife, Arlene, sets up the route," he explains.  
 He also notes that there is one prime week during the Spring in which he runs 24 hours a day, excluding Sunday. To do this, he has a relief man, Mervin Rutt, Mt. Joy, to help.  
 "We don't always run a week straight," Nolt explains. "Usually, there will be some rain in there somewhere, and then you can't steam." Steaming requires loose, worked ground, and rain packs it too solidly for the steam to penetrate.  
 Usually, Nolt calls his customers a few days in advance of his arrival so that the beds can be prepared.  
 For steaming, the beds are either disc harrowed or roto tilled a few days prior to sterilization, depending on the ground condition and the weather.  
 The beds are worked about six-and-a-half inches down and are left to dry.

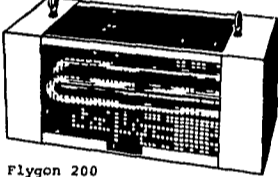


Paul Nolt changes the steaming hose from one pan to another. Each pan steams for seven-and-a-half minutes, and while one is steaming, the other remains in place holding the heat for an extra seven-and-a-half minutes.

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The day this picture was taken, Nolt was steaming at the farm of T. Hershey Rohrer, State Road, East Petersburg. T. Hershey Rohrer, Jr., helps Nolt change the pans.



Nolt's apparatus has two pans six by eight-and-one-half feet in size. He places one pan on one bed and a second on an adjacent bed. Then, he steams one pan at a time for seven-and-a-half minutes, heating the ground to 180 - 190 degrees F. While the second pan is steaming, the remaining pan stays in

place, holding the heat in for an extra seven-and-a-half minutes.  
 To do this, the steamer has about 115 - 120 pounds of pressure in the boiler, takes [Continued on Page 36]

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