

Soil Conservation Protects Sludge Applications

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HARRISBURG —A Northampton County (PA) landowner is managing his farmland differently from most others. Henry Yeska, Sr., Georgetown Road, Nazareth, quit farming in 1964 and went into the cleaning and hauling of waste from home sewage disposal systems. He uses the farmland as a disposal area for the waste.

His 170 acres of farmland is rented to two farmers. Not so unusual except that Henry, with help from the Northampton Conservation District, puts in the soil and water conservation practices instead of the renters. He has two purposes for the practices.

One of his workers said that Henry would almost cry when he

saw soil wash off his farm in a hard storm. In addition, the practices will keep the sewage sludge from getting off the farm.

Saving soil is the prime reason for the conservation practices. Technical help was obtained from the USDA Soil Conservation Service. Terraces and stone and sod waterways protect over half the cropland. Additional terraces are being installed in 1987, reports Barry Frantz, SCS, District Conservationist.

Sewage sludge is injected into corn stubble after the ground thaws in the spring and after small grain in the fall. When weather and soil conditions permit, sludge is surface applied in the summer and chiseled into the soil within 24 hours.

A one million gallon lagoon has been built to store the waste until application time.

Record keeping and soil and nutrient testing are important parts of Henry's management program. Detailed records are kept of all sludge applications. All records are sent to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources (DER) monthly. DER inspects his operation at least twice per year.

Based on soil and nutrient tests, up to 30,000 gallons of sludge can be applied per acre annually, states Henry.

He adds that there is considerable proof that his operation is successful. The terraces and waterways survived a nine-inch rain in September of 1986. An almost similar rainfall in December

resulted in only clear water leaving the farm.

Henry adds that there is now no soil deposited around the road culverts and even the amount of water running off the land has decreased.

Another sign that Henry is doing a good job is shown in his proud declaration that he has had no complaints from nearby residents.

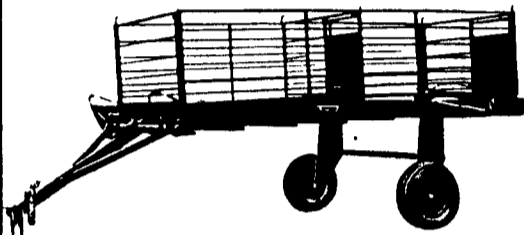
Perhaps the best proof is the recognition received from other conservation farmers. He was named 'Northampton County Conservation Farmer of the Year' in 1985 by the Northampton Conservation District.

Henry Yeska demonstrates that love of the land and good management can solve even the more difficult resource management challenges.



Henry Yeska demonstrates love of the land and good management.

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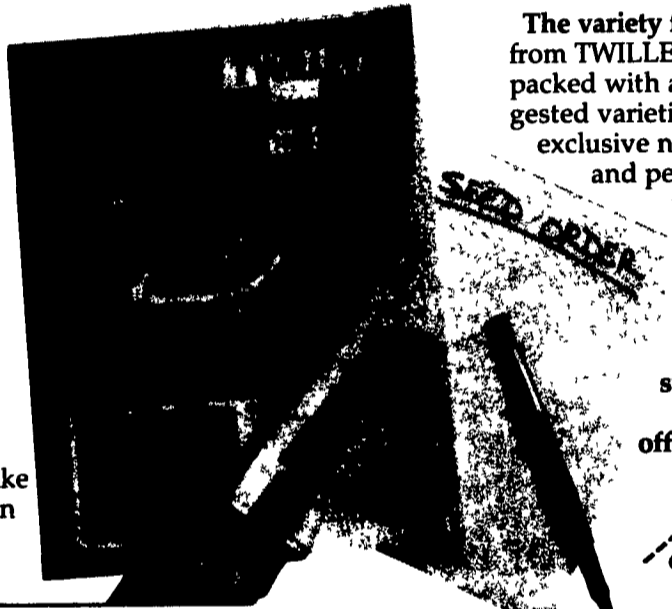
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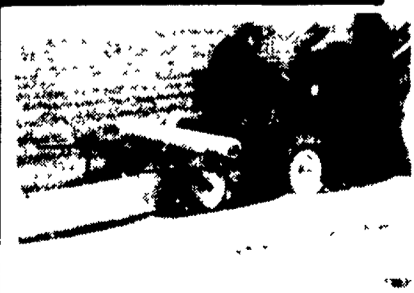
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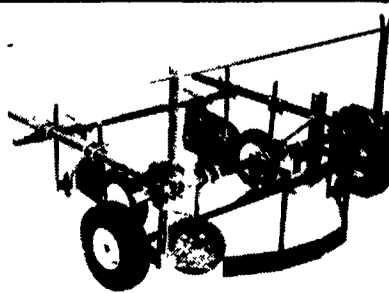
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