

Terraces Ease 'Water Worries' On Moyer Conservation Farm

(Continued from Page A1)

"We never got pictures of the flooding because we couldn't get into the house to get the camera," said Martin Moyer.

The corn was already planted and the fields were washed out. Newly installed terraces were ripped up and had to be redone. But the Moyer family set to work. By the next spring, additional terraces were installed to collect and channel water and to prevent further flooding and erosion.

Since then, happily, the Moyers believe their "water worries" have been put to rest.

The Moyer family — Martin with wife Missy and children Jeffrey, 13, Amy, 12, Kristen, 7, and Sarah, 6 — were honored for their work to contain erosion and stop runoff by the Berks County Conservation District at a banquet recently.

During an interview with *Lancaster Farming* at their Marion Township farm, the Moyers, who were featured in the Sept. 7, 1991, issue of *Lancaster Farming*, spoke about the challenges of working in an area that is heavily sloped with some highly erodible land.

Altogether, the Moyers manage about 128 acres, 108 of which are tillable. They grow 75 acres of corn, 30 acres of alfalfa, 18 acres

of barley (double-cropped), and about 20 acres of rye (double-cropped). They maintain about seven acres of meadowland that they hope to turn into a rotational grazing system.

The Dairy of Distinction farm includes grade Holsteins and registered Brown Swiss. They milk about 62 cows altogether, with about the same amount of replacement stock. Missy cares for 15 head of registered Brown Swiss.

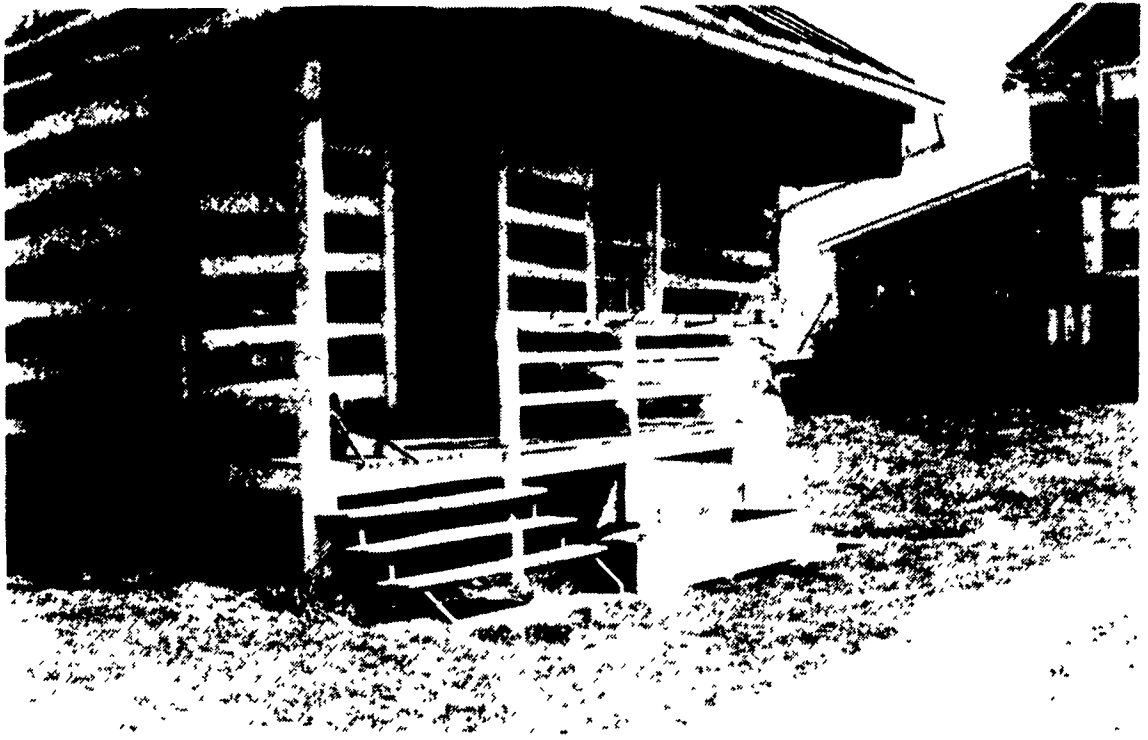
For the Holsteins, herd milking averages on DHIA stand at 20,454 pounds; for the Brown Swiss, they milk about 16,295 pounds, as of the latest test.

Martin's father, Charles, purchased the farm in 1974. Martin began milking in 1980 at the farm. As he did at the beginning, Martin is in charge of the fieldwork, including additional acreage.

Martin grew up in Bernville on the home farm and married Missy in 1981. Two years ago, Martin and Missy purchased the farm from Martin's father, who recently passed away. Martin also manages about 800 acres of other ground with his brothers Paul and Llewellyn in Bernville.

The Moyers have gradually added to the herd and made major conservation improvements to the farm.

Managing the highly erodible



At the time, the Moyer family was out in the barn, milking. A short while after the rain had stopped, the entire basement of the house was flooded out from rains that sheeted over the top of a newly planted May corn field. The water was so deep that it crested over the top of foundation stonework on this small, original homestead, left, next to the Moyer house.

land proved difficult since the time it was purchased. At that time, the farm was in strip crops to contain erosion. But Martin's father wanted the entire ground to be in corn. "My dad wanted big fields, and this was big fields," he said.

Moyer said, "Pop was working at conservation practices for as long as I know, doing some things at the home farm."

At the Womelsdorf farm, however, putting the ground mostly in corn proved costly. When it rained, "we had erosion — terrible erosion," admitted Martin.

Moyer knew that it was a mistake to remove the strips. But something had to be done.

"After I started milking here again, I wanted to put these back into strips, so we checked with ASCS and got involved with soil conservation."

That was about eight years ago. Moyer admitted that while not everything wasn't done in a year, the water problems mounted.

After some of the terraces were installed, "they had that terrible rain, and they all filled up with mud, and they had to do them again," said Missy.

Martin hates to think what the land would have been like if they hadn't started to install some kind of water "catch basins."

The problem? Too many neighboring waters coming into their land.

"We were getting runoff from the neighboring farms, and we put the terraces in to stop the water," said Moyer.

In all, the farm conservation plan includes 8,365 feet of terraces, 4,700 feet of underground outlets, 1,750 feet of diversions, 300 feet of grassed waterway, 20

acres of stripcropping, and 69 acres of crop residue management.

The terraces were the real key to stopping the flooding and erosion. But it's "something that's going to have to be maintained," said Moyer.

"I'm not near done with the soil conservation practices yet, but we're still trying to get our strips worked around."

Between terraces, Moyer is busily sowing alfalfa, much like the stripcropping on the farm of years back.

(Turn to Page A26)



Sarah Moyer with Jenny, a November Brown Swiss calf.



The terraces were the real key to stopping the flooding and erosion. But it's "something that's going to have to be maintained," said Moyer. Moyer shows the pipe inlets from one terrace.

Berks County Honors Conservationists

ANDY ANDREWS

Lancaster Farming Staff
VIRGINVILLE (Berks Co.)

Individuals were honored for their support of the Berks County Conservation District at the annual banquet recently at the Virginville Grange.

Educator of the Year honors went to Christine Williams, seven-year Tulphehocken High School ag science instructor. Williams was honored for her instrumental work in involving students in land judging, conservation public speaking, Envirothon competition, and as adviser to the young adult farmer program.

Special \$1,000 scholarships were presented to two students, Tara M. Plewa and Janice R. Youse. Tara, a Twin Valley High School senior, has excelled in classwork at the school and was a member of the first place Envirothon team for four years. The daughter of Richard and Susan Plewa, Honey Brook, Tara is co-president of the Twin Valley FFA and vice president of the county FFA. A gold medal winner in the Pennsylvania FFA forestry contest, Tara has been accepted at the Penn State College of Ag Sciences and plans to major in forestry.

Janice R. Youse, daughter of Paul and Linda Youse, Oley, is an Oley Valley High School senior. Janice has served on the local 4-H club and the Oley FFA chapter in many official capacities, and is a member of the 1990 Reading Fair farm family. She has been accepted at Penn State Berks Campus to major in food science and ag business.

Conservation Farmer of the

Year went to Martin C. Moyer, a dairyman from Marion Township. Moyer is profiled in this issue of *Lancaster Farming*.

A special recognition award went to the Berks County Farm Bureau for the development and implementation of conservation concerns.

Chesapeake Bay recognition went to Robert J. Geib, Bethel poultry farmer and conservationist; Gerald H. Seiler, Bethel conservation farmer; and Eugene O. Yenser, Myerstown conservation farmer.

Special conservation service honors went to Roger Mallon and Bob Entler. Mallon, operations manager of Wall Music Stores, is the outdoors writer for the Reading Eagle-Times. Bob Entler, Temple, is a self-employed carpenter and home builder. Both Mallon and Entler are co-hosts of outdoor broadcast specials.

A special media award went to George G. Landis, resident of Penn Township. Landis began at the Reading Eagle in October 1960 and served as county editor from 1965-1982. He has served as agricultural reporter since July 1993 and was honored at the 1994 Farm City Banquet for the promotion of agriculture in Berks County.

Exemplary erosion and sediment pollution control design went to Spotts, Stevens and McCoy, Inc. The landscape maintenance award went to Allen Heilner, Heilner Landscaping Co., Inc.

A 50-year service pin went to Curtis Bashore, Bethel, one of the original charter members when the district began in August 1946.