

Conservation Farmer Makes Class 2, 3 Soils Productive

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According to the district, Trycieki, 10-year president of the Bucks County Farm Bureau and a member of the board of trustees at Delaware Valley College, began farming when he was a child. In 1985, Tom began farming full-time and still cares for some acreage in Buckingham Township owned by his uncle, Walter Trycieki.

During the past 10 years, Trycieki has completed conservation work on the 100-acre Trycieki family farm besides the rented acreage.

According to the district, the conservation farmer has installed more than 16,000 feet of terraces, diversions, and waterways to control soil erosion and water runoff. Trycieki has placed 8,340 feet of diversion, 4,500 feet of waterways, 4,150 feet of terrace, and seven water control structures.

He has placed creek crossings over several laneways throughout his uncle's farm.

Trycieki has a target date of May 1 for corn planting, depending on weather and soil temperature. May 20 is the target date for soybeans.

Even on some Class 2 and 3 soils, Trycieki, in good years, has been able to harvest an average of 135 bushels per acre of corn. Some fields have averaged as close to 100-185 bushels of corn per acre on the better ground.

"You can get a good crop even with Class 2s and 3s," said Trycieki. "But proper management is a must."

The acreage is split 50-50 with corn and soybeans. The grain is sold to elevators in Delaware, Maryland, and locally.

Trycieki completes routine testing of soils to determine nu-

trient applications. He also uses starter fertilizer on the crops.

Using one-pass minimum tillage and no-till provides many labor- and time-saving benefits, noted Trycieki. That's one of the biggest challenges facing farmers in the 21st Century — cutting down on labor and maintenance costs while input costs keep rising.

Trycieki has help from his son, Thomas B., 14. Thomas is in the 8th grade at Holicong Middle School and a member of the National Junior Honor Society. Thomas helps manage the farm with his computer expertise.

The first conservation practice installed was a system of swails and diversions. About two years ago Trycieki placed some water crossings in with the help of the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and the conservation district.

Some work includes about 15 acres of fields in corn-soybean rotation near a major housing development in Plumstead Township. There, diversions help control water flow to keep the soils intact. Also, Trycieki does his part to ensure soybean stubble and corn crop residue remain on the surface.

Using minimum and no-till is the number one conservation strategy, noted Trycieki. He has been using the combination on all acres for the past five years.

As for the Class 3 soils, he said that farmers "can't push them," said Trycieki, and to stay out of the fields until they are dry and warm enough to plant seed. Going in with the fields too wet creates hardpan soil and compaction problems.

He uses minimal till to help ready the ground, to mix organic material from corn residue in with the soil to promote tilth.

Trycieki uses Roundup Ready soybeans and some Bt corn. Agriculture and agribusiness in general can benefit from the crops, which save on herbicides.

The biggest challenges facing cash crop farmers, said the Bucks County Farm Bureau president, is how to survive in the 21st Century during an unstable commodity price market, genetically modified crop scares, and tighter regulations.

Low commodity prices and higher input costs are creating a "dilemma for all of us," said Trycieki. "We need to find ways to make production agriculture more viable and profitable."

This year Trycieki increased his catastrophic crop insurance to 65 percent. Those who don't elect crop insurance are "playing Russian roulette with their cash flow," he said.

"I can't stress enough why farmers need to be looking into crop insurance," he said.

At the same time, Trycieki is very "conservation-minded," he said. "What we need to do as farmers is improve our conservation practices. It is our obligation and responsibility to be stewards on this land for the survival of all mankind."



Trycieki has placed creek crossings over several laneways throughout his uncle's farm.

Trycieki's biggest problem is finding the money to do it. Cost-share programs through the Farm Service Agency help. If Trycieki had more money, he said, he would utilize it to place conservation practices on all ad-

ditional acres, including owned and rented ground.

Trycieki urges all farmers and agribusiness people to join Farm Bureau to work on ways to make farming more viable and to protect our agricultural resources.

USDA Proposes Procedures For Pork Referendum

WASHINGTON, April 14, 2000--Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman today announced proposed procedures for the upcoming referendum on continuation of the pork checkoff program.

"This is a very important issue, and I encourage folks to comment on these proposed regulations. I want to make sure that the rules for the referendum are absolutely clear and understood by pork producers around the country so we can have a fair referendum on the checkoff," said Glickman.

The proposed rules, which will be published in the Federal Register on April 18, will establish a two-day period for in-person voting and a four-week absentee ballot period for producers. Voting will take place at the Farm Service Agency county offices, and FSA

employees will count the ballots, determine the eligibility of challenged voters, and report the results.

Importers will cast their ballots by mail.

The Secretary will consider all comments received up to 30 days after publication of the proposed rules before issuing final rules setting the date for the referendum. The referendum will be paid for with USDA funds.

The congressionally mandated pork checkoff program is authorized by the Pork Promotion, Research, and

Consumer Information Act of 1985. Secretary Glickman announced in late February that he was authorizing a vote on continuation of the checkoff program.

Comments, postmarked no later than May 18, may be sent to Ralph L. Tapp, Chief, Marketing Programs Branch, Livestock and Seed Program, AMS, USDA, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, STOP-0251, Washington, D C 20250-0251, telephone 202/720-1115; facsimile 202/720/1125, or email at Ralph.Tapp@usda.gov



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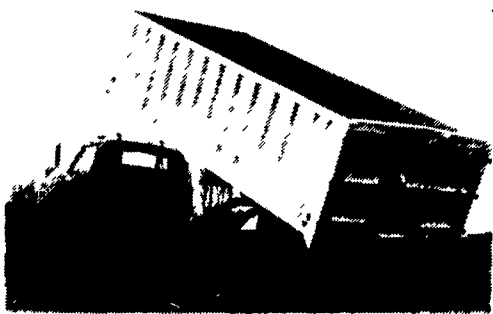
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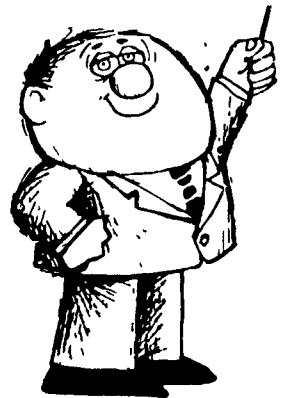
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