

Scranton reaffirms commitment to Chesapeake cleanup

MILLERSVILLE — Citing the need for continued funding for conservation measures to control soil and nutrient loss from Pennsylvania's farmland, Lieutenant Governor William Scranton III today announced that Pennsylvania's proposed 1986-87 budget contains an additional \$2 million for Pennsylvania's Chesapeake Bay program, bringing the total state and federal commitment over the past three years to more than \$8 million.

Scranton, who was accompanied by Environmental Resources Secretary Nicholas DeBenedictis, made the announcement following a tour of the Wilmer and Arlene Rohrer farm in Lancaster County on Wednesday. The Rohrer's, who recently received an initial payment of \$10,000, were the first landowners in Lancaster County to receive funds through the cost-sharing program to install nutrient management practices on farmland in the lower Susquehanna River Basin. When all aspects of the management contract are completed, the Rohrers are expected to receive a total of \$30,000.

"Pennsylvania is committed to the cleanup of the Chesapeake Bay," Scranton said, "but, more importantly, we are dedicated to the support of agriculture, the Commonwealth's number one industry, and our farmers' efforts to improve production and preserve our natural resources for future generations."

Scranton noted that the Rohrer's 356-acre dairy farm is an excellent example of effective conservation practices. Through the Chesapeake Bay program, the Rohrers are installing 23,000 feet of terracing to control soil and nutrient loss from their rolling farmland. The terracing installed under the cost-sharing program will complement more than 7,000 feet of terracing which was instituted over the past five years.

In 1972, the Rohrers constructed a 184,000 gallon underground manure storage system, which permits the storage of manure until field application is required, thereby eliminating the possibility of overfertilization. To control runoff and erosion, the farm's entire acreage is covered with a rye grass cover crop.

In addition to the terracing work underway through the Chesapeake Bay cost-sharing program, the

farm has also developed a conservation tillage, strip cropping and contour farming system and a fertilizer management program.

The Lancaster County Conservation District, which is locally responsible for the implementation of the cost-sharing program, estimates that conservation methods instituted on the Rohrer farm have reduced annual soil loss from 27 tons-per-acre to 4 tons-per-acre, substantially lower than the Lancaster County annual soil loss average of 9 tons-per-acre.

"Although the Rohrer's conservation practices have resulted in a substantial reduction in soil loss, the most impressive figures involve the farm's substantial crop yields," Scranton noted.

Over the past several years, the farm has averaged 180 bushels-per-acre for corn, compared to 130 bushels-per-acre average for all Lancaster County farms. In 1984 and 1985, the Rohrer farm has been

ranked second and fourth in the state, respectively, in alfalfa yield per acre.

The cost-sharing program was initiated in 1984-85 with \$1 million from the state's initial \$2 million Chesapeake Bay program. This year, an additional \$2 million was allocated for the cost-sharing program as part of the Commonwealth's current \$4 million program.

The program is administered by the Department of Environmental Resources, in conjunction with the State Conservation Commission and county conservation districts.

Under the cost-sharing program, farmers may receive 80 percent of the cost of implementing an approved nutrient management program, up to \$30,000. Approved practices include reduced tillage systems, animal waste handling and storage facilities, contour farming and stream protection measures.



Glenn Rohrer explains the soil conservation measures currently in place on the Rohrer dairy farm to Lt. Gov. William Scranton III.

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Tracey Landis with her steer and Debra Martin with her lamb both which were purchased by Hamilton Bank at the Southeast District 4-H Baby Beef Show in November 1985 and donated to the Lancaster County Red Rose 4-H Baby Beef and Sheep Club Banquet held at the Farm and Home Center on February 6. With Tracey is Darwin F. Boyd, Vice President and Director of the Hamilton Bank Agri-Finance Department. Tracey is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James E. Landis, R. D. #2, Cedar Hill Road, Quarryville. Debra is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Melvin H. Martin, R. D. #1, Box 380, Conestoga.



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