

*Farmer loses cows, hogs, chickens*

# Fire collapses barn in minutes

TURBOTVILLE — The intense blaze destroyed the large bank barn in a matter of minutes, reported Assistant Fire Chief Jeff Webb, of the Turbotville Volunteer Fire Company.

The barn fire occurred on a Northumberland County farm owned by Donald Rovenolt, R2 Watsonstown.

"Even though we were only five minutes away from the scene, the barn was a total loss upon our arrival," Webb said. The volunteer firemen of Turbotville were all at a practice session at the station when the call

came in at 8:27 p.m. on Tuesday evening.

The fire was discovered by Albert Brown, a livestock hauler who had arrived at the farm to pick up hogs from the Amish farmer, David Hostetler. Brown turned in the alarm.

Firemen from Turbotville, Watsonstown, and McEwensville were able to contain the blaze to the large bank barn. They saved a 20 x 60 wagon shed which was 30 feet from the fire.

"We weren't able to save any of the livestock, and Hostetler's attempts to free the animals were halted

because of the intense heat," noted Webb. A tragic loss of 50 Holstein cows, 110 hogs, and about 25 chickens and ducks resulted.

The assistant fire chief added that around ten cows had managed to get out of the barn before it collapsed. But at least one of the animals had to be destroyed.

Along with the livestock, Hostetler lost two-thirds of his farm machinery when the barn floor collapsed.

Webb noted the damage estimate came to \$100,000 on the barn, and \$125,000 on the contents, coming to a total of \$225,000.

He said the fire chief did not consider the fire to be of a suspicious nature, but the state police fire marshal has been called in to investigate.

Webb explained the barn went up in flames so fast because it was an old barn, very dry and dusty. "It was highly combustible, and the fire was helped by the fact that one of the large barn doors had come off the hinges and was left open. The draft created by this situation fanned the flames; and once the fire had burned a hole in the roof, the barn burned in seconds." SM



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## Corn stalks offer cheap erosion control

LANCASTER — More Lancaster County farmers are baling up corn residues for fodder than ever before. However, those that are leaving these residues in the field are finding that they offer surprising erosion control, and are very inexpensive to maintain, so stated Edward Petrus of the U.S.D.A. Soil Conservation Service.

"In fact," says Petrus, "maximum crop residue, combined with little or no soil disturbance in preparing seedbeds, can reduce water erosion by 95 percent."

Each piece of residue, it seems, acts as a tiny shield, protecting the soil from the impact of raindrops.

But just how much residue is enough to be effective?

"The more residue the better the protection," says Petrus. "At least 1500 lbs. per acre must be left as a minimum. Real protection begins taking place at about 3600 lbs. per acre, which, in a chisel-disk system, should control erosion on slopes up to 6 percent and 200 feet long, if tilled and planted on the contour; 5,000 lbs. per acre will control erosion on most slopes up to 8 percent when corn is planted on the contour."

In order for farmers to estimate the amount of residues left in their fields, SCS recommends the following method:

Place a yardstick on the soil surface, perpendicular to the plant row. Count the number of inch marks that have residue under them.

If any point has two or more pieces of residue, count that point twice. For example, if you have 36-inch rows and 18 of the inch marks have residue under them, you would have 50% coverage.

Take readings several places in the field and average them.

The following table roughly changes per cent of corn residue to pounds per acre:

45 percent cover	=1500 lbs./acre
65 percent cover	=2500 lbs./acre
83 percent cover	=3600 lbs./acre
93 percent cover	=5000 lbs./acre

Petrus points out that corn stalks offer the most protection if they are shredded, disked, or chiseled onto the soil surface as soon after harvest is practicable.

It is also recommended that an extra 20 pounds of nitrogen per ton of residue be used in the fertilizer mix, since some nitrogen will have been lost through decomposition.

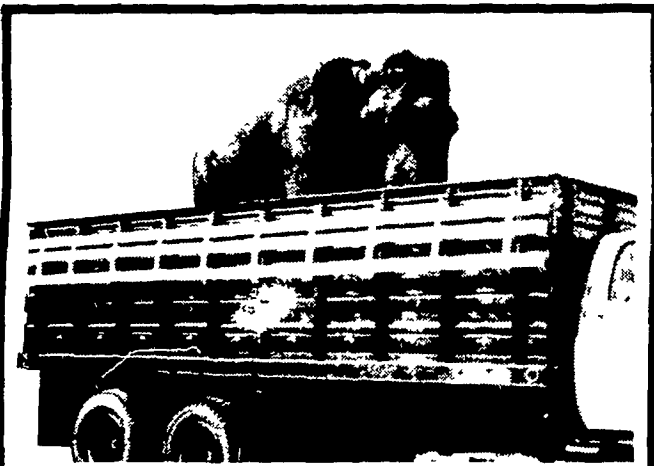
Crop residues alone will not solve all erosion

problems. They must be used in combination with other conservation practices such as contour farming, stripcropping, terraces, etc.

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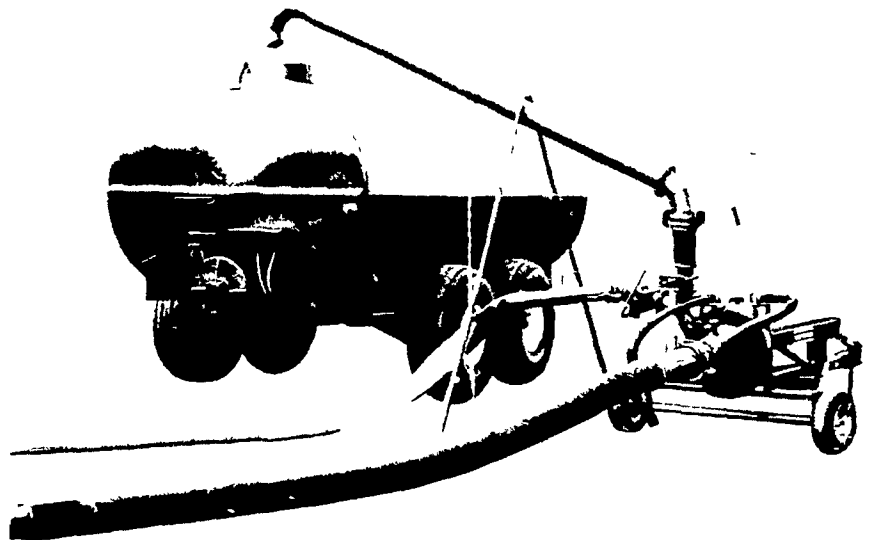
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