

Sign-up begins for Conestoga headwaters project

LANCASTER — Henry Eby, Star Route, Terre Hill, became the first farmer to sign up this week in the \$1.9 million federal program to clean up the headwaters of the Conestoga in the northeastern section of Lancaster County.

Eby, who farms 98 acres on the western boundary of East Earl Township, plans to install terraces, piping and a diversion ditch to control surface runoff on his farm.

As part of his steer-feeding operation, Eby grows corn, tobacco, wheat and grass on a rotation basis. The cost-sharing project may begin when the tobacco is taken off in August.

Sign-up was opened this week by the Lancaster Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service for applications in the cost-sharing project to improve water quality in the Conestoga headwaters area.

The Lancaster County ASC Committee will be administering the \$1.9 million recently approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture under the Rural Clean Water Program.

Funds will be provided to assist farmers in the project area to install improved management

practices to reduce agricultural pollution.

The federal funds will cover 50 to 75 percent of the cost of installing the improved practices, with a maximum limit of \$50,000 per farm over the 10-year life span of the project.

Farmers within the project area may file a request for assistance at the ASCS Office in the Farm and Home Center.

The project area, located in the northeast section of Lancaster County north and east of Ephrata and east of Blue Ball, contains some 110,000 acres and about 1250 farms.

Critical areas of the project, which are included in the cost-sharing program, include about 400 farms.

The Local Coordinating Committee for the project is most concerned with these critical areas, which have been identified as those farms adjacent to small tributaries, those having an animal unit density greater than 1.5 animal units per acre, and farms using high rates of commercially supplied nutrients and pesticides.

The primary sources of pollution in the project area are animal



Representatives of the Local Coordinating Committee for the Conestoga Headwaters Project in northeastern Lancaster County include, from the left, Bill Crawford, Farmers Home Administration; Don Robinson, adult farmer instructor, Eastern Lancaster County

School District; Tom Johnston, Lancaster County Conservation District; Warren Archibald, Soil Conservation Service; Ray Brubaker, ASCS Office; Aaron Stauffer, Lancaster County Conservation District; and Paul Kline, ASCS Committee.

wastes, commercial fertilizer, pesticides and sediments.

The Local Coordinating Committee includes various USDA agencies and local organizations.

The Soil Conservation Service will be providing technical

assistance in the field by designing and laying out practices and water quality systems.

The Lancaster County Extension Service will provide information and education for the public.

Also involved are the Lancaster

County Conservation District, Eastern Lancaster County School District's Vo-Ag Department, the Bureau of Forestry, Farmers Home Administration and the Lancaster County Planning Commission.

Kentucky study looks at N stabilization

NEWARK, Del - What's the best way to stabilize fertilizer nitrogen so that it can be used more effectively in no-till corn?

Results of a 5-year study on silt loam soils in Kentucky conducted by scientists at the University of Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station recently released information on work conducted at 4 locations on soils of this type that are generally wet in the spring.

"A key factor in these tests was N-Serve and the way it was used," reports University of Delaware Extension agronomist William Mitchell. "When mixed with the

soil, this chemical slows down the shifting of nitrogen fertilizer to nitrate, a form in which nitrogen is always on the 'go'. It will go down into the soil with heavy rains and it will come back toward the surface as the soil dries.

"If rains don't leach it down too far, the upward movement on drying may take it back up into the root zone," he says. But if the soil is wet for 2 to 3 days, the nitrogen may go into the air. In most cases this shifting about of N in its nitrate forms results in fertilizer losses and a low level of recovery

by corn plants.

N-Serve can kill the soil organisms that cause this shift to nitrates, says the specialist.

"In the presence of this chemical N remains in its ammonium form for a longer period and is much less likely to either leach beyond the root zone or volatilize as a gas," says Mitchell.

But N-Serve itself is volatile and is generally incorporated into the soil immediately after application.

The question is, how do you use it effectively with no-till corn?

In the Kentucky tests, N-Serve

was mixed with nitrogen fertilizers (urea and ammonium nitrate) at the rate of 1 quart per acre and the mixture broadcast on fields where tall fescue was used as a no-tillage mulch. The mulch was killed with Paraquat and it is assumed that the N-Serve coated nitrogen sifted down through the mulch to the soil surface.

"Best results from this treatment came when the soil remained wet for 2 to 3 days following application of nitrogen fertilizer," Mitchell reports. "In a 3-year test where annual N application rates

averaged 130 pounds, N-Serve increased the yield of corn about 15 bushels which was a nice return for \$5 worth of product."

He says the Kentucky scientists weren't certain why the product worked so well without being incorporated, but suggested that coating the fertilizer particles with N-Serve was preferable to mixing it with the soil, in which case the two ingredients wouldn't be as closely associated. Another possibility was the decreased volatility achieved by the no-tillage mulch.



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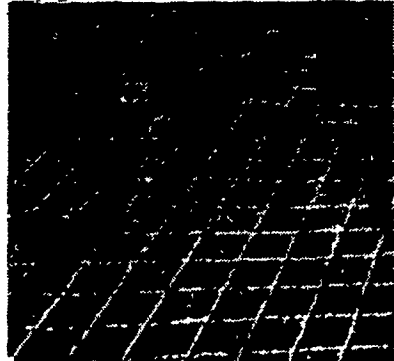
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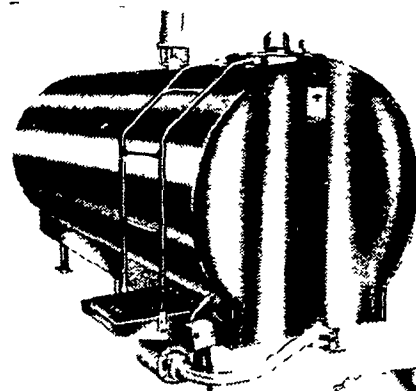
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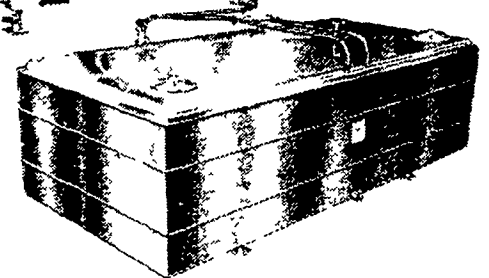
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