

Farm improvement

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find the ground was relatively dry just two feet below the surface. It made the design task easier and assured the Groffs that they could go ahead with a holding area without the worry of having their storage fill up from an underground water source.

A waterway diverts ground water away from the holding area.

The roof drains are connected into the tile drain

system so there is no added pressure on the manure pit.

Manure is scraped out the lower end of the barn with a skid loader. A concrete slide is located below the apron where the manure is pushed out.

The slide was put in to make sure the important downhill side of the retaining wall would not erode from the constant sliding of manure from the barn.

Wilmer says the manure moves easily to the deep middle of the pond and he has noted no problem with it piling up below the push-off ramp.

When the Groffs get their milkhouse put in, the manure holding area also will handle all milkhouse waste.

With a total volume of 30,000 cubic feet, or roughly

225,000 gallons, the storage should have no problem handling the extra.

Since the Groffs use only sawdust for bedding they anticipate no trouble with long hay or straw in the system.

They have a concrete ramp on the uphill side of the manure storage which leads down into the pit.

They expect to get a three point hitch agitator in for emptying their pond.

This will allow them to agitate, will eliminate the need for a vacuum pump, and will permit them to leave the spreader tank at the top of the ramp rather than go to the struggle of hauling it uphill, fully loaded, every time they want to make another trip.

The manure holding facility has been in only for a few weeks and to date they have less than a month's manure in it.

The late fall has helped to some degree. Grass they planted to hold the sides of the slope began to show green earlier in the week—and that means less problem with any runoff into Chickies Creek.

The Groff farm sits on the far Western edge of the Chickies Watershed.

In fact, the water which drains down one side of the lane goes into the Chickies; water on the far side of the garage goes into the Conestoga.

Since the government was considering a flood control project along the Chickies they made extra funds available for projects in the area which would help improve the water quality.



Scott Eberly, left, from the Soil Conservation Service, and Wilmer Gorff are on the access ramp to the new manure facility. At the far corner of the barn is the scraping apron just in front of the lower retaining wall. This area formerly was a steep, wet, slope dropping into the background.

In the past two years a total of \$27,000 has been available for use just in the 23 square mile area designated as part of the Chickies Creek watershed.

This money is in addition to the cost sharing funds available for use elsewhere in Lancaster County. And the rate is slightly higher.

Farmers are allowed 80

percent sharing for high priority projects and 40 percent for lower priority projects.

All funds for this year have been allocated.

On December 17 more money should become available for use through the regular county program.

Whether more watershed money will be available to

Chickies Creek area farmers will have to await developments.

But for the Groffs and the government, the money is well spent. The Chickies Creek watershed will be a bit less prone to runoff problems and the Groffs will be in a better position to keep their cows, and themselves, contented.

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