

Pennsylvania Farmers Union Elects Officers

LEESPORT (Berks Co.) — Uncontrolled surface water runoff can cut into your profits in any cropped field, states Randy McCormack, soil conservationist with the Soil Conservation Service. The little rills channeling water, fertilizer and lime off your fields in the spring become larger with each rainfall and sometimes become deep enough to interfere

with harvesting in the fall. One remedy for this problem is to farm the field in contour strips, alternating a hay strip or small grain strip with a strip of row crop. On a steeper sloping field, eight to fifteen percent, a diversion may also be needed. A diversion is a ridge built across the slope and is designed to divert and carry excess surface runoff to a safe out-

let, usually a waterway. By diverting the excess runoff away from your fields, you are shortening the length of the field and protecting the lower slopes from an accumulation of rainfall runoff. This will prevent any small gullies from forming and will keep your topsoil, fertilizer and lime where it belongs, on the field. A strip-cropping system will further control

any runoff rainfall that begins to accumulate below the diversion. The diversion, once constructed, is seeded to a grass hay mixture. The sod on the diversion protects the channel from erosion and provides cover for the berm. The diversion seeding may be managed for hay or green chop. A diversion will easily last 30 years or more, with proper maintenance.

The initial investment in construction of a diversion will be repaid in reduced soil losses, reduced fertilizer, lime and pesticide losses and in improved crop yields. For more information concerning diversions and other soil erosion control measures contact the U.S. Soil Conservation Service at the Berks County Agricultural Center in Bern Township.

Computers Not Widely Used By Farmers

EPHRATA (Lancaster Co.) — Less than three percent of U.S. farmers use computers for financial recordkeeping while 56 percent use general ledgers or notebooks.

Nearly 16 percent use some form of financial records work-

book. That leaves 25 percent using "other methods" of recordkeeping, including 14 percent who use the proverbial "shoebox" or some similar informal system of keeping receipts, invoices and bills of sale.

This information was gathered

in the annual Farm Costs and Returns Survey covering operations of calendar year 1987.

The survey is conducted each year by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service and its state offices.

Another finding in the survey

was that less than 12 percent of farmers subscribe to farm financial recordkeeping services. About two-thirds of such services are provided by accountants, the participants in the survey indicated.

Computer usage is not uniform throughout the farm sector. Nearly 15 percent of the operators of "large" farms (those with annual commodity sales of at least \$250,000) used computers in 1987 — and nearly 40 percent of that category used recordkeeping

services. Large farms accounted for 55 percent of all commodity receipts in 1987, according to economist Jim Johnson of USDA's Economic Research Service. Thus the three percent figure (the proportion of all farmers using computers) is not indicative of the amount of U.S. farm production coming from farms that use computers.

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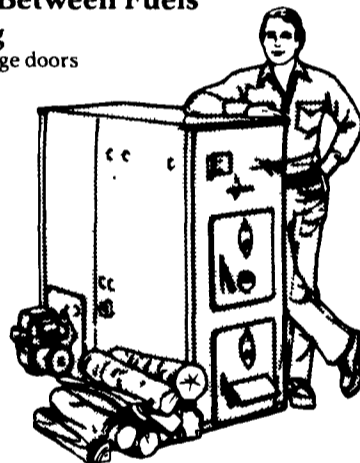
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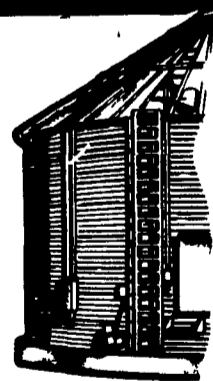
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