

Taking Care Of Environmental, Neighbor, Industry Concerns Are Some Tasks Facing Chester Conservation Farmers

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and birds. Recently, there has been movement to place the White Clay into the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.)

Since purchasing the farm in 1972, Barclay and his family have been steadily incorporating conservation practices. In fact, on one of their first dates, according to Diana, they walked contours.

"What (Barclay) did was he tied bale string together and I said, 'What are we doing this afternoon?' said Diana. 'He said, I don't know. But don't get dressed too good. And I wound up walking those hills over there . . . and he staked it out.'"

Diana said protecting the White Clay and Red Clay watersheds is important, because Barclay has "always been of the opinion, if it falls on my place, it's my water. I want to contain my water and don't want to keep having concerns."

Hosted project

Diana said that because of their ongoing involvement in conforming to the plans, and eventual completion of most of them, their farm hosted the demonstration project.

Part of the process involved installing roof and barnyard runoff practices, which included laying a substantial amount of underground pipe. One set of pipes took water from the barnyard, including dairy waste water, and dropped it into the manure pond. The other set of pipes took roof runoff — clean water — and allowed it to go into the creek.

Also, fencing was installed. Because of the hilly nature of the ground surrounding the barn area,

two terraces were completed to manage water runoff. Also, the farmer completed more terracing, including rented ground.

Doing the work allows the dairy farmers to maintain good land stewardship and neighborhood relations — critical if farmers want to continue farming when development takes place all around them.

"And that's one thing that all of us in agriculture have got to do," he said. "We have to work with the public, communicate with them."

Host tours

Hoopes said many of the schools in the area do not have traditional FFA or required agricultural studies anymore. So the farm family decided to host several tours conducted through the Ag In the Classroom program. The plan to do so again in July of 1993. In the fall of last year, several academically talented students visited the farm, and many of the children were impressed.

"You have to start with the children," said Diana. "I don't think the children saw so much manure at one place in their lives." However, Diana said that the teacher did a good job in explaining where milk comes from and the products generated as a result — including waste products. The teacher, according to Diana, said "You see how we have a big environment. But Mr. Hoopes has his own environment. By doing what he is doing, he's incorporating himself into ours."

The way of life of farming has gone on in the Hoopes family for more than 150 years, according to Barclay. But more and more, he



In 1990, Barclay and Diana Hoopes signed on as cooperators in the conservation district's Red Clay/White Clay Demonstration Farm Project. They received \$27,000 in cost-share money to build this dry manure storage pad and storage pond to help save the White Clay and Red Clay tributaries.

and other Chester County farmers are feeling intense development pressure. New housing developments encircle his farm — some cost \$400,000 or more.

"That was one thing we didn't foresee at all," said Barclay. "I knew we had development pressure, but this last wave out of the '80s, I never felt it would have the impact on us as it did."

Barclay said because of the new homes, "you've got people constantly looking at you, you know?"

Environment issues

With the general public, environmental issues are an extremely high priority, according to the dairy farmer. This has forced him to take a closer look at his own operations, including his ability to keep farming as a livelihood. He said he intends to diversify and to stay "one step ahead."

"I don't want anybody coming in here and forcing me to have to do anything. I don't like that."

Diana said many times farmers are the first to be blamed when there are problems. "We're the first when you go down there and see a pile of manure," she said. "(People think) OK, there it is, that's the problem, there you go, there you go! And for some people, it's surface thinking. And water is one of the top priority issues of the 1990s, and we do have to protect this resource, because all life forms need it!"

"As a parent and a grandparent, I want the water supply to be clean. I want to do my part, and I want somebody up ahead of me to do their part, too," she said. "We're not going to have a future if we don't have water."

Plans in place

Having the conservation plans in place and placing on paper the facets of being a good steward, including nutrient management planning, goes with being a good steward. "But there's some protection in there, also," said Diana. "You're building yourself a fortress. You're planning to be here for a long time."

But remaining a good steward is top in their minds. They collect about eight tons of newspapers per month from the local solid waste authority and chop it up for bedding. Chopped newspaper has kept



Barclay Hoopes, right and Charlie Smith, Atlantic Breeders Co-op direct herd sales representative, review a semen delivery order.



Mark Hoopes, left and brother Jeff repair a hay wagon.

the cows clean and dry, works well to absorb water, and provides a good source of plant nutrients.

Diana said that "farmers have really been one of the first recyclers. I mean, with farmers, if they're good, they don't waste much, they use everything they've got and put it back in the ground."

Barclay mentioned that he doesn't want to be known as somebody who has really done something a lot of others hadn't done previously. He said that farmers were contouring back in the 1940s.

Inspect operations

The Landenberg dairy farmer continues to closely inspect how

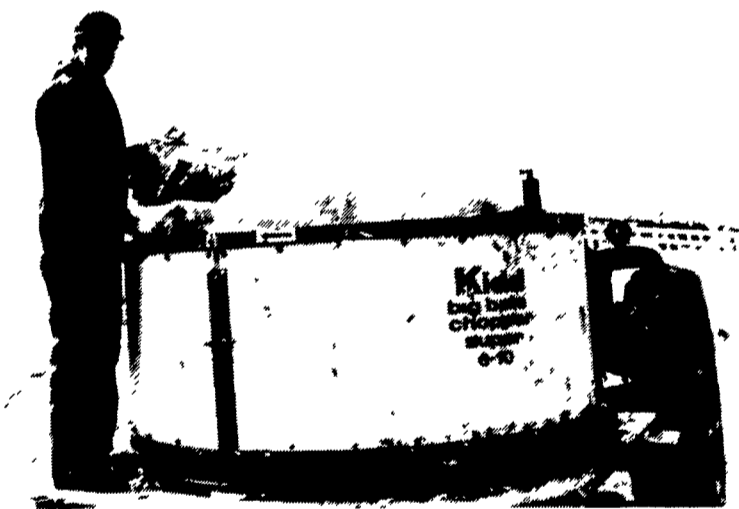
his operations impact the environment.

"You can't imagine, when I go out on that road with a manure spreader, how concerned I am for the amount of stuff that might get on that road. I don't want anybody upset with me."

"We want a harmonious relationship with the people in the community," said Barclay. "We don't want to have neighbors all upset at us."

"As far as I'm concerned," he said, "I think farmers are good stewards, and if you're not a good steward, why—"

"—you're not going to be in business, then," said Diana.



The Hoopes collect about eight tons of newspapers per month from the local solid waste authority and chop it up for bedding. Chopped newspaper has kept the cows clean and dry, works well to absorb water, and provides a good source of plant nutrients.



Because of the hilly nature of the ground surrounding the barn area, two terraces were completed at the Hoopes farm to manage water runoff.