

Plans Require Crop Residue

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Lehigh County Agents

To be eligible for USDA farm program benefits, farmers must have completely imple-

mented their own conservation plans for highly erodible fields by December 31, 1994.

Such conservation plans require that specified percentages of crop

residue be left on soil surfaces to reduce erosion and conserve soil moisture. If you have questions about your conservation plan, contact your county Soil

Conservation Service office.

Lynn Hoffman, Penn State extension agronomist, reminds us that residue management is not just no-till or mini-

mum-till or using a particular tillage tool. Residue management involves farming systems that operate in, and take advantage of, certain levels of soil surface

residue throughout the year. It requires the best use of tillage, planting, and harvesting equipment.

In addition, residue management makes it important for growers to understand the influ-

ence of crop residues on pesticide effectiveness and pest populations. Some pesticides are made less effective, and some pest populations are enhanced by residues. All of these factors increase the importance of careful planning to avoid excessive tillage or unwanted rotation changes.

Remember that the effectiveness of a tillage implement varies with travel speed, tillage depth, and size, shape and spacing of disks or teeth. Hoffman says stalk chopping increases by ten percent the amount of residue incorporated while moisture from a light shower or frost reduces incorporation.

Among tillage implements, mold board plows leave the least residue (0-10 percent) and no-till planters leave the most (80-90 percent). Chisel plows and disks are in-between, with cultimulchers and spring-foot harrows at the high-residue end of the range (60-70 percent).

As residue levels increase, pest problems tend to increase. Hoffman recommends that growers be alert for the following problems:

- Armyworm in corn planted in small grain stubble.
- Woody perennial weeds in long-term corn.
- Cutworm in fields with chickweed.
- Soil compaction from working in fields that are too wet.
- Gray leafspot in high-occurrence areas.
- Colder soil temperatures at planting.
- Irregular forage stands when planting in corn fields too rough for your drill.
- Sod webworm and other insects when planting in heavy sods.
- Acid soil surfaces in old sod fields.

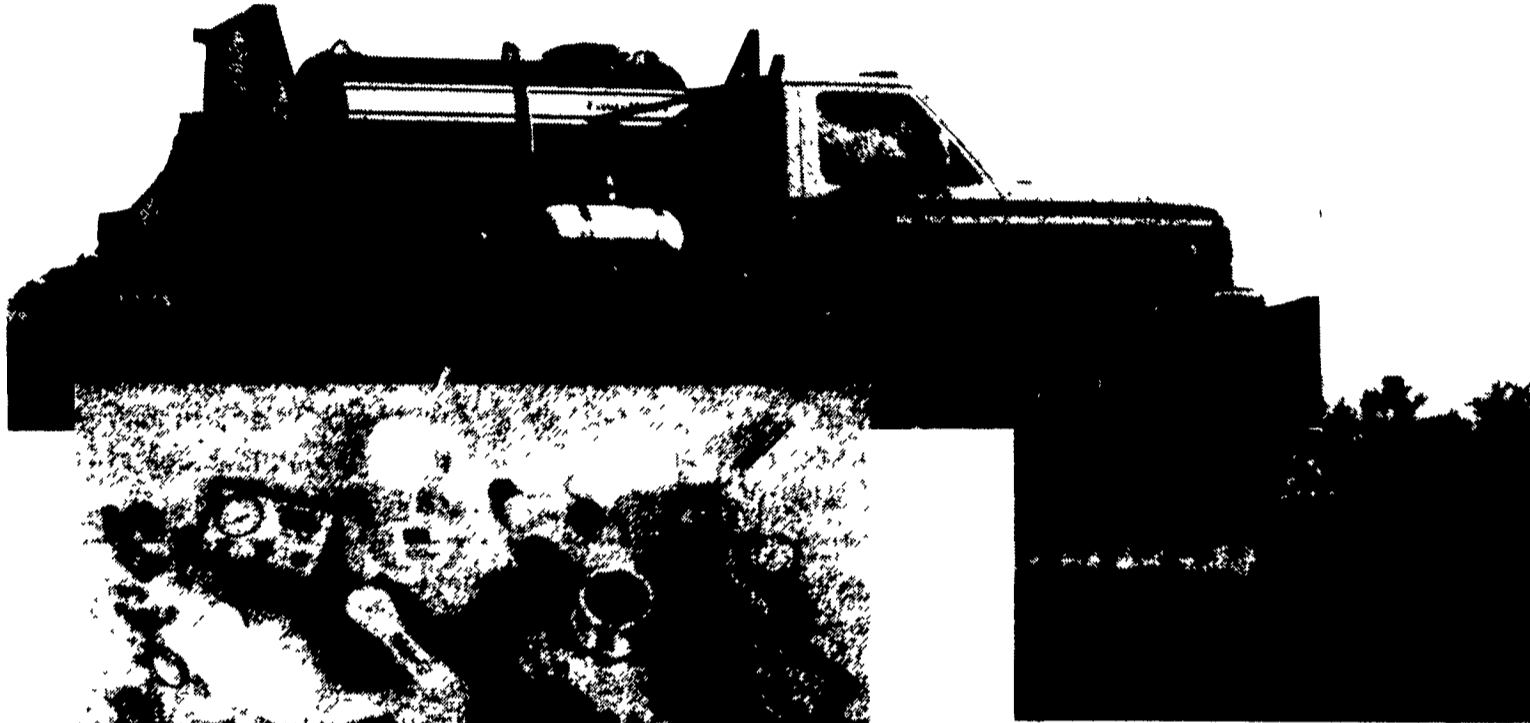
The Penn State Agronomy Guide contains recommendations for dealing with these problems. The Guide is available through County Extension Offices at \$6 per copy.

Tax Guides Available
Internal Revenue Service publication 225, "Farmer's Tax Guide" is now available through County Extension Offices. This free publication explains how federal tax laws apply to farming and provides guidance for preparing 1992 farm income tax returns. It lists important changes for 1992, as well as important dates and other reminders. It also lists other publications that might be useful in preparing tax returns. In Lehigh County, phone (215) 391-9840 to request a copy.



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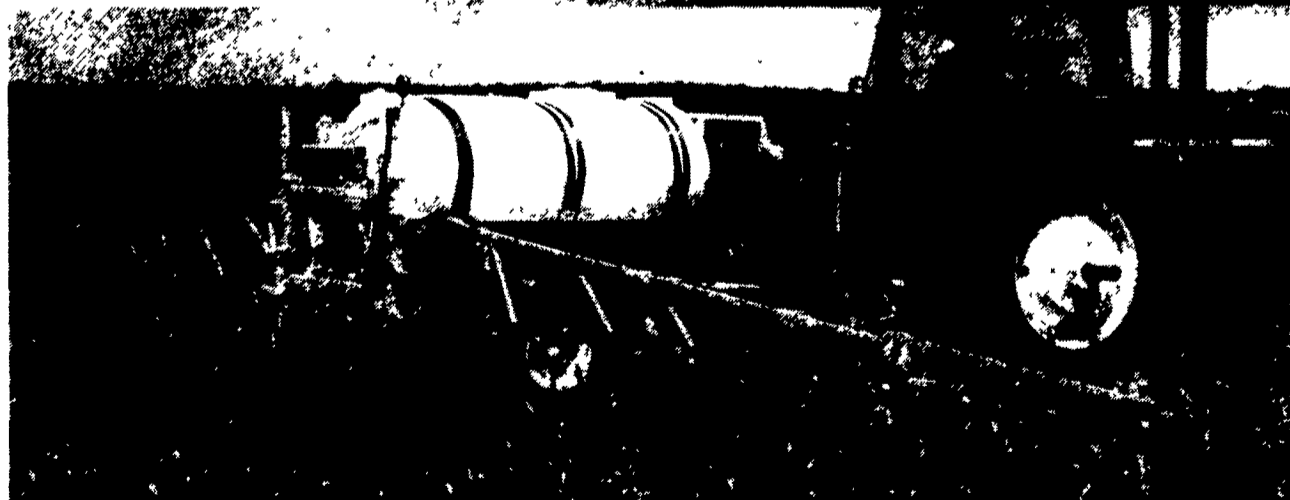


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