

Lancaster Farming

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Soil Fertility, No-Till Studies At Mid-Atlantic Tillage Conference

Optimum Soil Nitrate Equals High Crop Yields, Say Researchers

ANDY ANDREWS
Lancaster Farming Staff
HAGERSTOWN, Md. — Optimum yields for corn and other warm-season crops can be obtained when a soil sidedress nitrogen test (PSNT) reveals levels of soil nitrogen around the 25 parts

per million (ppm) mark, according to a USDA soil scientist. Dr. John J. Meisinger, a scientist with the Agriculture Research Service in Beltsville, presented the findings conducted in Maryland recently that examined the usefulness and effectiveness of the PSNT

on a wide array of crops under different soil conditions and types. Meisinger provided the results to a packed room of farmers and agribusiness representatives on Thursday at the 20th annual Mid-Atlantic Conservation Tillage Conference at the Ramada Inn and

Convention Center. According to Meisinger, the study looked at the PSNT on seven Maryland soil types through five growing seasons. In every case, where the PSNT test revealed low ppm levels, yields were reduced. Where the PSNT yielded "optimum" ppm levels (in a range of 25-30 ppm), yields were substantially increased.

completely different entity from phosphorous, which shows opposite qualities.

The PSNT will be most effective following a "normal" spring (where rainfall is not excessive) at the right time. In a test, a soil sample is taken in 12 inches of soil immediately before corn crop sidedressing — when the plant measures 6-12 inches tall. In the Mid-Atlantic region, tests are taken from June 15-July 1.

Meisinger said that a study conducted 90 years ago showed the effectiveness of soil nitrate testing and nitrate's effect on crop yields.

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Franklin County DHIA Honors Fritz

BONNIE BRECHBILL
Franklin Co. Correspondent
CHAMBERSBURG (Franklin Co.) — "Harry Fritz has done an outstanding job in his 45 years as a technician and a regional manager," Dean Emig, director of Field Services for Pennsylvania DHIA,

told Franklin County DHIA members. "He kept the integrity in DHIA."

Emig made his remarks at the Franklin County DHIA Annual Meeting and Awards Banquet, held earlier this month in Pleasant View Mennonite Church. Emig

presented Fritz with a Penn State rocking chair in honor of his recent retirement. Fritz was a technician for many years; for the last three and a half years of his career he served as a regional manager.

Fritz, 64, of Lemasters, said he

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Pa. Forage, Grassland Council Honors New Holland Farmer

VERNON ACHENBACH JR.
Lancaster Farming Staff
NEW HOLLAND (Lancaster Co.) — Earl Weaver, a Lancaster County dairyman for 28 years, was recently honored by the Pennsylvania Forage and Grassland Council with its Forage/Conservation Farmer Award.

groundwater, and keeping the soil preserved for the next generation," the wiry, blond-haired farmer said.

Weaver bought the farm from his parents, Raymond and Mabel, who still live in a home on the farm that was built by their parents when they took over the farm.

At first, when he took over the farm, it was a 50-acre parcel. In 1978 he purchased additional land from a neighboring farm and expanding his farm to 87 acres.

He had the original farm redesigned for soil conservation in 1976, taking advantage of some cost-sharing that was offered through the USDA Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service.

The additional acreage was also re-done in the same fashion. Some of the strips are now more than 2,000 feet long in which he alternately grows alfalfa, corn and soybeans.

"I've been extremely impressed with the lack of washing," Weaver said. "It just impressed me with what can be done with contouring."

The Weaver farm is a second generation dairy farm, though when he and his wife Marilyn first started, they had hogs. Though he has been milking cows since he was 13 years old, he said he had

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The award is recognition of a long-time and outstanding commitment to soil conservation.

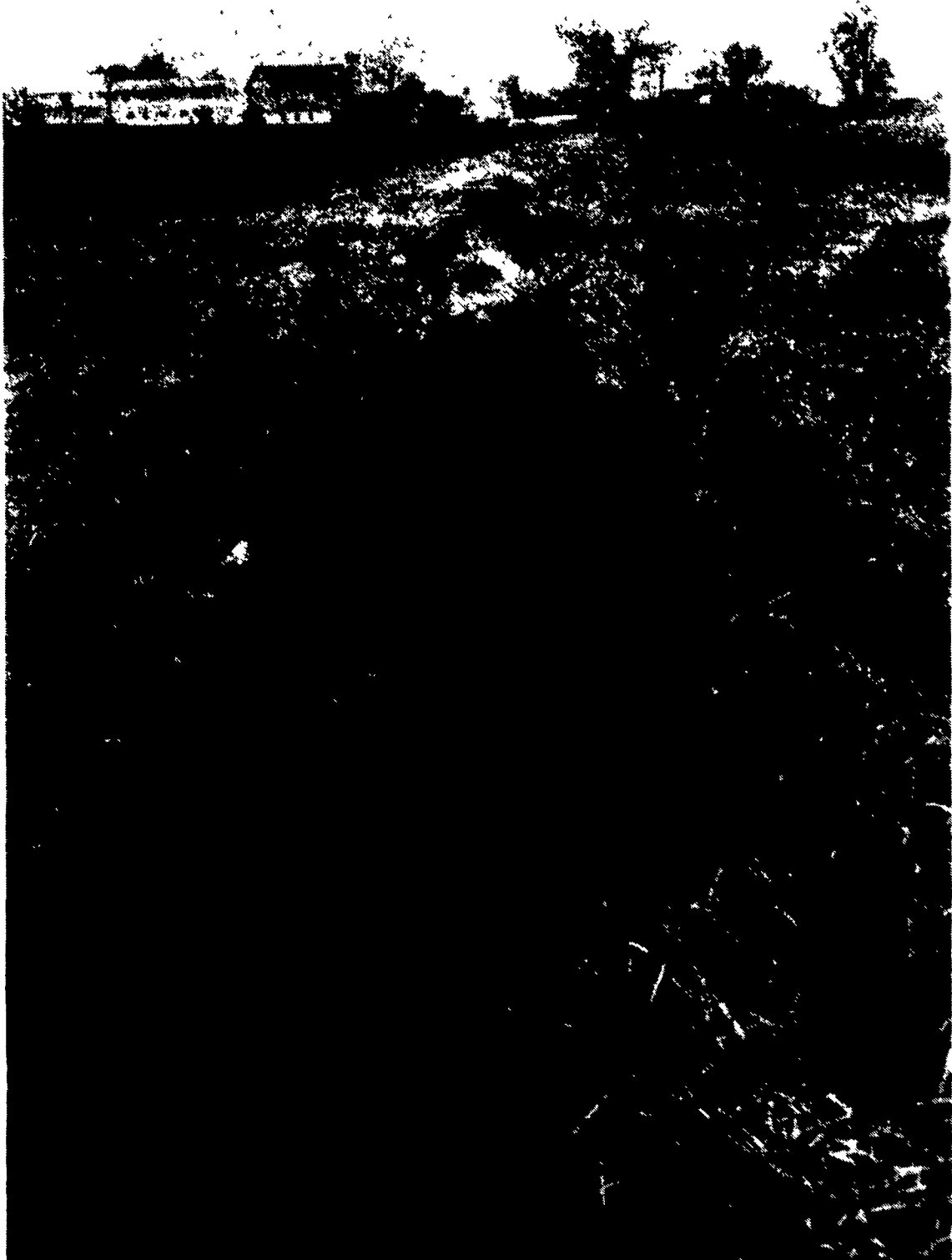
Weaver said he was surprised when he learned of the award.

It's not that he hasn't been committed to soil conservation. He has, transforming a farm that contained several crop fields that were constantly subjected to "washouts," as Weaver refers to erosion gullies, into a series of 100-foot wide contour strips with grass waterways.

But the award was a surprise. Bob Anderson, county extension agent, had nominated Weaver for the award two years ago. Weaver more or less forgot about being nominated. Besides, he's been busy for the past two years getting a soybean processing and storage business operating.

Surprise or not, Weaver said the award is significant because of what it means about those who support such awards.

"It means that people are still concerned — other than me — about keeping nitrates out of the



Earl Weaver, recent recipient of the Pa. Forage and Grassland Council's Forage/Conservation Farmer Award, shows the length of plant he allows for overwintering in grass waterways. He says the grass should not be cut short in fall, before dormancy, but rather should be allowed to grow to a length of at least 10 inches in order to allow the grasses' leaves to bend over and create a 'hatch' protection to the soil. It also provides better cover for overwintering wildlife.

Christmas Deadlines

The Lancaster Farming office will be closed Friday, December 24 in observance of Christmas day. Early deadlines will be followed the week of Christmas. These deadlines are as follows:
Public Sale Ads — Noon, Mon., 12/20.
Mailbox Markets — Noon, Mon., 12/20.
General News — Noon, Wed., 12/22.
Classified Section C Ads — 5 p.m., Tue., 12/21.
All Other Classified Ads — 9 a.m., Wed., 12/22.

New Year's Deadlines

The Lancaster Farming office will also be closed Friday, December 31 in observance of New Years day. Early deadlines will be followed the last week of December as follows:
Public Sale Ads — Noon, Mon., 12/27.
Mailbox Markets — Noon, Fri., 12/24.
General News — Noon, Wed., 12/29.
Classified Section C Ads — 5 p.m., Tue., 12/28.
All Other Classified Ads — 9 a.m., Wed., 12/29.