



The Berks Co. Conservation District placed flags to designate plow paths for contour strips on the farm operated by Larry Kehl, pictured here, and brother Lloyd. The Kehls were honored Monday night by the Berks Co. Conservation District for their conservation efforts.



Lloyd Kehl, left, and brother Larry stand atop the earthen mound that surrounds a manure holding pit constructed in 1981. Larry said that, more than any one project, the manure pit greatly contributed to farm profitability.

## Repairs To Farmland Net Recognition For Brothers

ANDY ANDREWS

Lancaster Farming Staff

LENHARTSVILLE (Berks Co.) — It certainly was rough going in the past. Holes in the ground. Mud trenches. It was dangerous going over the hilly fields if you were tilling or harvesting.

But thanks in part to conservation efforts — installing tiling systems, contour strips, and grass waterways — farming has become easier and more profitable for the Kehl Brothers (Larry and Lloyd) in the rolling hills of northern Berks Co.

The Kehls were recognized for their conservation efforts by the Berks Co. Soil Conservation District at a banquet Monday night.

Larry Kehl spoke about the difficulties of farming a great deal of marginal land, and the work in making the farmland more profitable.

### Dairy farm

The Kehls operate a 550-acre (tillable) dairy farm in three locations — one near Virginville, another in Lenhartsville, and another near Moselem Springs. They raise 85 (milking) head of Holstein cows, including 80 replacement young stock.

Crops grown include corn (200 acres), about 200 acres of hay, and 100 combined acres of oats and wheat. They milk from a free stall through a milking pipeline.

The brothers went into a partnership — Kehl Bros., Inc. — after they purchased the farm in 1985. They grew up in farming, ever since their father purchased his first farm in Moselem Springs in 1949.

Since then, the family has been involved with conservation through the district. "My dad always signed up for programs over the years, for as long as I can remember," said Kehl. "It was soon after that, when there was a program, sometimes he went with it, some years he didn't."

### Contour strips

In 1975, the Kehls built a lagoon to contain milk house waste. In 1981, the Kehls built a manure pit, using clay containment around a concrete base. Soon after that, the family installed tiles and placed more contour strips on the farmland.

Three years ago, said Kehl, the business went into a long-term agreement with one of the other farms. They removed fence rows in the smaller fields and installed contour strips with grass waterways. At the farm in Lenhartsville, a grass waterway was leveled and planted in August of last year.

Beforehand, he said, "you couldn't really get around much. You had to watch that you didn't get stuck here and there."

Last week, the district installed flags to mark the paths for an additional 50 acres of contour strips in Lenhartsville.

### 300 acres

Within the last seven years, approximately 300 acres of contour strips were installed on the entire farming operation.

"It just helps in the crop rotation," said Kehl. "That was my main concern. We put tiles in the area

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