

Moyer's Improvements To Junge Farms Net Conservation Honors

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and a few drainage catch basins to ensure conservation where needed.

Recently, at the bull farm, a pipe outlet system was installed at the driveway to the barn to help control water runoff, piped about 100 yards down to a grassed area.

There are two manure storage structures, one on the heifer farm and the other at the main farm. The older structure, completed in 1978, is used for the main dairy farm. The structure is an earthen dam with a concrete floor and ramp with an eight-month storage capacity. A second unit, constructed in 1985, also is an earthen dam with a concrete floor and ramp for the heifers. The manure packs are pushed into the holding area.

A third structure, in the process of final approval, will be constructed at the bull farm. It will have an eight-month storage capacity and will be a three-sided, square concrete structure with concrete floor. The manure from the bull farm will be scraped into it from the bull barn, recently constructed.

Two years ago, Moyer's father-in-law, the late Harold Roeder, constructed an eight-foot tall gate and headlock structure in the bull barn, with two aisles making up seven pens. Manure from the interlocking pens can be easily scraped out.

In placing these water and soil control structures, Moyer admitted that he is doing what he needs to do, not simply "following the rules." The award has personal meaning, but he didn't put in the practices just to win an award.

Rather, he views the work as something he would do anyway, simply because he believes in conservation.

"I think it's more of a personal accomplishment," Moyer said. "It's not something we actually went out and worked for. It hap-

pened because of the way we do things."

Junge Farms uses about 50 percent no-till and most of the rest is minimally tilled. The alfalfa is moldboard plowed.

Getting good plant standability is a challenge in the valley because of the "two stones to one dirt" ratio of the Trexler shale soil, Karen Moyer noted.

Junge Farms have always placed importance on the benefits of soil testing, which they do every three years. The soil tests are based on about 240 carefully mapped field sites and not only record previous crops and nutrient applications, but also indicate what crops will be rotated into them and their nutrient needs.

The test also indicates what the soil pH is of the different sites and what the lime requirements are. The records also note the farm field number, acres, the crop in the previous year, nitrogen application by total pounds, starter nitrogen use, date planted, variety, and a space for comments (including whether the field was wet or dry, rainfall, weather conditions, etc.) They haul manure to the fields when needed, Ray Moyer said, "keeping the fertility in balance."

Moyer believes every farmer should be doing those things on the farm necessary to keep the field fertility and economic balance in line, he said, "without some law saying we should be doing these things."

Junge Farms recently purchased a no-till planter that can vary in-row fertilizer rates from area to area, from 0-600 pounds at application. Eventually the Moyers hope to make use of GPS systems to map the fields for yields and other information to be used at planting and harvest.

The Moyers follow a careful

crop rotation and use nitrogen applications wisely.

Last year, the Moyers were fortunate to have enough rainfall in time to secure a good corn crop. The Trexler shale soil can prove a challenge during a drought. Without rainfall in mid-July last year, the corn crop could have been lost.

Junge Farms would like to expand the cropland if enough acres would become available. They'd also like to add additional heifers if conditions would be right.

Also, all calves raised at the farm if not sold for breeding are

finished out as steers. The Holstein steers are grain fed.

A big innovation on the farm is the eight-foot high bull gate system. The system, constructed in the winter of 1996 by Ray's father-in-law, the late Harold Roeder, can handle seven bulls with an adjustable headgate. One such bull, a 3-year-old Beltone bull, weighs about 2,500 pounds. The sturdy, custom-built structure uses 2-inch steel pipe and high-tensile tubing. For a farmer to have that constructed by a contractor would cost about \$75,000.

Ray Moyer farms with wife

Karen and family. The family consists of son Jason, 27, and wife Keena and family. The Jason Moyer family includes children Cody, 10; Dane, 8; Jake, 7; Cheyenne, 6; Laramie, 5; Wade, 3; and Cole, 1. A son-in-law, Joe Veppert, works with Ray and Karen's daughter, Suzann, and son Levi, 4 and daughter Jordan, 3; Also, Moyer's daughter Leann works with Mike Moyer (related to Moyers by marriage), and Michael, 9; Keegan, 8; and Sara, 2. A nephew, Jay Garis, works as a herdsman. Robin Bedford, Karen's sister, helps with milking.

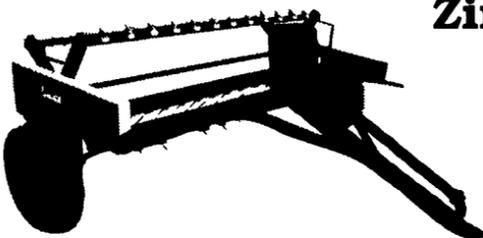


Levi, left and Jordan Veppert help feed calves at the Junge Farm.

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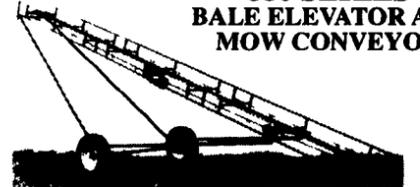


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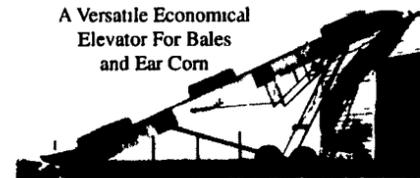
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