

STORIES of New Jersey

grains which act as control crops. The flow of soil-laden water, spilling from the clean-tilled strips, is held back by the band of thick vegetation in the next strip. Whatever soil is moved from the clean-tilled strips is deposited on the control strips. Furthermore, rotation of control crops in strip cropping makes it possible to renew the supply of organic matter.

In the dairy regions farmers have realized the value of plowing properly spaced furrows along the contour lines on hilly pasture land. These contour furrows hold excess water on the land and aid in checking erosion by shortening the drought seasons and stimulating the growth of the sod. Such improvements permit dairy farmers to use their pasture to the fullest extent.

Where, as in many areas in South Jersey, there is a large percentage of crops, such as potatoes and other garden produce, which expose the land to erosion; or where heavy rainfall makes the long slopes dangerous, mechanically constructed terraces are used. The surface run-off is arrested by the terrace channel and absorbed by the soil or conducted off the land by suitable outlets. Terracing of a farm requires considerable engineering skill.



Terraced contour rows in a peach orchard

CONSERVATION HAS A HISTORY

The organization of the battle against erosion has only recently begun on a large scale. An important step in New Jersey was the completion in 1932 of a 15-year land classification survey. Its reports and maps show the location, distribution and extent of all the 189 distinct soil types in the State with all the variations in topography, drainage and texture. Each farm and each field is a special problem in conservation, which must be studied individually. After analysis of the soil, topography and drainage, the problem of crop rotation, the amount of pasture and woodland and the farmer's economic condition must be considered.