Fixing Up Pastures Just Small Part Of Field Day In White Horse

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WHITE HORSE (Lancaster Co.) — Oftentimes, farmers get caught up in the daily grind of chores and time-consuming tasks and delay taking a moment to see how things can be improved on the farm.

Often they're aren't aware that there may be other ways of solving problems and streamlining farm operations.

With this in mind, Penn State, in cooperation with the Soil Conservation Service as part of the Pequea-Mill Creek Water Quality Project, is sponsoring a Field Day at the Gideon Stoltzfus Farm along Rt. 897 in White Horse.

The purpose of the field day, set for Tuesday, June 23 from 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m., is to allow farmers to get acquainted with the work of the project and the agencies involved and to provide solutions for farmers.

Kinds of issues

The field day "is basically an introduction to the Pequea-Mill Creek Project," said Jeff Stoltzfus, project associate. "It's an introduction to the kinds of things we're working on, the kinds of issues that we're dealing with."

The field day will overview various projects, including pasture rotation, solar water pumps, slit tillage, pasture pumps, portable shading, pesticide mixing pads, and more. Representatives from Brubaker Agronomics, Agri-Basics Soil Service, the Lancaster County Conservation District, the Soil Conservation Service, and the Pennsylvania Game Commission will speak at the field day.

A focus of the field day will be small pasture improvement. On the Gideon Stoltzfus farm, the Pequea-Mill Creek Project has recently helped install new electrical fencing and is working to repair sod to the barnyard.

"We're going to talk about the benefits of stream fencing and pasture management from a herd health and from a water quality point of view," said the project associate.

The Field Day will look at the benefits of stream fencing and pasture management from a herd health and from a water quality point of view. Fencing, such as the type shown here by Andy Mellinger on his farm near Stasburg, will be examined.

Also, the project will demonstrate watering pumps and troughs, including a solar pump and a special portable pumping trough that the cow operates, shown here by Stoltzfus.

Three paddocks

The field day will also examine three paddocks, totalling eight acres, on an adjacent farm operated by Amos Stoltzfus. There are separate paddocks for horses, cows, and dairy heifers.

On the Amos Stoltzfus farm, approximately one acre of land (including a barnyard and path to adjoining paddocks) has been worn down to dirt. The project is busily working to reseed and restore the pasture to allow for improved soil conservation and to provide a cleaner pasture area, according to the project associate.

On a field day recently to Virginia, associates for the Mill Creek Project learned how cleaner and cooler properly maintained pastures can be for cattle. In one example, adjacent pasture was eight degrees cooler than bare ground.

Well-maintained grass "is cooler on the cows and it's better on the feet," he said. "Cows are cleaner. They're not dirty when you bring them in to milk them. You don't have to deal with dirt and everything on the udders, because they've been lying in the grass.

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On Tuesday, June 23, the field day will overview various projects, including solar powered water pumps, shown here at left. Andy Mellinger, farm owner, far right speaks to Frank Lucas of the Soil Conservation Service.

Jeff Stoltzfus, associate with Pequea-Mill Creek Water Quality Project, inspects a spring well site. A portable pump will be installed here at the Amos Stoltzfus farm in White Horse.