

duty

# Conservationists say saving soil

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the rains came in January and the ground was frozen, that terrace was almost plumb full of water. That's when I knew they (Soil Conservation Service technicians) knew what they were doing when they designed it."

Roy echoed Jim's enthusiasm of

the terraces ability to hold back the runoff water. He recounted an experience when the terraces made the difference.

"During a winter storm when the ground was frozen, the terraces filled up with runoff water and held it for 3 days, letting it out slowly. Without those terraces, that water

would have runoff the farm in a couple hours

"And, during the summer of 1977, the new house downstream from us had its furnace flooded out two times in storms where we got 3 inches of rain in 30 minutes — that was before the terraces were installed — it wouldn't happen now."

Jim pointed out the location of the new chicken house, constructed last summer, would have been impossible before the terraces were installed on the fields behind the buildings.

"Water used to come off those fields in a stream every time it rained, and it would have run right through the middle of the house," he said.

Since the terraces were installed, what changes in cultivation practices were needed? According to Jim, the terraces forced him to "learn to drive in circles and to plow up hill to keep the terrace ridge built up."

Although they keep the moldboard plow around for some plowing, Roy and Jim pointed out they've made the switch to chisel plowing in the past three years.

"Chiseling lets more trash on the field and doesn't let the water run off as quick, especially in the winter," noted Jim. He added they also seed cover crops of rye on the corn acreage harvested for the trench silo.

Roy added farming fields with terraces on them means farming a lot of short rows. "But," he emphasized, "I'd rather do a few more short rows than be bouncing over gutters."

What did it cost for the 1.6 miles of terraces, 1400 feet of tile drains, 600 feet of waterway, and 600 feet of diversion?

In ball park figures, Jim figured it cost about \$17,000 for the con-

servation work. He pointed out, however, seventy-five percent of the cost was paid by the federal Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service.

"The big thing is we're saving our soil," said Roy. "We're not watching our valuable top soil wash down the stream."

"Maybe Jim's kids might see those terraces pay for themselves — I can't put a finger on the worth of top soil."

In summing up the reasons for practicing conservation farming, Jim said, "You can't farm on subsoil."

## Grangers oppose rural electric changes

HARRISBURG — Proposed changes by the federal government in the Rural Electrification Administration's loan programs, expected to result in significant rate increases, have prompted action by the Pennsylvania State Grange.

The state Grange, which represents over 44,000 rural Pennsylvanians, supports REA's loan program in its present form.

"Dairy farmers across the United States are being asked to forego any price increase in milk supports at this time," Charles Wismer, state Grange Master, said. "Therefore, I believe if we want them to survive, we have to do everything in our power to protect them from energy increases in the future."

Under President Reagan's proposal, Rural Electric Cooperative no longer will be allowed to borrow money through the Federal Financing Bank. As a result, these cooperatives will have to borrow money elsewhere at higher interest rates. Interest rates on present loans are expected to increase by 1.25 percent as of October 1, 1981, and Pennsylvania Rural Electric

Cooperatives predict this could mean \$65.9 million added onto present electric bills in rural parts of the state.

The President also proposes slashing in REA-Insured Loan Program by \$350 million in the next fiscal year, resulting in limited new construction or overall rate increases.

Wismer said these changes will hit hard on rural customers because rural electric companies only average 4.6 consumers per mile of line. By comparison, private companies average 35.8 consumers per mile of line.

In a letter addressed to U.S. Senators and Congressmen, Wismer wrote "The proposed changes really would not reduce the federal budget one dollar because neither REA loan program is a federal budgetary expenditure."

"Over the years, REA has really improved the standard of living for rural Pennsylvania and has also contributed very much to the low cost of food because our Pennsylvania farmers rely on electric energy to run these farms," he concluded.



Jim were presented with the District's Outstanding day evening. During an on-air look over their conscheduled practices will be

"That first terrace was so high," recalled Jim, "I felt it was ridiculous. But last winter when

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This metal riser allows the surface runoff carried in the cropland terrace channel to enter underground pipes. The excess water is safely carried in the drains to a stream where it is outletted.

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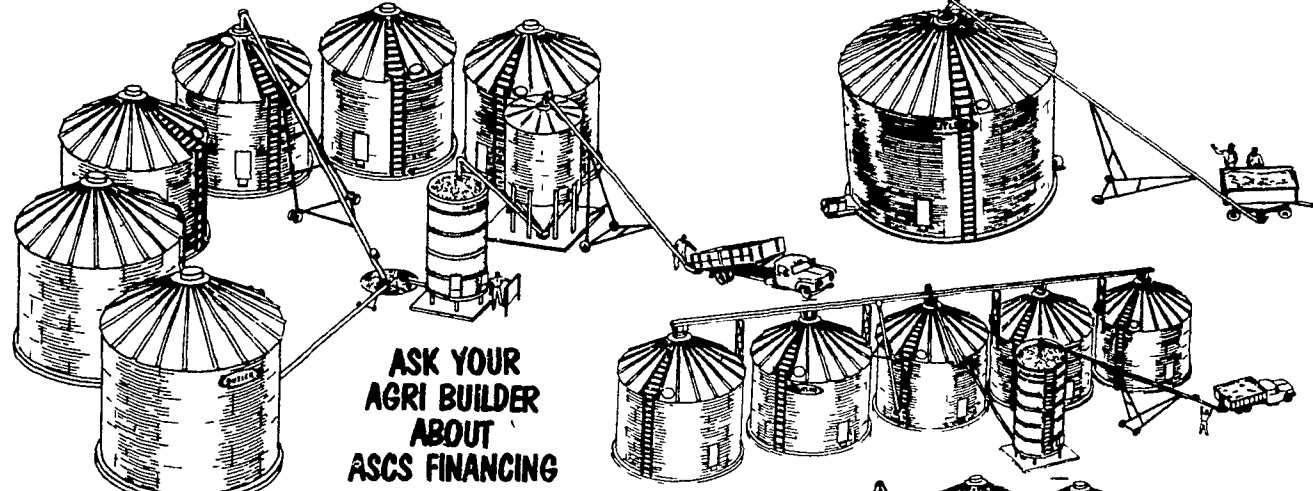
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