



Photo shows typical low spots where cross drains (plow or hoe drains, etc.) are used to move surface water to the interior ditch system. As many as 15 or more of these cross drains are used in some fields which takes considerable time to maintain.



Photo shows a scene of a field being leveled with the laser transmitter in the foreground.

### Drainage Problems

Level as a "table top", an expression used by area farmers as they look out over wide expanses of the Northeastern Coastal Plain, does not hold true in many cases. Most fields, in fact, have low spots or pockets that cause drainage or

water management problems. These drainage conditions cut into crop production and waste valuable field growing space.

Several local farmers are eliminating many of these drainage and poor water distribution conditions by using laser beam operated land forming equipment. Their carry-all pans and

drag scrapers are carefully controlled by this laser beam which is a rotating beam of light programmed to a certain grade and is intercepted by receivers on the equipment for precise land forming and leveling.

According to Stanton Harrell, soil conservation technician with the Soil Conservation Service, the actual field surveys can be made with the same equipment. Field elevations are determined right from the cab of the tractor. Harrell says, "By using the

existing field grade and by cutting off the high places and filling the low places, wet spots are corrected and the use of many cross drains are no longer needed."

Local farmers having a need for some type of land forming or smoothing, should contact their local Soil Conservation Service Office for more information. Technical assistance to landusers on solving conservation problems is free and is provided without regard to race, creed, color, sex, age, marital status, or national origin.

### Jewelry Jottings

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### Scallop Harvest Season

On the morning of January 19, observers in aircraft sighted 436 small white boats in Carteret County waters doing a slow twisting dance that could be called the scallop tumble. Like a square dance, participants were in a cluster here and a cluster there, centered mainly in western Bogue Sound, but, miles eastward in Core Sound and near Harkers Island, some 150 boats could be seen.

This winter ritual takes place on Mondays and Wednesdays. Fishermen are gathering bay scallops. Scallops are those thumb-thick bite-size columns of 'white rich meat on a seafood platter.

You have to say gather, because scallops just lay there. Fishermen drag along the bottom behind a boat a small net with a stout rectangular three feet wide mouth. The metal bar nudges scallops off the bottom and they tumble into the net. Water is shallow and scallops stay close. Easy pickings, really. Shooting fish in a barrel.

A complete scallop has the curved shape of a squatty

flying saucer. About the size of a woman's compact, though humped much thicker at one end, some 400 fill a bushel basket. The meat you eat is actually the muscle used to open and close the two shells.

Down on the water and in a commercial fisherman's boat, the picturesqueness is soon gone. It is sheer repetition. Grab a rope and muscle a drag in. Plop the mixture of live scallops, dead shells, seagrass, starfish, and mud on the culling tray. Toss the drag overboard. Pick out the keepers. Scrape the leftover overboard. Pull in another drag. Some boats pull four or more. Over and over again. No stop. One or two men per boat. Like an assembly-line job, yet a real plus, each time it is like pulling the handle of a slot

machine, the payload could be meager or bountiful. Clatter of the boat motor is constant. Cut the motor, and the other motors close by blend into a steady factory-like hum. Even on the water, the sound of money is the same.

Prices of seafood are mostly high and a good day on the water pays well. In addition to full time commercial fishermen, many of the boats belong to part time fishermen who go for commercial quantities just a few times each year.

Daily limits are 15 bushels to a boat. The season can last into March, depending on the season's crop. Last season, fishermen made a reported \$1-million from bay scallops. Harvest this season is predicted to be about the same, quantity-wise. It is too early to predict dollars.

### Cousin Kin

Yes Grace is my lady friend,  
She helped me through thick and thin.  
We worked together many years,  
And we are also cousin kin.

She helped me through my busy years,  
At the grape vines and at the quilting frames.  
When I asked for help she smiled,  
And always to my rescue came.

Grace is very easy and considerate,  
And always carries a smile.  
She had the misfortune of a fall,  
But she is improving all the while.

I recall one trip we took together,  
True the night was bitter cold.  
And we were much younger then,  
Years have swiftly passed and we have grown old.

She spent the night with me,  
Just a few short years ago.  
I remember how the wind did howl,  
Next morning the ground was covered with snow.

Grace and myself are both widows,  
For years we have shared our joy and sorrow.  
We have talked together many days,  
And we are looking forward to a brighter tomorrow.

We realize there's a silver lining,  
Just beyond the dark rolling cloud.  
When we find a friend so faithful,  
Yes indeed, we should be very proud.

DEDICATED TO MRS. GRACE T. CHAPPELL  
BY MARY LIZZIE LANE

### Review

Continued From Page 2  
To further fuel speculation, none of the state's legislative leaders in interviews last week were willing to rule out use of General Fund monies for highway expenditures.

One strong Senate supporter of the governor thinks Hunt "would be glad to get anything we send back over there."

"You think he's going to turn it (General Fund money for highways) down and ask for a gas tax hike instead?" the Senator asked.

Maybe not. But Gov. Hunt in his State of the State Address, called for "programs for progress."

"We see other states' laying their plans. Many are content to stand still, or even to turn back ... we must not be afraid to swim against the tide, to sail against the wind ... we must move ahead," Hunt said.

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