

Forage And Grasslands Awards

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State Farmer from the Future Farmers of America.

Calvert has been promoting the use of forages and grasslands on a professional basis for more than 30 years. In 1962 he became the ag extension agent in Somerset County. He then became the ASCS county director in Somerset County in 1969. Eleven years later, after realizing that grasslands and pastures were the key to soil conservation in much of Pennsylvania, he accepted a position as area conservation agronomist for southwest Pennsylvania, a position which he holds today. As area conservation agronomist, he was a promoter of pastures and grazing before it was recognized by most people as an economically and environmentally sound management option.

Shortly after beginning his current position, Calvert began Project Grass. This project promotes the use of grass as a feed and soil conservation combination. Although the project was originally planned for southwest Pennsylvania, it has stimulated similar projects in other areas of the state and in surrounding states. Project Grass has involved hundreds of farms in the southwest region in "on-farm" demonstrations and research addressing new grass species, fencing techniques, and animal and grazing management on grass pastures.

Calvert is active in church and local activities. Tom and his wife Lianne make their home on a small sheep operation in Somerset County.

Research/Extension Award

This year the research/extension award went to Dr. Lowell L. Wilson, a long-time Professor at Penn State University in the Department

of Dairy and Animal Science.

In 1966, Wilson joined the faculty of the Pennsylvania State University. His research at Penn State has been extensive, but has recently centered on the research projects at the Haller Farm at Penn State. He has published numerous scientific papers and more than 400 producer oriented articles.

Wilson's extension research in animal science makes him a top choice to receive an award from the Forage and Grassland Council. Without knowing about the animals that consume the forage, it would be difficult to understand what changes we can make in forage production to benefit the animal and ultimately Pennsylvania agriculture.

Forage/Conservation Farmer Award

Earl Weaver, from Lancaster County, is this year's recipient of the Forage/Conservation Award. Weaver operates a 90-acre dairy farm near New Holland. He cooperated with both the Soil Conservation District and Penn State Extension in planning and establishing his conservation practices.

The farm is cropped in alternate strips of alfalfa and grain. All fields are on the contour and sod waterways are well maintained at all times. Erosion is substantially below that required by the Pennsylvania Clear Stream Law. All corn ground is cover cropped with rye, which is harvested in the spring as silage for additional feed.

Conservation Award

Jeff Stoltzfus and Frank Lucas, of the Pequea-Mill Creek Project in Lancaster County, have been named as joint recipients of the 1993 Conservation Award.

The Pequea-Mill Creek Project

(under the control of the Soil Conservation Service, Penn State Cooperative Extension, and Agriculture Stabilization and Conservation Service) has a mission of improving water quality by reducing non-point source pollution.

The Pequea-Mill Creek Project is comprised of 135,000 acres of intensively farmed land in central Lancaster County. Stoltzfus and Lucas have worked to see that the mission of this project is accomplished. They have developed and lead tours and educational programs, and conducted on-farm demonstrations. As a result, 30 farms have installed manure storage facilities, 24 have installed barnyard runoff controls, seven have installed erosion control practices, and more than six miles of stream have been fenced to exclude livestock.

Their educational programs and demonstrations involving rotational lot management systems have been exemplary. This system is a form of rotational grazing to protect sensitive areas around farmsteads and to enhance animal health. Cattle are rotated through a series of grass lots based on the condition of the sod.

The goal of the rotational lot management system is not to provide forage, but rather to provide a grassed, comfortable, and environmentally-friendly exercise area for cattle.

Outstanding Pasture Producer Award West Region

Santino Barchiesi, Jr. (Greene County)

Santino Barchiesi, Jr. utilizes pasture and rotational grazing as the major forage source for his 50-cow dairy herd on Greene County Farm. Santino began

intensively grazing in 1987 with a few acres but now has incorporated more than 67 acres into his grazing system.

Santino maintains his pastures of cool-season forage species by topdressing regularly with nutrients. He has established adjustable fencing so that pasture size can be reduced or increased as needed. He has allowed his system to serve as a model for other systems and continues to host field tours and farm meetings at his farm.

Along with his grazing practices, Barchiesi has installed contour strips and spring developments, and employs the practice of cover cropping and conservation tillage to minimize soil erosion from his farm. He is involved in several local farm organizations and was recently named District Cooperator of the Year.

Central Region Ernest VanTassel (Somerset Co.)

Ernest VanTassel has been selected as the outstanding pasture producer for central Pennsylvania. His herd of 55 registered Jerseys utilize pastures as a major component of the dairy ration.

VanTassel and his wife, Kimberly, started intensive grazing prior to moving to their 190-acre farm in 1987. They have converted the crop land on the farm to pastures soon after purchasing it and today there are no row crops on the farm.

The reasons for using pasture are many for the VanTassels, but two of the most important are the money savings and low input required to intensively graze their herd. Along with establishing their intensive grazing, they have planned and installed spring developments and an agriculture waste pond to better utilize the resources they have on the farm.

Northeast Region Max Dehart

(Northumberland County)

The recipient of the outstanding pasture producer award for the northeast region of Pennsylvania is Max Dehart of Northumberland County.

Dehart utilizes pastures extensively as a forage source for his sheep flock of more than 500 ewes and beef herd of 50 cows with calves. These animals graze on approximately 180 acres of pasture.

Permanent fencing is used to divide 120 acres of pasture with the remainder being perimeter fenced and temporary fencing used to cross fence. This allows for complete flexibility to adjust paddock size as the pasture growth fluctuates during the grazing season.

His permanent pastures consist of alfalfa/orchardgrass mixtures, alfalfa/timothy mixtures, birdsfoot trefoil/orchardgrass mixtures, and ryegrass/clover mixtures. Supplemental pastures of Sudan grass/sorghum are also seeded. Excess from these pastures is stored as large round bale silage for use during the winter. Max indicates that he regularly limes (two tons/acre every four years) and overseeds his pastures with legumes to improve quality and productivity.

Dehart is involved in numerous local and statewide farm organizations. In addition, he and the farm manager have been very cooperative in opening the facilities to visitors. They have hosted several farm tours/meetings, including the 1992 Multicounty Livestock Tour.

Southeast Region William Elkins (Chester County)

William Elkins is owner and

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