

Berks County tour

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"This is one of the systems we recommend," stated Roy Shryock, conservation technician with the Soil Conservation Service. Shryock referred to the holding pond for the animal wastes. "The concrete ramp is included so he can either haul it out or pump it," he added.

The farm of Lynn Stoudt, R1, Bernville, was also visited to view his brassica plantings. One of the original cooperators in the brassica demonstration trials, Stoudt was pleased with the results he got from his turnips, rape, and swede plantings.

Some problems with residual herbicides and insects were experience with the crop being planted on June 23. Stoudt utilized the crop for greenchop for his dairy herd and also used it for grazing. Some of the brassicas were ensiled in ag bags with good results, although no yield measurements are available yet.

Harry Schaeffer, extension service, reported that fertilizer must be used for a good crop and added that on the three dairy farms using brassicas, "either consistant milk production or increases resulted."

Stoudt reported his expenses to be \$53.00 per acre for fertilizer and \$8.00 per acre for seed. No herbicides or insecticides were used.

The mushroom house and production facilities of G & G Mushrooms, Womelsdorf, were



Concrete waterers and highway dividers are seen at Concrete Safety System.

also visited by the farmers. Nancy Young, tour guide, explained some of the mushroom processes.

There are five "breaks" or crops of mushrooms to a planting, she explained. They must be picked every day when they reach the right stage. Mushrooms should be picked while the tops are still closed and whiteness is a sign of freshness.

Young also explained the numbers seen laying on the many baskets of mushrooms. "If pickers pick more than three baskets an hour," she explained, "they get more money."

This plant grows approximatley 85,000 to 90,000 pounds a week, over three million a year, according to Young. Sixteen houses are used and strict procedures and care

must be taken to grow a quality product. For the farmer's interest, Young added that the electric bill in the summer time when the air conditioners are going to keep the mushrooms growing, are usually around \$18,000.00 a month.

The final stop on the tour was the Concrete Safety Systems plant in Bethel. Cattlequards, feed bunks, stock tanks, and waterers were viewed with explanations from the guide on their application. Water tanks for spring fed systems and freeze-proof waterers were studied for their use in conservation practices.

Views of the fall foliage completed the trip on the way back to the Berks County Ag Center. Under consideration for 1985 is the possibility of an air tour to view additional conservation practices.



Harry Schaeffer explains brassicas on Lynn Stoudt farm, R1 Bernville.



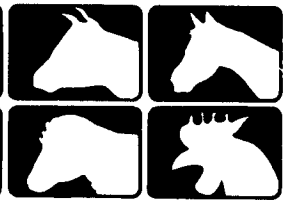
Swedes (Swedish turnip or rutabaga) can grow pretty big under good conditions.

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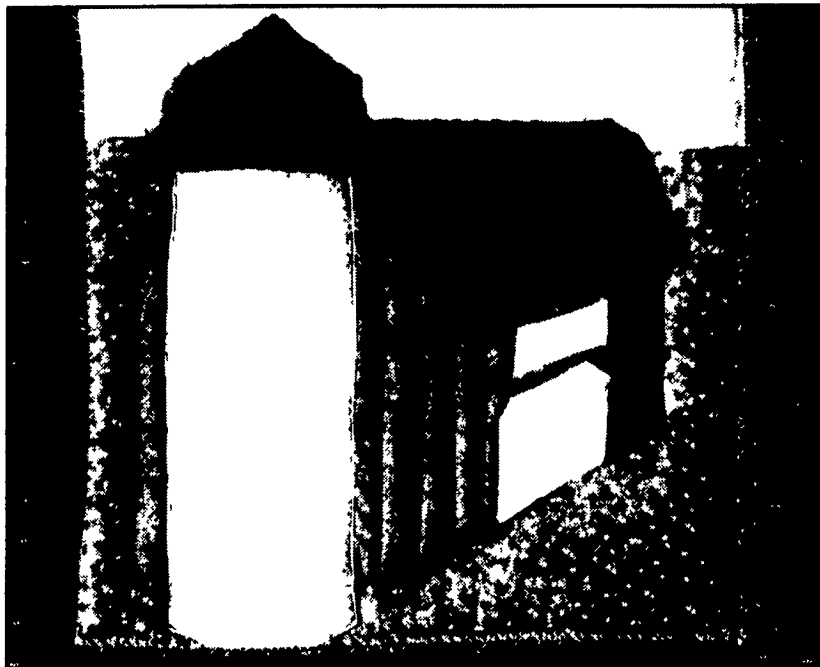
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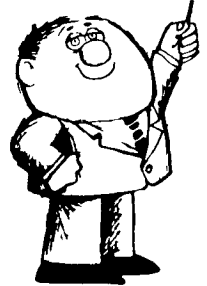


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