

STORIES of New Jersey



Contour furrows check erosion

On the million or so acres of cropland under cultivation or lying idle, cover crops, including the green manure crops that will be plowed under in the spring, may be used effectively to arrest erosion. No cover-crop especially designed for erosion control in this State has been developed that can compare with kudzu and lespedeza in the South. The State College of Agriculture is experimenting with varieties from all over the world in the hope of developing one particularly suitable for New Jersey.

Land that erodes badly under cultivation or is unfit for cultivated crops or pasture should be retired to forest. Trees anchor the soil and each year renew the dense blanket of litter. A well-managed woodlot, besides enriching poor soils and protecting rolling land from erosion, will yield the farmer an annual income in wood products, such as fence posts, Christmas trees and wood for fuel.

CONTOUR FARMING

As a remedy for the damage caused by rectangular fields with straight rows, conservation experts advocate contour farming, which fits the farm to the land. This consists in planting and cultivating rows that curve across the slope of the land and at right angles to it. The ridges and plow furrows act as earthen dams checking the run-off of water and soil. It has been demonstrated that 19 times as much soil washes off a field of corn planted up and down a slope as off one planted across a slope.

Of the various forms of contour farming the most useful for this State is contour strip cropping. Under this plan bands of tilled crops, such as corn, potatoes or vegetables, are alternated with strips of sod, grasses or small