

Ag Program Releases Youth Grants

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — State Agriculture Secretary Boyd E. Wolff has announced the funding of 43 projects under the third round of the Agriculture and Rural Youth Organization Grant Program. The grants were made available to organizations that benefit youth in the commonwealth such as 4-H and FFA.

"We're very pleased to continue supporting the youth grant program," Wolff said. "Every area of the state was represented in this round of funding."

The organizations were able to apply for direct grants of up to \$2,500 and matching grants of up to \$15,000. Direct grants will be used to fund educational projects, programs, seminars, or field trips, and matching grants will be used to fund capital projects and equipment purchases.

The State Agriculture and Rural Youth Development Board selected seven matching grant and 36 direct grant recipients from 91 eligible applicants. The counties, recipients, their locations, the amounts of the awards, and the use of funds are as follows:

Matching Grants

Berks County:

- Tulpehocken Area FFA, Bernville, \$660, develop an agricultural environmental study area.

Bradford County

- Northeast Bradford FFA, Rome, \$8,934.52, construct a greenhouse.

- Rainbow Riders Riding for the Handicapped, Troy, \$15,000, erect a handicapped riding facility.

Bucks County:

- Upper Bucks County AVTS - FFA Club, Perkasie, \$3,000, con-

struct a greenhouse for the horticulture program.

- Quakertown 4-H Club, Quakertown, \$5,000, develop a rural/urban learning center.

Chester County

- Pulaski Middle School, Chester, \$7,500, construct a greenhouse.

Lebanon County:

- Northern Lebanon FFA, Frederickburg, \$2,500, build an agricultural learning laboratory.

Direct Grants

Adams County:

- Battlefield FFA, Gettysburg, \$2,500, fund a conservation school project.

Beaver County:

- Blackhawk School District/Blackhawk FFA, \$2,440, develop an organic recycling system.

Bedford County:

- Northern Bedford County High School FFA, Loysburg, \$2,497.50, develop an agricultural video learning program.

Berks County:

- Kutztown FFA, Kutztown, \$2,433, develop an agricultural science workshop.

- Tulpehocken Area FFA, \$2,500, purchase agricultural science laboratory equipment.

- Twin Valley FFA (Berks/Chester Counties), Elverson, \$2,500, develop an agricultural literacy program.

Bradford County:

- Rainbow Riders Riding for the Handicapped, Troy, \$2,000, purchase a two wheeled cart with access for driver in a wheelchair.

Bucks County:

- Delaware Valley College FFA, Doylestown, \$2,000, Present an agricultural Career Day program.

- Bucks County 4-H, Doylestown, \$2,500, develop a "lending box" service for 4-H projects.

Butler County:

- Butler County 4-H Tractor Club/Butler County 4-H Development Committee, Butler, \$1,000, develop a farm safety program.

Centre County:

- Students for the Responsible Use of Animals, University Park, \$2,500, develop and distribute educational materials.

- Penns Valley area FFA, Spring Mills, \$2,400, construct an environmental trails project.

Chester County:

- Pulaski Middle School Garden Based Science and Community Service Project, Chester, \$2,500, purchase a self-contained portable growing unit.

Clarion County:

- Clarion County 4-H Development Committee, Clarion, \$2,500, develop a series of day camp opportunities.

- Clarion-Armstrong-Indiana Tractor Safety, Clarion, \$2,500, provide volunteer training for farm safety.

Crawford County:

- Conneaut Valley FFA, Conneautville, \$2,500, initiate a hydroponic/aquaculture system for the agriculture classes at Conneaut Valley High School.

Cumberland County:

- Cumberland County 4-H Development Fund, Carlisle, \$2,500, fund an agriculture camp.

Dauphin County:

- Pennsylvania Family Farm Foundation, Harrisburg, \$2,500, fund a youth leadership program.

- Pennsylvania State Grange Junior Grange, Harrisburg, \$3,500, prepare and implement

Rural-Urban Family Organization or the Junior Grangers statewide.

- Pennsylvania Association FFA, Inc., Harrisburg, \$2,500, provide statewide leadership conferences for FFA members.

- Halifax Area FFA, Halifax, \$700, sponsor a series of safety demonstrations.

- Pennsylvania State Grange Youth Development, Harrisburg, \$2,500, develop youth leadership workshops.

Delaware County:

- Delaware County 4-H, Media, \$2,500, purchase experimental learning materials.

Eric County:

- North East School District, North East, \$2,497.54, Purchase greenhouse equipment.

Huntingdon County:

- Standing Stone FFA, Huntingdon, \$2,426, beekeeping project.

Indiana County:

- Indiana County 4-H Development Fund, Indiana, \$3,347, sponsor an "Animal Awakenings" 4-H day camp.

Lancaster County:

- Cloister FFA, Ephrata, \$2,500, purchase laboratory equipment and related materials.

- Grassland FFA, New Holland, \$2,500, establish a Floral Arrangement laboratory and a Retail Marketing Workshop.

Lebanon County:

- Cedar Crest FFA, Lebanon, \$2,500, develop an educational agriscience laboratory.

McKean County:

- Bradford Area FFA, Bradford, \$2,500, forest management and logging safety workshops.

Montgomery County:

- Montgomery County 4-H Creamery, \$3,500, conduct youth animal science day camps.

Northumberland County:

- Northumberland County 4-H Development Council, Shamokin, \$2,358.39, develop a program for the reduction/reuse/recycling of trash.

Somerset County:

- Berlin Brothersvalley FFA, Berlin, \$2,199.85, develop an agricultural mechanics safety program.

Southwestern Counties:

- Southwest Region 4-H Program Development Committee, Greensburg, \$2,500, Sponsor an agricultural and animal science camp for youth in 9 southwestern counties.

Tioga County:

- Northern Tioga School District, Elkland, \$2,500, conduct the Dale Carnegie self-enhancement program for students.

Warren County:

- Warren County Cooperative Extension, Warren, \$2,500, provide educational sessions related to careers in the forest industry.

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In Another Set-Back, Hog Venture Loses Building Permit

BELLAIRE (Lancaster/Dauphin Cos.) — Plans for a major hog operation to be built on a 122-acre farm located next to the Village of Bellaire may have to be reconsidered now that its building permit has been revoked and neighbors are turning up the heat. The site of the proposed 5,400-hog (1,800 sows, 100 boars, 3,500 piglets) feeder operation lies along the banks of the Conewago Creek at Mapledale and Bellaire Roads, near the point where Dauphin, Lancaster and Lebanon Counties meet.

At its Feb. 9th monthly meeting, the Conewago Township (Dauphin Co.) Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to revoke the building permit for construction of two new hog buildings and a 3.5 million gallon manure storage system. The permit had been granted last fall to MACH 3 Partnership, owner of the property.

MACH 3 is comprised of four Lebanon County investors, including Leon G. Hoover, President of Farmer Boy Ag, Inc. of Myerstown. White Oak Mills, Inc. of Elizabethtown has agreed to obtain the animals, provide the feed and run the operation except for the manure management and application. MACH 3 plans to spray-irrigate much of the manure on 82 acres at the site and haul away the rest.

The Conewago Twp. Supervisors, one of whom is a full-time farmer, took the unusual step of revoking the building permit

because MACH 3 had failed to provide evidence that it met at least three conditions attached to its Land Development Plan approved last August that are required prior to commencement of the operation. In passing the resolution to revoke the permit, the Board also directed the Township Solicitor to immediately notify MACH 3 and ask them for an explanation. The Board declared the hog project to be "a high priority item" and said an officer would be assigned to have it regularly monitored.

Conditions attached to MACH 3's Land Development Plan included a requirement that at least 300 acres be "available on a continuing basis" for manure application, compliance with Dauphin Co. Soil Conservation District recommendations and those of the Conservation District of any county in which the manure is applied, weekly monitoring and recording of discharge from the manure storage outflow pipe, testing of the Conewago Creek every three months, soil testing every three-years, annual notification of where manure is to be applied, and submission of the manure storage facility design to the Federal SCS Office.

The Bellaire site has been criticized by residents in the immediate vicinity, all of whom are on well water, as well as those in Elizabethtown Borough, situated three miles south. Conewago Creek, a high quality stream which flows into the Susquehanna River, supplies Elizabethtown

residents up to half of their public water.

About 100 homes are located within three quarters of a mile of MACH 3's Bellaire farm. The local residents are concerned not only about groundwater contamination but also that the quantity of water needed for the hog operation could cause their well levels to drop significantly.

It is common knowledge that MACH 3's site, which contains a 100-year floodplain, frequently floods during heavy rains and spring thaws. The land percolates poorly and it contains eight underground tile drain lines which flow directly into the adjoining Creek and related tributaries that run through the land.

A group of about 35 local residents have formed a group, Concerned Citizens of Bellaire Area, which has been meeting regularly since last summer. In addition to the water problems, they are also worried that the operation will result in putrid odors. Many of these residents are farmers, retired farmers or were raised on farms. However, they see this as a "hog factory" which will spew out pungent odors that would never be permitted from a manufacturing plant. Paul J. Liskey, Jr., Chairman of the group, says that the operation is "fraught with environmental risks which make it wholly inappropriate for this location." The Concerned Citizens are also troubled by the possibility that fly populations could become intolerable. They also note that high decibel readings from the

hog barn fans could be highly irritating to anyone sensitive to such noise within a 1½ mile radius.

Mr. Liskey claims that he and his neighbors are not "just raising the 'NIMBY' flag (Not In My Back Yard)." He says that "it is plainly irresponsible to place an operation like this in low-lying, flood-prone land along the banks of a high quality stream located just a few miles from a significant public water source. An operation like this belongs on high ground, away from streams and rivers and away from population centers."

Members of Concerned Citizens of Bellaire have vowed to fully exercise their legal rights. They have been soliciting support from the entire neighborhood, encouraging everyone to have their wells tested and to consider having their properties appraised prior to the commencement of the hog operation. Nothing that pollution laws, particularly those associated with waterways, oftentimes cast a wide net, the group suggests that area farmers who participate in the project, either in accepting the manure or co-owning the pigs, might be liable for damages. The group recently retained as its environmental counsel Eugene E. Dice, former chief litigator of the DER.

Leaders of the Concerned Citizens of Bellaire Area met in January with Lebanon Attorney George Christianson, one of the MACH 3 Partners, to convey their concerns with the project and urging MACH 3 to implement all possible means to minimize the

potential odor, water and noise problems associated with the proposed venture. Although MACH 3 is considering a two-stage lagoon system in place of the single lagoon, with only second-stage liquids being spray irrigated on site, the citizens group was told that the Partnership is unwilling to purchase a manure digester which has been proven to both control odors and produce energy. At this meeting the group suggested it would be willing to buy the land for 30% over the price MACH 3 paid for it a year and a half earlier, but this proposal was rejected.

Representatives of the citizens group also met earlier this month with John Wagner, President of White Oak Mills. They expressed disappointment that the Company rejoined the venture after Mr. Wagner stated last summer that White Oak Mills was severing its involvement with this particular operation.

Mr. Liskey is quick to point out that Concerned Citizens of Bellaire Area "supports traditional family farms and responsible agribusiness." He says that the group has received a great deal of support from farmers who consider the MACH operation a threat to the traditional family farm and an abuse of the exemptions from DER permitting granted to the agriculture ventures. Persons wanting more information may call or write Liskey at (717) 367-5088, 665 Koser Rd., Elizabethtown, PA 17022. The next meeting of the group will be March 10th.