

Soil loss can be computed

HARRISBURG — When soil conservationists tell farmers that their fields are losing soil at a certain rate, they are not making a guess. It is a statement based on research and over 40 years of use, reports John Spitzer, Agronomist for the USDA Soil Conservation Service.

Developing equations to calculate field soil loss began about 1940 in the corn belt. In 1946, efforts began to adapt the formula to other sections of the Nation. In 1952, the USDA Soil Conservation Service in the Northeastern States began to use the formula that has become widely accepted. It is commonly called the Universal Soil Loss Equation (USLE).

Research on the formula was conducted through Federal-State cooperative projects in 27 states. One of the projects was at Penn State.

USLE is an erosion model designed to predict the long-time, average soil losses in runoff from specific field areas under specific cropping and management systems, noted Spitzer.

The equation will also compute the average soil loss for a multiple-crop system, for a specific crop in a rotation, or for a particular cropstage period in a given crop

year. Six factors are fed into the formula. Spitzer identified the factors in simple terms as (1) rainfall and runoff - includes factors for snowmelt and applied water such as irrigation; (2) soil erodibility - varies with each type of soil; (3) slope length - the longer the slope, the higher the erodibility; (4) slope steepness - the steeper the slope, the higher the erosion; (5) cover and management - open tilled crops are more erosive than close tilled or sod; and (6) support practices - such as contour stripcropping, conservation tillage, terraces, etc., as compared to uphill and downhill farming.

Spitzer cautioned that the formula data is not absolute; however, it is the best information of this type that is available. In research studies where actual soil erosion plot measurements were compared to USLE, in 53% of the cases, the difference was less than one ton per acre; in 84% of the cases, the difference was less than two tons per acre.

Presently, soil conservationists use a slide rule type soil loss calculator to compute soil loss on visits with farmers. Spitzer predicted that the time is coming when the conservationist will use a

portable computer to forecast soil loss.

SCS conservationists are experimenting with computer models which will predict not only soil loss, but when the soil is no longer profitable under certain crop and management systems. They will also determine exactly how much soil conserving practices cost per ton of soil saved.

"How much soil are you losing from your fields?" asks Spitzer. "It could be more than you think. Remember, soil erosion must reach about 14 tons per acre before it can be seen. If you can see erosion in your fields—you've got a problem."

Hints for special laundering

NEWARK, DEL. — Immediately after using a toxic spray for weeds or pests, both you and your clothing need to be cleaned thoroughly, says University of Delaware extension home economist Roxane Whittaker.

Remove all your clothes and isolate them in a sealed plastic bag or bucket with a lid. Keep them there until you are ready to launder. Meanwhile, shower and shampoo thoroughly.

Wash the contaminated clothing separately from other family laundry. Check the pesticide label and the garment care label for any specific washing instructions.

Choose a heavy-duty phosphate-based detergent and use the amount recommended on the box. Set the washing machine for the hot water temperature and long washing cycle you would use for heavily soiled garments. Do not overload the machine. Dry as usual.

Grain Inspection Service, Philadelphia. Other speakers include Bill Craig, Bay State Milling Co., Shiremanstown, to talk about "Wheat Quality—The Miller's Perspective" and Bill Griffith, Pestcon Systems, Inc., Shiremanstown, offering his opinion on "Grain Fumigation."

Following the seminar, the Grain Meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m. and will feature a special guest speaker, Lavon Daugherty, National Commercial Grain Specialist of Clayton Brokerage Co., St. Louis, Mo. Also, the program will include reports from PennAg officers.

Tickets are \$15.00 per person per program (lunch/dinner are included) and can be obtained from PennAg at (717) 733-2238.

Also, PennAg announces that its speaker for the 1983 convention in September will be Earl Butz, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture. He will discuss "There Is Still a Rainbow in Agriculture."

Clean the machine by running it a second time with detergent and water but no clothes. For added protection, wipe out the tub with isopropyl alcohol.

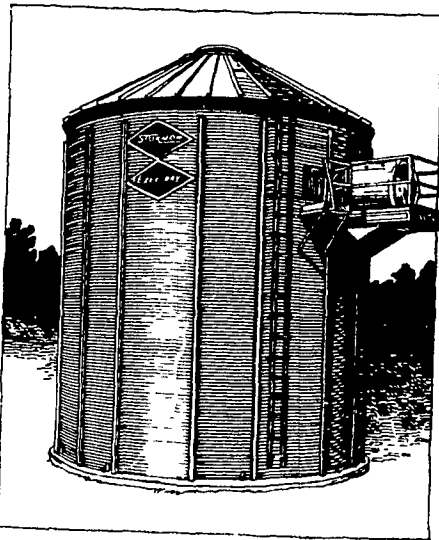
PennAg plans grain meeting



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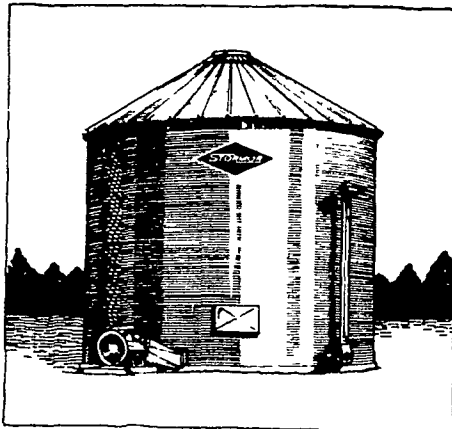
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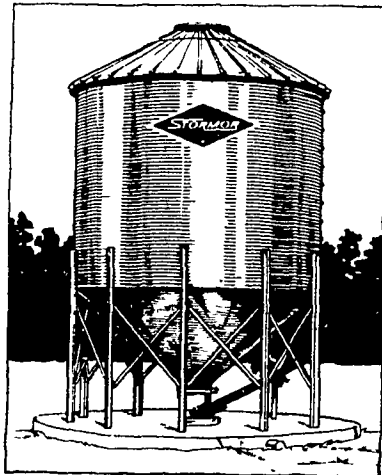
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