

# Field Days To Highlight Sustainable Ag

MILLHEIM (Centre Co.) — A series of field days will be held in Pennsylvania this summer to show a wide range of sustainable farming techniques being used on farms in the state.

Sponsored by the Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA), the public is invited to attend any or all of the field days at no charge. Printed fliers for each field day, including directions, can be obtained by calling the PASA office at (814) 349-9856.

• On August 6, Ed and Lorraine Rits will host a field day at their farm near Honey Grove in Juniata County from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The Rits have a cow/calf beef operation on 205 acres and utilize intensive rotational grazing methods. Previously, they raised hogs and dairy cows on high input grain crops. They will discuss how and why they have converted to their

present system. Also highlighted will be a matua brome grass seeding, composting demonstration, fencing and watering systems, and much more. The field day is cosponsored by PASA and Rits Consulting Service. Lunch will be available for purchase. For more information, contact Ed Rits at (717) 734-3745.

• On August 11 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Walnut Acres in Snyder County at Penns Creek will hold a special farm field day to show organic production of vegetables, grains, and legumes in a five year rotation. Walnut Acres is one of the oldest organic farms in the state, with affiliated food processing and mail order sales businesses that are known nationally and internationally. Lunch will be available for purchase. For further information, contact PASA or Walnut Acres Customer Service at

(800) 344-9025.

• The final 1993 summer field day will be held on August 31 and will focus on dairy grazing at Garry and Linda VanDeWeerts' Grassroots Farm near Athens; Bill, Janet, and Curtis Browns' Browncroft Farm near Rome in Bradford County, and two farms across the border in New York state. The VanDeWeerts will show low-cost rotational grazing alternatives, experimental forage crops (including Puna chicory, Matua grass, and others), pastured poultry, and much more. Dr. Jerry Jung of the USDA Pasture Research Labs will give a presentation on the forage trials that he has conducted with the VanDeWeerts on their farm for the past few years.

Browncroft Farm features a rotational grazing system that has been in use since the late 1950s

when the Browns started farming. Advocates of small scale dairying and diversity, Bill was named a Pennsylvania Master Farmer in 1990. The Browns are a seasonal dairy with approximately 30 to 35 registered Holstein milkers. They also have a sugar bush and maple syrup business.

The Aug. 31 Pasture Field Day

is cosponsored by PASA, Bradford Co. Cooperative Extension, and Cooperative Extension in Chemung and Tioga counties in New York. For more information, contact PASA or Tom Maloney at Bradford County Cooperative Extension (717) 265-2896.

For more information, contact PASA at (814) 349-9856.

## Water Quality Practices At Workshop

UNION BRIDGE, Md. — On Thursday, August 5 the Monocacy Watershed Project will be conducting a workshop for farmers on cover crops (9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.) and methods of livestock management (12:30 p.m.-2:30 p.m.) to protect water quality.

The free workshop will be at the Union Bridge Community Center on Ladiesburg Road in Union Bridge.

Drawing on his many years of research on cover crops, Dr. Morris Decker of the University of

Maryland will talk about the benefits of planting cover crops. As a separate topic, the Maryland Agricultural Cost Share (MACS) program for cover crops will be explained. Because the deadline for signing up and getting approved for this fall's planting season is August 15, all farmers interested in this program are urged to attend.

As a wrap-up to the morning session, the workshop will look at how a barnyard area needs to be managed as one system to keep animal waste and clean water

where you want them.

During the afternoon session the workshop will be looking at the value of new approaches to animal management. Streams play vital roles to farms and communities. The event will be looking at ways to get the maximum benefits for livestock while still protecting water quality.

One practice being used in Pennsylvania and Virginia is loafing lot management systems to provide exercise areas that minimize water quality problems. The workshop will be discussing and showing a video tape of several dairy operations of this type in Lancaster, Pa.

The main principle behind loafing lot systems is to rotate animals into at least three small 2-3 acre pastures after they have been milked and fed. Each pasture would only be used several days and would have time to rest and regrow before animals are turned in again. The pastures are not used for forage production, but are planted to grass, usually tall fescue, to maintain a protective cover to trap nutrients and stop soil erosion. During wet weather conditions, a sacrifice area, such as a concrete holding pad, needs to be used instead of the pastures so that animals are not on wet saturated fields.

Some of the benefits that have been observed from the creation of these pastures include a large reduction in the amount of soil lost from an exercise lot. Cows have cleaner udders, which reduces milking time. Cases of mastitis and reproductive infections are reduced. Grassed lots are cooler in summer than bare lots, reducing animal stress. Less time is needed to get the cows in for milking. Cows exhibit heat better on grass than on concrete. The public image of farming operations is also improved by the cleaner-looking pasture and farmstead areas.

Another topic we will review is the concept of rotational grazing systems for livestock operations. The event will include a videotape of a beef cattle operation in Pennsylvania that successfully uses these practices.

If you have any questions on either of the two half-day sessions, contact the Monocacy Office at (301) 898-0133 in Frederick or (410) 775-7434 in Carroll County.

## N.Y. Dairymen Serve As Examples For Clean Water

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The voluntary, locally based effort by farmers in the New York City Watershed Program should serve as a model for the reauthorization of the Clean Water Act, New York State Commissioner of Agriculture and Markets Richard T. McGuire last week told members of a U.S. Senate subcommittee.

In testimony before the Senate Environment and Public Works Subcommittee on Clean Water, Fisheries and Wildlife, McGuire said the New York City program has a "proven record of success" and stressed the program's importance for the development of national nonpoint source (NPS) pollution control policy.

"The program is locally delivered and administered by an existing — not a new — group of institutions with whom farmers are familiar; who understand farming science, methods and techniques, and farm business operations; and whom farmers trust," McGuire said in describing the success of the New York program.

"The system for pursuing the city's water quality objectives, as they are affected by the agricultural segment of the watershed community, was arrived at by negotiation and consensus — not by fiat."

The New York City Watershed Program is a cooperative effort to preserve water quality in the New York City Watershed area involving the farm community, New York City, local government and

New York State.

The program is based upon the prospective voluntary adoption of best management practices to control NPS by more than 550 dairy farmers in the New York City Watershed area.

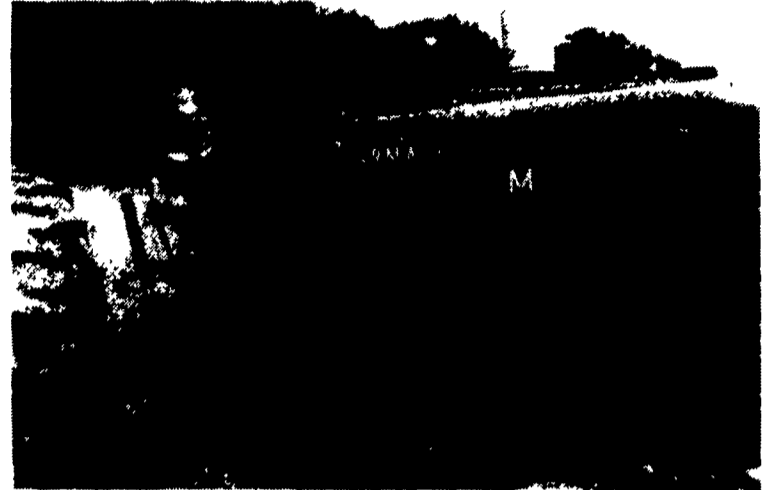
According to McGuire, the city's original intent was to establish mandatory restrictive agricultural land use regulations. However, after consultation a locally developed and administered program of best management practices, tailored farm by farm, with the voluntary cooperation of the farm operator was determined to contribute far more to achieving water quality goals, as well as enhancing the viability of the farm enterprise and the agricultural economy.

McGuire, who also testified on behalf of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA), emphasized that a key element of the New York program was cost sharing.

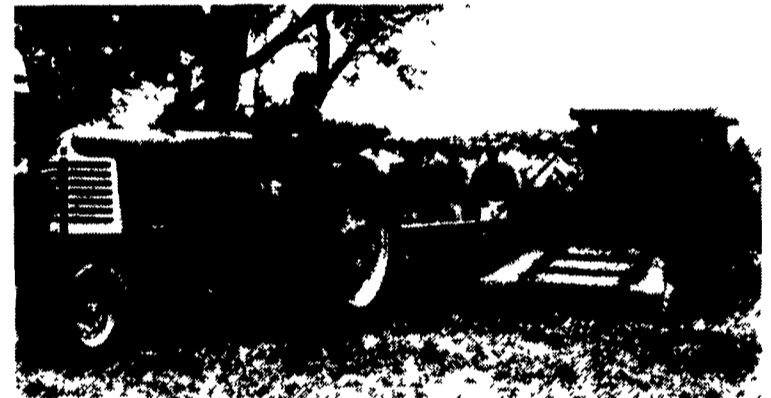
"The cost of both the farm planning process and the installation of practices called for by each plan to achieve the pollution prevention goals of the responsible agency is financed by the responsible agency — or, in any case, not by the farmer," he said. "Once the front-end costs are overcome, these improvements will benefit the economic operation of the farm." McGuire urged the Subcommittee to "strongly consider" the principles embodied in the New York City program.

## Ag Showcase

(Continued from Page A22)



Farnall M real close.



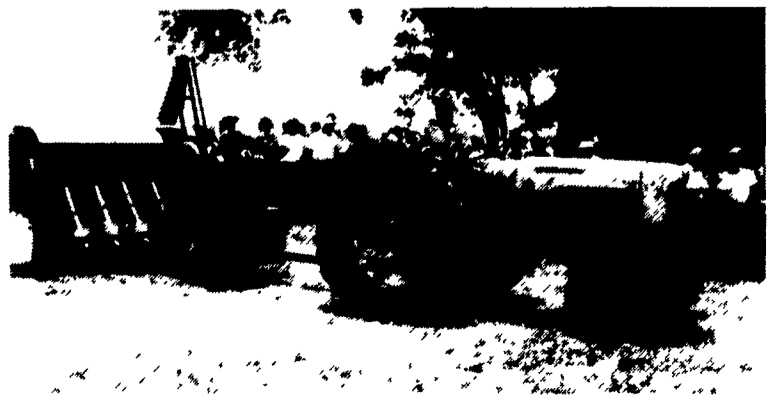
The old Oliver and the Allis Chalmers baler.



John Deere B and John Deere baler.



Two Oliver tractors.



Fordson and 77 New Holland baler.