

# Nutrient Management Planners Approved

**SMOKETOWN** (Lancaster Co.) — The USDA Soil Conservation Service has added the names of eight individuals to the list of fertilizer vendors and crop consultants approved to develop nutrient management plans for environmental protection in the Pequea-Mill Creek Project area of Lancaster County.

In all, 47 agricultural chemical dealers and private consultants have completed nutrient management training and have passed an examination sponsored by Penn State Cooperative Extension and the Soil Conservation Service.

These vendors and consultants are qualified to provide services in

nutrient management planning for farmers needing a nutrient management plan to meet township requirements or for the construction of a manure storage facility. If a nutrient management plan is required for the purpose of constructing a manure storage facility, the cost of the plan can be incorporated into cost-sharing.

Farmers can also use the services provided by these planners to begin learning about the nutrient management process and the factors that will be considered in the upcoming mandatory and voluntary nutrient management programs. Planners will use soil test, manure production, and crop

production information to recommend nutrient applications from manure and fertilizer to achieve an optimum agronomic yield while ensuring acceptable environmental protection. Included will be a manure spreading schedule, recommended rates of manure application, and the fertilizer required to meet crop production needs.

In addition, 15 of these planners are certified to provide information on integrated crop management (ICM). ICM is a program of nutrient and pest management for which cost-sharing is available from the ASCS.

A wide variety of industry and private consultants are involved.

A list of approved planners is available from the Pequea-Mill Creek Project, Lancaster County ASCS, and the Lancaster County Conservation District.

This initiative is part of the USDA-funded Pequea-Mill Creek Project to improve water quality in central Lancaster County. Also included in this voluntary program

are incentives to help farmers implement best management practices (BMPs) to improve water quality.

For more information, contact Jerry Martin at the Pequea-Mill Creek Project office, 307B Airport Dr., P.O. Box 211, Smoketown, PA 17576-0211, (717) 396-9423.

## Sterling Farms Cooperator Of Year

**CHALFONT** (Bucks Co.) — William Sterling of Sterling Farms was recently honored by

the Bucks County Conservation District as this year's "Outstanding Conservation Cooperator."

The award was presented by John Thomas, district manager, as part of the Bucks-Mont Crops Day Program.

Thomas said, "I give Sterling Farms a lot of credit for persevering with their conservation farming efforts in the rapidly developing lower end of Bucks County."

Sterling Farms consists of approximately 250 acres located at 2186 Twining Road near Newtown. Sterling grows a wide variety of crops, including corn, soybeans, vegetables, small grains, and hay. Vegetables grown include sweet corn, peppers, tomatoes, potatoes, cucumbers, pumpkins, and squash.

Although labor intensive, growing and marketing vegetables to many local stands has allowed Sterling Farms to survive in the rapidly developing area. Finding enough farmland to make a living at growing just grain crops wasn't feasible due to lack of open land in the area.

Bill Sterling is a sincere believer in soil conservation and was one of the founding directors of the Bucks County Conservation District. Sterling developed a conservation plan for this farm in 1968, the year he acquired it. Sterling said, "the original farm was settled sometime in the 1700s, although I never actually researched it."

Since 1968, Sterling has installed more than 58,000 feet of terraces, 9,000 feet of grassed waterways, and more than 200 acres of contour farming. Cover cropping, crop rotation, conservation tillage, and crop residue management are also practiced throughout the farm.

Many of the terraces and waterways on the farm were built with Sterling's own equipment, along with some guidance from the USDA Soil Conservation Service.

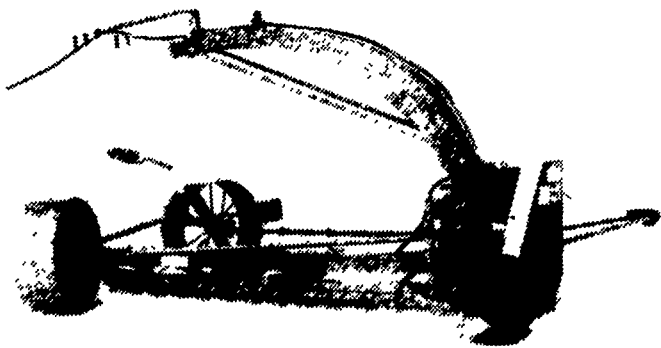
Edward Brzostek, district conservationist for the service, said, "In my 20 years of service, I have rarely seen a farm with the amount of well-maintained conservation practices as that of Sterling Farms. It really makes you feel good inside seeing a conservation farm like this one."

Sterling pointed out that he is just one of the workers on the farm, and that his nephews Tom and Jim McGowan are now responsible for a major portion of the operation. He said he is both glad and proud of the way Tom and Jim have accepted the growing responsibilities on the farm. He credits much of the farm's current success to their hard work.

# Patz

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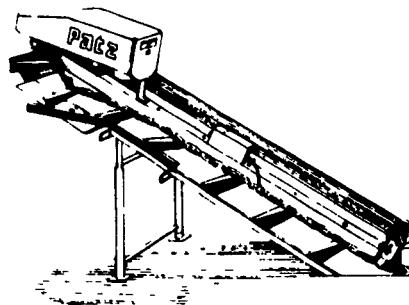
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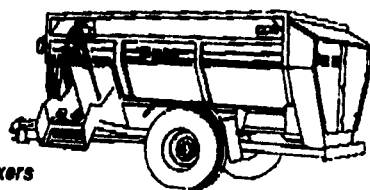
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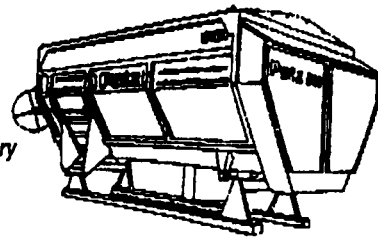
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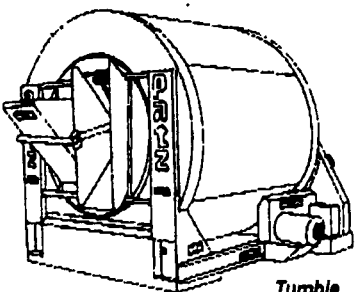
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