

# Conservation Farmer

(Continued from Page A1)

Conservation District will honor Woland as the Conservation Farmer of the Year at the district's banquet on April 2.

Woland cares for a home farm and another rented farm nearby. Altogether, he manages 115 tillable acres, of which 50 are in corn, 45 in soybeans, and about 20 acres in wheat. He follows a corn/soybeans/corn/soybeans/wheat rotation.

According to records maintained by the district, on his home farm, Woland maintains 79.6 acres in no-till and 77.2 acres are in contour fields. On the rented ground, 32 acres are no-tilled and there is less than an acre with a waterway.

Other conservation practices Woland, who has been a member of the district since 1989, manages includes 720 feet of tiles and 1.2 acres of grassed waterway. Woland maintains a rye cover crop which he chisels into corn ground.

What proves particularly challenging are the hills.

"There are hills all over,"

Woland said at a recent interview at his farm. "It's steep."

There are some fields with a 3-8 percent slope and others with slopes ranging from 8-15 percent. Woland believes one slope is as high as 23 percent — and he manages to get no-till corn on it with some good results.

David owns a combine in partnership with his brother, Donald, who works for Metal Industry.

David has been operating the grain farm all his life, but took over the operation from his parents, Elmer and Ethel Woland, in 1977. He lives at the home farm.

The farm was originally handed down from Ethel Woland's parents, Henry and Sarah Enders. Long ago, it used to have livestock, according to Ethel Woland. The farm was stocked with pigs, cattle, chickens, even a dozen cows.

But by the late 1960s, the cows were gone, according to David. For a time, the farm raised hogs and some cattle until about 1980, when the Wolands switched to grain farming. In that time, David worked for the Speeces milk bot-



Using a drill on some of the steeper ground proved a challenge. David's mother Ethel noted, "I hold my breath — I don't watch," she said. Here, Woland makes adjustments to a soybean drill planter.

tlng company nearby.

The biggest problem encountered in the past was water collecting in some poor drainage areas. Tiles were installed in 1992 to take care of the problem, diverting rain water to waterways leading to the Armstrong Creek, which eventually flows into the Susquehanna River.

Contour strips were installed in 1992 as part of the conservation plan. There has been no continuous corn since the early 1980s. Woland admitted that they switched to a rotation because continuous corn didn't seem to work — it resulted in "low yields and poor weed control," Woland said.

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The Wolands don't use any conventional plowing. The crops grown yield about 120 bushels per acre of corn, 40 of soybeans, and 55 of wheat, all sold on the open market. Woland gets ready for another corn planting season.

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Last year, despite the drought, Woland had good corn crops, almost as good as 1996, he noted. They use no manure, but use a 7-21-7 starter on the crops.

The land under conservation plan is a Calvin-Leck Hill shaley silt loam.

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"I think it's fun," said David with a laugh.

The combine levels off nicely even with the drastic slopes. For Woland, the big challenge is watching for groundhog holes, which can be hazardous to any planter, he noted.

The biggest weather challenges faced by the Wolands are those caused by drought. The land easily dries out can have an impact on yields.

But for the award, which Woland sees as a personal honor, Woland believes it was his work selling the idea of con-

(Turn to Page A42)

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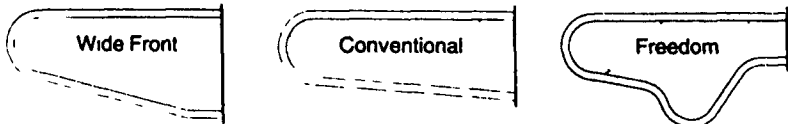
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