

# Lampeter Farmer To Demonstrate Slit Till System

BY JACK HUBLEY

With the corn crop disappearing from the fields, many farmers should be turning their attention to methods of keeping their valuable topsoil in place during the winter and spring months when bare ground is particularly vulnerable to erosion.

About 12 years ago, Herb Myer

of Lampeter began employing a system he calls slit tillage to get the job done. Since that time, he claims to have reduced erosion and improved his soil's tilth and ability to retain moisture without sacrificing yields.

Myer slit tills his fields using a modified chisel plow with half the teeth removed and the wide chisel

shovels replaced with two-inch-wide teeth. The unit cuts five slits 30 inches apart and about 12 to 15 inches deep.

Following last year's corn harvest, Myer slit tilled about 100 acres. Prior to planting corn during the first two weeks in May, he disked the fields lightly, "just enough to level the ridges and close the slits on top," he says.

After checking his yields at a number of field locations, Myer found that his harvest varied from 172 to 191 bushels per acre for the entire farm. "It's really the best crop I ever had," he says.

Myer credits the slits with helping him through the summer drought by retaining more moisture. "My corn didn't wilt down as quick during the dry spell this summer," he points out. And even though heavy rains doused the farm in the early spring and later in the summer, he can find no evidence of erosion.

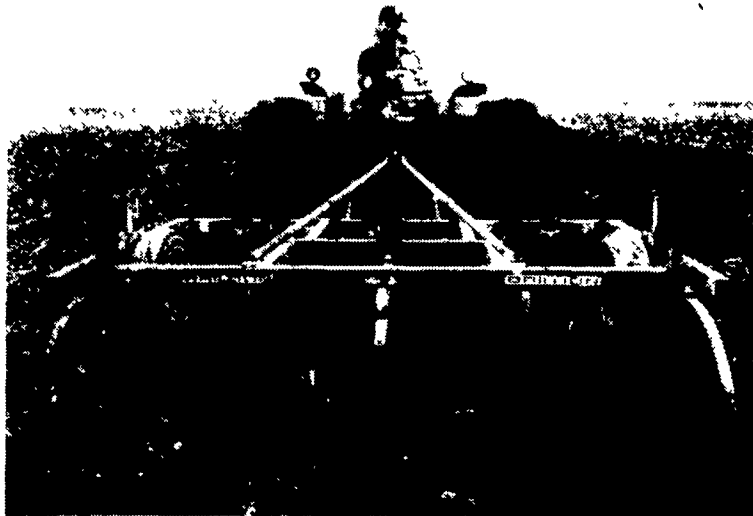
In addition to controlling erosion and maintaining soil moisture, Myer says slit tillage is a money saver, since it takes less horsepower to drag his slit plow through the soil.

Myer isn't the only one sold on slit tillage. Convinced that more

farmers should give it a try, the Lancaster County Conservation District is currently building a slit till plow that will be available to county farmers on a free trial basis. The modified Brillion chisel plow will be ready by Nov. 1, according to district spokesman Amos Funk. The unit can be used free of charge on five acres or less and can be towed with a pickup. "We want to have as many people as possible try it," says Funk.

Farmers interested in learning more about slit tillage should plan to attend a field demonstration on Myer's farm on Oct. 28, beginning at 1 p.m. The farm is located one-half mile east of Lampeter on Route 741.

For more information on using the conservation district's slit till plow contact Gerald Hiestand at the district's office located in the Lancaster Farm and Home Center, phone 299-5361.



Lancaster County farmer Herb Myer says his slit till method is the answer to erosion problems. He'll explain why at a demonstration on Oct. 28 at his farm.

## September Milk Priced At \$12.79

NEW YORK — Dairy farmers who supplied milk plants regulated under the New York-New Jersey marketing orders during September 1986 will be paid on the basis of a uniform price of \$12.79 per hundredweight, 27.5 cents per quart.

Market Administrator Thomas A. Wilson also stated that the price was \$12.46 in August 1986 and \$12.37 in September 1985. The uniform price is a marketwide weighted average of the value of farm milk used for fluid and manufactured dairy products.

This included differentials required to be paid to dairy farmers but not voluntary premiums or deductions authorized by the farmer.

Regulated milk dealers used 398 million pounds of milk for Class I, 43.6 percent of the total. This milk is used for fluid milk products such as homogenized, flavored, low test, and skim milks. For September 1986, handlers paid \$13.61 per hundredweight, 29.3 cents per quart, for Class I milk compared with \$13.35 a year ago.

The seasonal incentive fund returned a total of \$4,173,880.98, or \$.457 per hundredweight, to the dairy farmers' uniform price for September. This fund was generated by reducing the uniform price paid to producers during the high-production spring months.

A total of 15,569 dairy farmers supplied the New York-New Jersey Milk Marketing Area with 913 million pounds of milk during September 1986. This was a decrease of 1.9 percent, about 18 million pounds, from last year. The gross value to dairy farmers for milk deliveries was \$119 million.

The balance, 514,949,943 pounds or 56.4 percent, was used to manufacture Class II products including butter, cheese, ice cream, and yogurt. Handlers paid \$11.61 per hundredweight for this milk.

The uniform price is based on milk containing 3.5 percent butterfat. For September 1986, there was a price differential of 17.7 cents for each one tenth of one percent that the milk tested above or below the 3.5 percent standard.

All prices quoted are for bulk tank milk received from farms in the 201-210 mile zone from New York City.

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