

Bay Program Helps Chester Farmers

WESTCHESTER (Chester Co.) — The recent press covering nutrient management legislation has many farmers concerned. "How will I be affected?" "Is the state going to tell me how to spread my manure?" "Will I have to install a manure storage facility?" "Will I be forced out of business by state-mandated changes?"

Twenty-one farmers in the Octoraro and Elk Creek watersheds of Chester County have taken steps to insure that they won't have to worry about these

questions. They are participants with the Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP).

After contacting the Chester County Conservation District, these "Bay Farmers" discussed their concerns and desires with district representatives and, together, figured out the best methods to alleviate any concerns that were had. One farmer had storm water flowing through his barnyard from a road. A drop box with some piping was designed and installed to catch that water

before it could cause problems. Another was concerned about some gullies enlarging his field. Terraces fixed those problems. The CBP is a voluntary program that allows a farmer to input his own special considerations into the planning process. Each plan is customized to each particular farm and farmer.

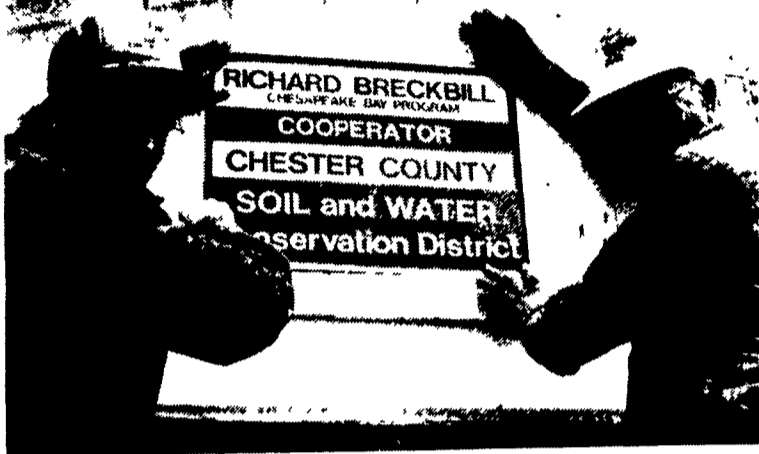
Being a nutrient management program, the Bay Program focuses on balancing the needs of the crops being raised with the nutrients being applied to the fields and pastures. Part of this balancing act is using best management practices (BMPs) to

ensure that these nutrients stay where they can be utilized by the crops. These practices also ensure that the soil that the nutrients may be attached to is kept out of the streams. Examples of BMPs used in crop fields are minimum tillage systems, contour strip cropping, waterways, and terraces.

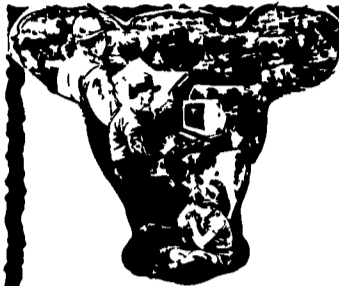
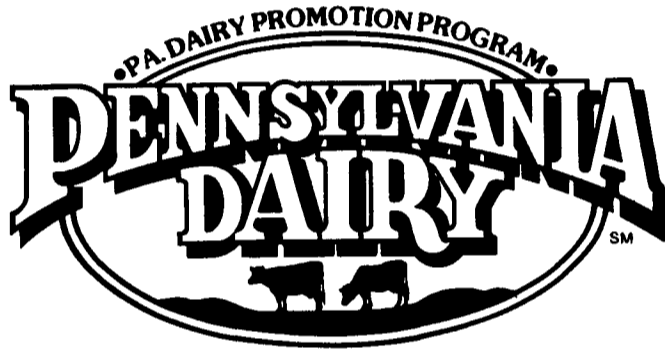
BMPs are also utilized around the barnyard, the most familiar being the manure storage tank or pond. Less familiar are rain spouting and other clean water diversions, because of the concept "keep the clean water clean and the dirty water dirty until it can be cleaned."

Many farmers are interested in some type of manure storage system, but are concerned about the sizable investment required. With up to \$30,000 available per farmer on an 80 percent cost-share basis, a large amount of the sum may be paid for by the program.

The Chester County Conservation District will be visiting with farmers in the Pequea, Octoraro, and Elk Creek watersheds during the next few months. If you would like to hear more about the Chesapeake Bay Program, contact Jim Saltzman at (215)696-0398 or (215)696-5126 to set up an appointment at your convenience.



Richard Breckbill holds his Chesapeake Bay Farm sign while Jim Saltzman, district resource conservationist, secures a corner.



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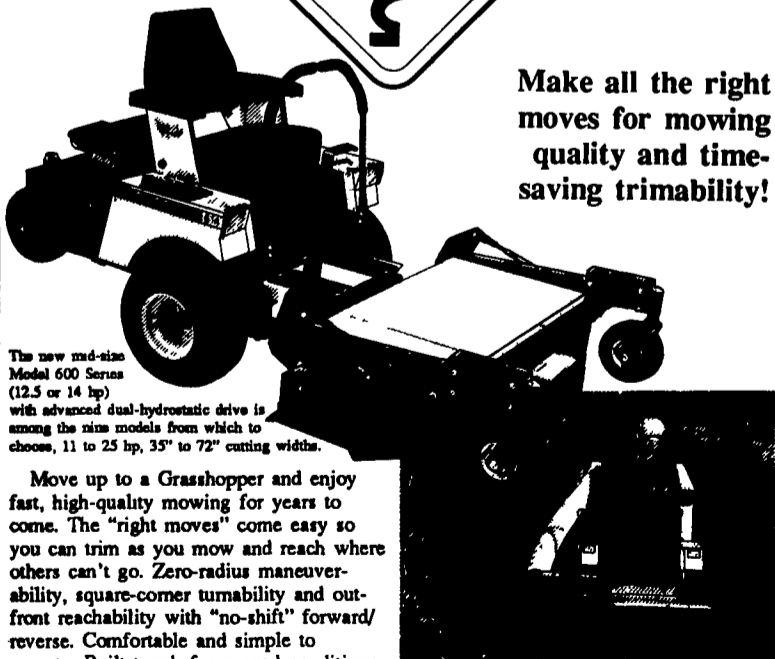


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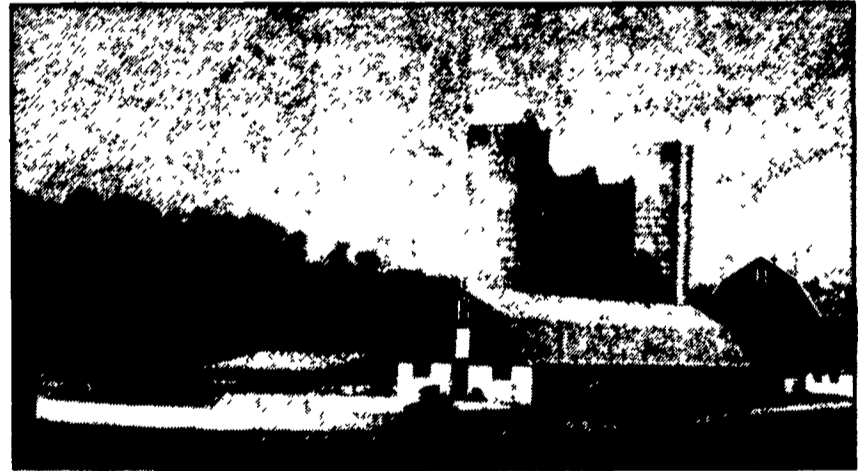
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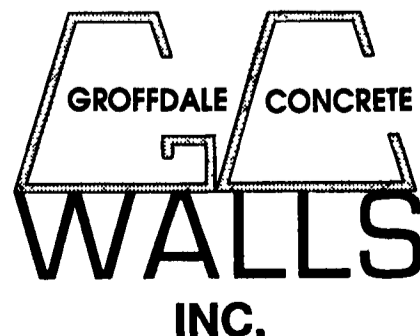
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