

Conservation practices control soil erosion, water

BY LAURA ENGLAND

QUARRYVILLE — Shortly after planting season and during the hot summer months, farmers look forward to cool showers to quench the thirst of growing crops. Water is indispensable on a farm, and for the most part, the more rain the better. However, too much of a good thing all of a sudden can be a hindrance as well as a help.

This was part of a problem a southern Lancaster County farm family was experiencing. Too much rain at one time, along with melting snows in the spring, created flooding problems and soil losses. The hilly farmland just wasn't equipped to direct the excess water away from buildings or from carrying away precious soil.

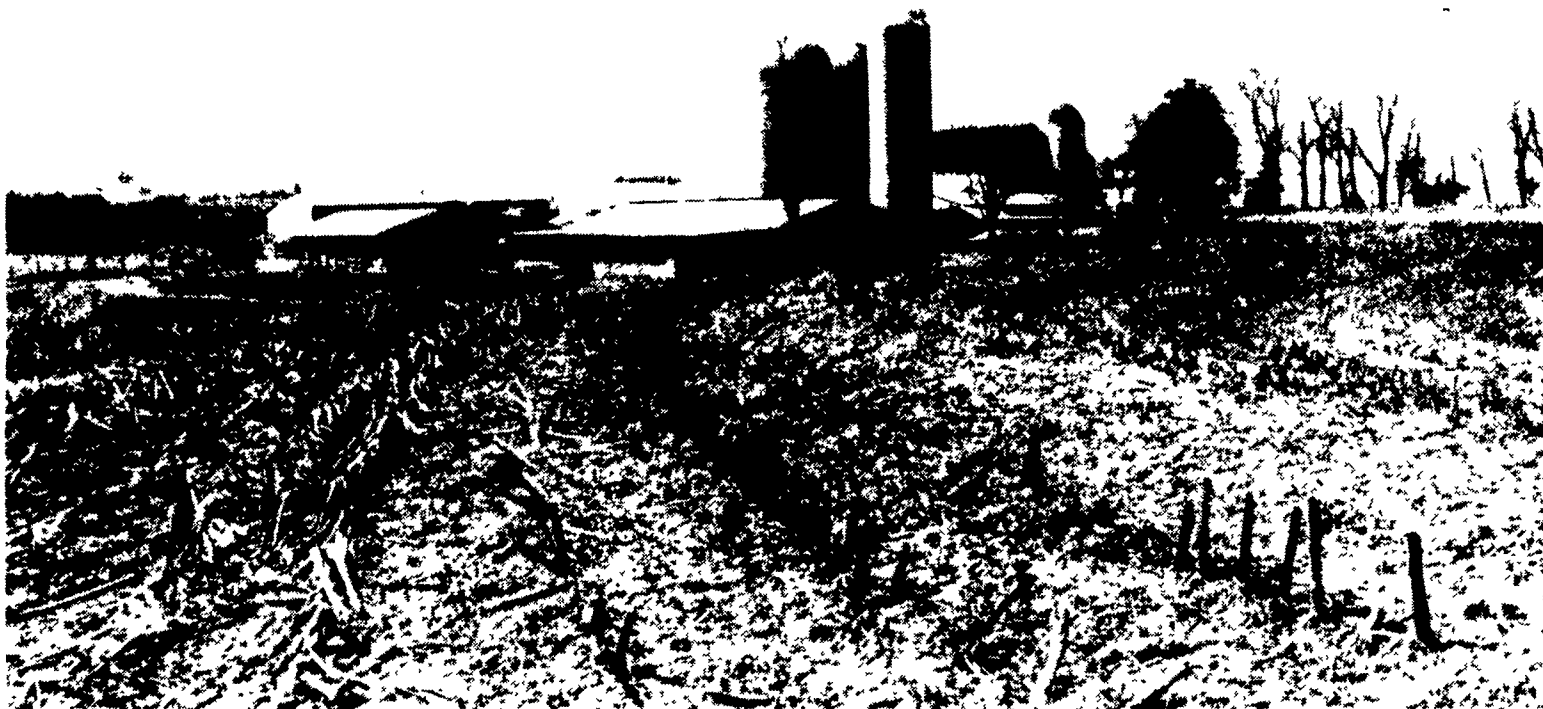
To correct the problem, Sam and Allen Kreider, R1 Quarryville, sought the help of the Lancaster County Conservation District. The brothers signed a request for conservation assistance for their 249 acres of farmland.

"We were interested in getting the water stopped," Sam said. "We wanted to stop the erosion down across the fields."

That request was signed in March 1950. Since then, Sam and Allen have seen many changes in their dairy farm operation and have realized the benefits of carefully planned conservation practices.

One significant change in the Kreider operation was the creation of a corporation. Sam's son Herb and Allen's son Scott joined the farm business, which is now S. & A. Kreider & Sons Inc. The operation includes 435 acres, with an additional 115 rented acres, and a 200-cow Holstein herd.

With most of the farmland resting on hilly terrain, the Kreiders have implemented several conservation measures designed to cut down flooding and soil erosion. One of the first projects completed by the conservation district was a terrace



Problems with flooding waters and soil erosion are under control on the S. & A. Kreider & Sons Farm, R1 Quarryville. In 1950, the family signed a request with the Lancaster County

built around Sam's house and farm buildings to control water.

The problem with flooding water from the fields was so bad at times, Herb said, that "heavy rains would create a creek which ran down through the yard."

Terraces and waterways have been the major conservation measures on the Kreider farm. As Scott explained, the waterways are established before the terrace is actually built. Kentucky 31 Tall Fescue Redtop is used for the sod waterway, he said, and the terrace is built the following season.

The earlier terraces built on the farm were simple structures complete with waterways. The

standards today have changed, Scott said, and pipe outlet waterways are constructed.

Pipe outlet sizes on the Kreider farm range from four to 12 inches in diameter, with the largest terrace equipped with the 12-inch pipe. Water from the fields is directed through the pipes to Jackson Run Creek, a branch of the Conowingo Creek, Scott explained.

"The pipe outlets work real well," Scott said. "We don't lose ground in the waterway because the pipes act like a reservoir. The water runs off slow."

Following the terraces and waterways, the Kreiders placed all their farmland in contour strips. The land is on a hay to corn crop rotation with small grains also planted. Conventional and minimal tillage is used.

The conservation practices on the Kreider farm, according to conservation district records, include 4,300 feet of sod waterway, 12,375 feet of terracing, 2,021 feet of tile drain in conjunction with the pipe outlet terraces and 162 acres of contour strips. An earthen ag waste pit with a concrete floor has also been installed.

The manure pit operates as a liquid manure system, Scott said. It is cleaned every four and a half months, and the manure is hauled to the fields. The manure is worked into the ground and provides good fertilization, Scott added.

Overall, S. & A. Kreider & Sons

Conservation District to construct waterways and terraces and implement other conservation practices.

are pleased with their conservation measures. "I think the practices have worked out real well," Allen said. "We don't have a lot of erosion."

The practices have worked out well, and the Kreiders plan to continue their association with the Lancaster County Conservation District. Plans for 1984 include 3,000 more feet of sod waterway and 1,600 feet of tile with basin.

Because of their cooperation with the conservation district, the Kreiders were honored Thursday night as the 1983 Outstanding Conservation Cooperator winner. Their selection was unanimous, according to Bob Gregory of the conservation district, and was based on their extensive conservation activities and the correctness of these measures.

Gregory said that the conservation methods on the Kreider farm are "neat and clean, and everything is done correctly." No signs of erosion are evident, he added.

Two of the outstanding conservation features on the farm, Gregory said, are the original

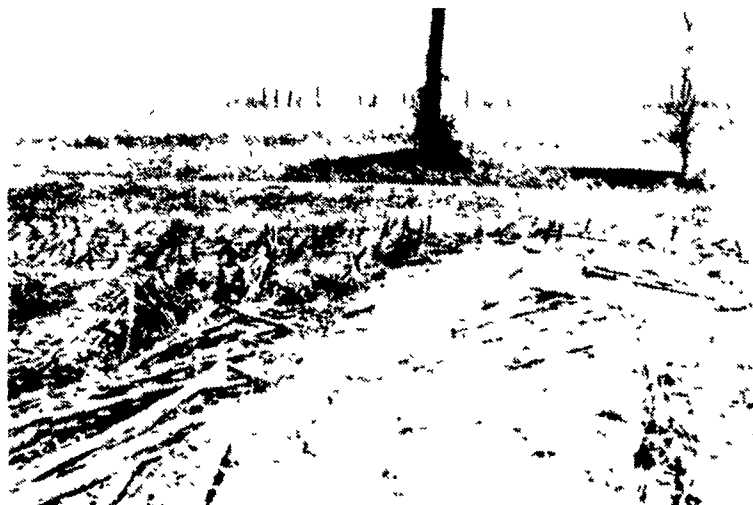
terrace built in 1950 and still functioning and a roadside waterway. The waterway prevents roadbank erosion, he said.

Although the conservation practices have been important to the Kreiders, the heart of their operation is their 200-cow dairy operation. The Kreiders milk their cows in a 13-stall rotary parlor which they used for the first time on Valentine's Day 1975.

The cows are divided into three milking groups and are fed a complete ration at a bunk feeder. Feeding is done four times daily. Long stem hay is also fed.

In addition to the time spent on daily farm chores, the Kreiders find time for church and others organizations. All are members of the Mechanics Grove Church of the Brethren, the Pa. Holstein Association and the Pa. Farmers Association.

Not to put aside their conservation interests, Sam has also served for 20 years as an Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) Community Committeeman.



The terrace on the right is one of three in this field that leads to a roadside waterway.



Scott Kreider, left, and his children Amy, 2, Laurie, 4, and Nathan, 5, demonstrate the sloping effect of this terrace and waterway complete with a pipe outlet.



Scott Kreider points out one of the pipe outlets used to direct excess water off the fields.