

erosion in drought

minimum-till and conventional farming. The methods work well for the family, he said, and are used in rotation.

“Wind and water are major causes of soil erosion,” he said. “The no-till helped yields because of the residue that conserved moisture, and conservation does become more important in times of drought. Our wheat, for example, seems to be doing OK for now, but more moisture is still needed.”

“The terraces are built from the dirt,” said brother Steven, “with a channel that holds the water, and keeps it from eroding and cutting gullies through the field.

“There’s cost involved, but you can do it

anyway you want to do it. You can go through a cost-share program or do it yourself.”

Steven said that the terraces took about two weeks to build, but that they require a bit of maintenance, too.

“It depends on if you happen to get a large or heavy rain,” he said, “where the terrace would overflow and get a break in it. But you can get 20 to 30 years out of these.

“It also depends on what kind of residue you leave between the crops. The residue holds the water in place, and keeps it from eroding and hitting the soil. Depending on the residue, it will help to preserve the terrace that’s there.”



GREG AND STEPHANIE Ritter won this year’s conservation award for their terraces, which span six and a half miles over their fields.

– Herald staff photo by Stephanie DeCamp

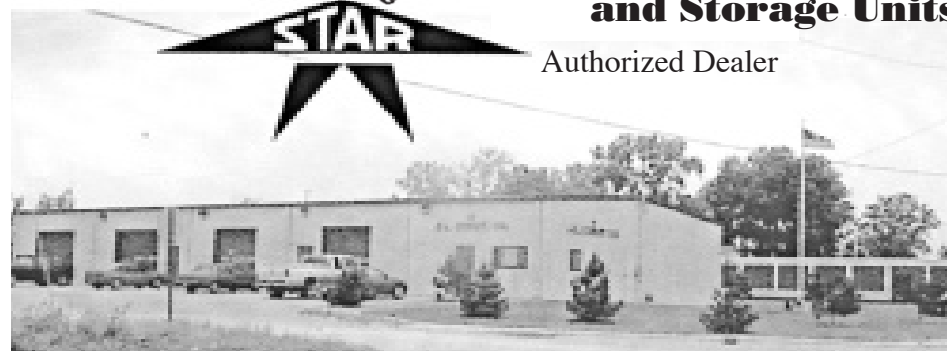


STEVE RITTER, who farms next to and with his brother Greg, also won the soil conservation award for terraces. The erosion-preventative mounds will last up to 30 years, he said.

– Herald staff photo by Stephanie DeCamp

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