

Farmers Awarded Grants To Test Practices

BURLINGTON, Vt. — The Northeast Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program has awarded \$19,714 in grants to six Pennsylvania farmers to test innovative farming techniques and share what they learn with other producers.

The farmers, whose projects range from testing alternatives to fungicides for strawberries to demonstrating stewardship forestry for farms, will receive the grants through the Northeast Region SARE program's new Farmer/Grower Grant program. In total, \$96,447 was awarded to 36 farmers in the 12-state region.

While scores of farmers have participated in the SARE program's larger, interdisciplinary research and education projects, this year's Farmer/Grower Grant program marks the first time the region has allocated funds specifically for farmer-initiated projects.

Northeast Region SARE Coordinator Fred Magdoff said the goal is to stimulate interest in alternative practices that could lead to a more sustainable agriculture, and to help farmers test innovative ideas.

"We know there is a tremendous reservoir of knowledge and initiative in the farmers and growers in the region," Magdoff said. "Farmers have a lot of good ideas, but sometimes they can't afford to take the risk of giving them a try. We hope that what these farmers are doing will be helpful not only for them and their neighbors, but that we may also learn things that can be used in other places."

The Pennsylvania farmers selected for funding are:

- Dwight Mickey, of Chambersburg, who will receive \$1,839 to evaluate the effectiveness of reduced chemical measures in a commercial peach and apple orchards. The project will use mating disruption and pheromone traps for insect control, and will compare conventional chemical fumigation with using canola oil to control dagger nematodes. Diseases will be monitored and the participants will make predictions for pears and apples with a leaf wetness recorder.

- Ellen Reker, of new Tripoli, who will receive \$5,000 to

demonstrate the use of cashmere-producing goats to reclaim a 13-acre abandoned pasture. Reker's goal is to show that the goats can be used as a cost-effective alternative to chemical weed and brush control, as well as to characterize the types of weeds and brush goats can control.

- Derek and B.C. Dickson, of Franklin, who will receive \$5,000 to build three constructed wetland on their farm to improve water quality and wildlife habitat and educate other farmers. By taking selected areas of the farm out of production, the Dicksons are

attempting to balance productivity with environmental goals.

- George W. Freeman, of Knox, who will receive \$3,890 to demonstrate the effects of different timber harvesting strategies in Pennsylvania hardwoods. The project will focus on the long-term economic effects of harvesting on the total farm budget. This demonstration/study will be maintained for at least 10 years as a training site for farmers and loggers by the Penn State Cooperative Extension, the Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry, and others.

- Diane Matthews-Gehringer,

of Kutztown, who will receive \$2,155 to compare the effectiveness of releasing parasitic wasps and insecticidal baits in reducing fly populations in hog and cattle housing.

- James Perkins, of Bath, who will receive \$1,830 to experiment with the use of peracetic acid to control soft fruit rots in strawberries and raspberries. The project's goals are to determine whether peracetic acid (which breaks down to vinegar and water) could provide an environmentally benign alternative to currently available fungicides.

JAY ZEIGLER ROOFING CONTRACTOR

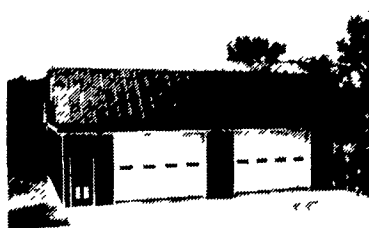
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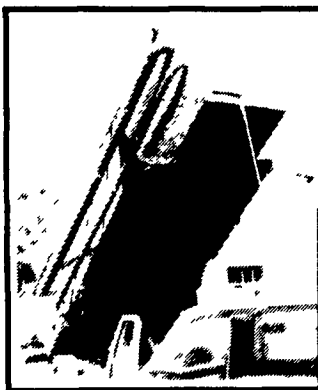
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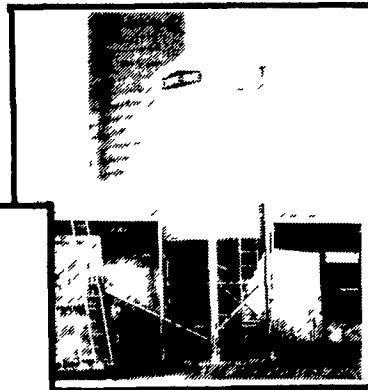
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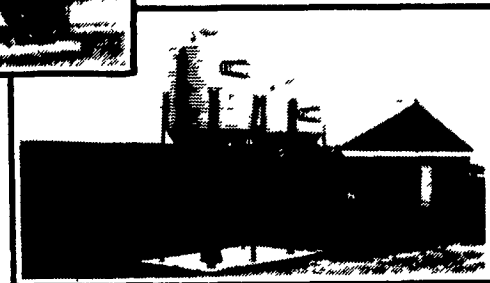


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