

## Study shows soil erosion worst on rented land

LEBANON — Muddy water in a stream is not just a loss of farmland soil, but of fertilizer, manure, pesticides and insecticides, as well, reports Donald Bollinger, Chairman of the Lebanon County Conservation District.

"This is money lost to the farmer", adds Bollinger. "It also creates problems for all downstream water users."

The soil erosion problem is more severe on rented land than on owner-operated land. A Dauphin County study found that 40 percent of the farmland in the county was rented. Soil loss on owner-operated farmland was 6.9 tons per acre per year and on rented land was 9.8 tons per acre.

"Conditions are similar in this county," said Bollinger. Directors of the Lebanon Conservation District are making a special effort to inform renters and rentees of this soil loss.

"Most farmland rentals are on a

cash basis," Bollinger added. "The renter may feel he is making money on his land rental. In reality, when the soil erosion losses are subtracted from the rental, the owner may be losing money on his investment. An approximate ten tons-per-acre annual soil loss will quickly wear out the soil, decreasing the total value of the land."

The Conservation District directors are concerned over these soil erosion and water quality problems. "All of us can benefit from this effort to make land renters more aware of soil and nutrient losses," notes Bollinger.

Mr. Bollinger urges the owners of rented farm land to contact the Conservation District Office. Technical and financial help is available through cooperating U.S. Department of Agriculture Agencies. The District Office is located in Suite 5, 201 Cumberland Street, Lebanon or call 272-3377.

## Paying attention to detail

(Continued from Page D21)

and Bill are also concerned with these risks. But, in order to feed a herd of cattle, risks must be taken.

As all farmers are aware, the raising of crops involves many risks. The Ja-Jo Farm consists of a total of 200 acres in which 70 acres of alfalfa are planted, 80 acres of corn, and the rest consists of small grains. Jim and Bill buy the majority of their straw, which is their major bedding material. These crops harvest enough feed for the 100 head of cattle that are raised here.

Many of today's farmers expand so they are able to compete in the market place. The Comptons have taken a different strategy. Maintaining a quality herd of cattle has brought them where they are today and will take them to where they plan to go in the future. The persistence and hard

work of both Jim and Bill Compton seem to be the two key characteristics to maintaining their quality Holstein herd.



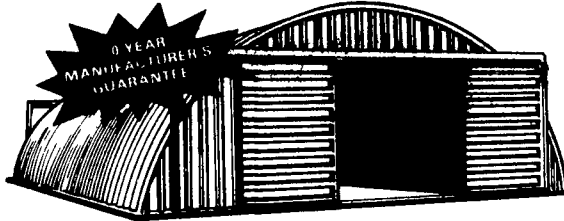
The Compton family reviews their DHIA records which indicate the herd's rapid rise in production. From left are: Bill Mary Jo, with granddaughter Rebecca, Cheryl, and Jim.

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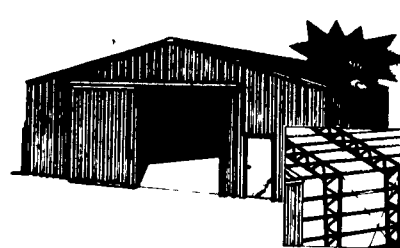
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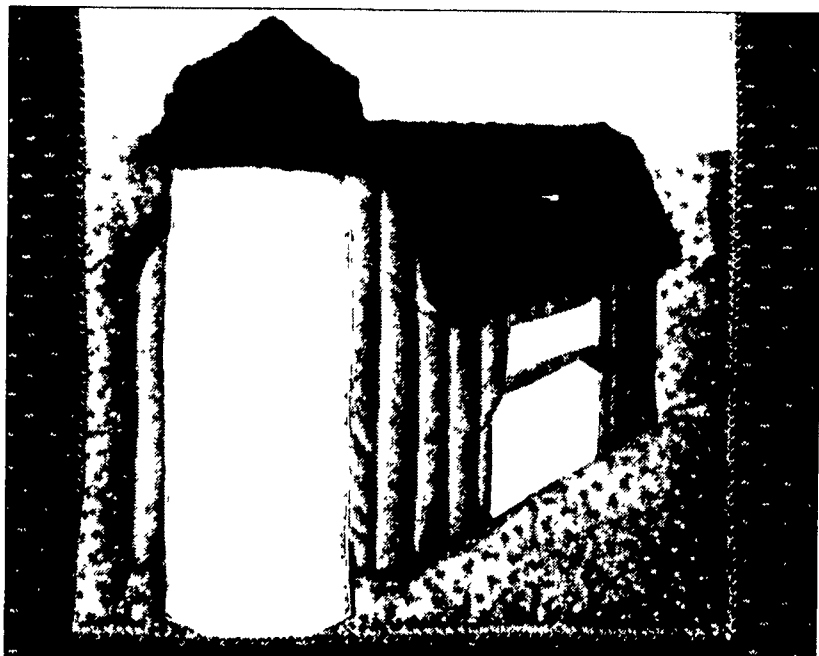
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