

Outstanding Cooperators Keen About Education, Conservation

ANDY ANDREWS
Lancaster Farming Staff
NEW HOLLAND (Lancaster Co.)—By exhibiting a keen interest in educating the public about farming and the values of conservation, Rapho Valley Farm, operated by Jere and Bonnie Swarr, Manheim, was honored as the 1994 Outstanding Cooperator at the Lancaster County Conservation District banquet Thursday night at Yoder's Restaurant.

In one example, the Swarrs invited Millersville University students in to learn about raising livestock and to "experience what conservation is all about," said Gerald Heistand, assistant administrator, Chesapeake Bay Program.

Rapho Valley Farm, which consists of 167 acres, is located in Rapho Township near Rt. 283.

With the rented land from three other farms, the Swarrs have about 300 acres of tillable land, according to Heistand.

In addition to his own farm work, Jere custom plants between 900 and 1,200 acres of corn and soybeans. The Swarrs raise 500 beef cattle and 2,500 hogs each year.

In 1948 Earl Swarr, Jere's father, purchased a farm that needed a conservation plan. According to the district, the farm was being plowed up and down the hill. There were basically three large fields in the operation.

Earl Swarr began by taking a steep hillside out of production and transforming it into a wildlife cover. Jere started making some of the management decisions in 1977, and took over the farm in 1981,

when a conservation plan was written stressing minimum tillage on the contour with heavy residue.

Heistand showed the more than 100 attending the banquet that large amounts of residue are left on the land in a series of slides. "Some people have trouble getting 30 percent (coverage)," he said, to meet requirements. "Here, we might ask, can we see 30 percent of bare area?"

During the six years Swarr has been working with the district, he has done a considerable amount of conservation work, according to the district. Even though he has been planting his corn no-till, some waterway and terrace work had to be done since he did not have a large amount of hay.

Some tile drainage was installed to help get more infiltration, leav-

ing less water available for runoff. He signed up with the Chesapeake Bay Program in 1987 to help with installation of a diversion and manure storage structure. After improving the manure situation, Swarr used ASCS cost-share programs to help with the installation of some pipe-outletted terraces.

Various practices installed on the farm include 800 feet of waterway, 2,350 feet of subsurface drainage, 1,225 feet of pipe outlet terrace, 635 feet of underground outlet, 1,650 feet of diversion, and a manure waste structure.

Swarr cites several challenges that farmers need to address. The first challenge is to get manure incorporated and at the same time keep adequate residue on the surface for erosion control. Second is how to deal with compaction on long term no-till situations. Third is how to relate to the urban community.

Swarr is tackling some of these challenges by getting involved. He is one of the township supervisors in Rapho township. This gives him an opportunity to become involved in decision-making that affects landowners.

To work at the second challenge, he plants 90 foot strips of rye cover crop which allow him to drive on alternate fields and shoot the manure onto the planted rye. Then the rye can be no-tilled and the field that may have been compacted with the manure spreader can be minimum tilled.

To meet the third challenge, the Swarrs keep the lines of communication open with their neighbors. When it's time to apply manure next to the trailer park, they call the park owner to inform him as to when it will happen, and what is being done to keep the odor down.

The Swarrs have been doing conservation tillage, strip cropping, and cover cropping for more than 15 years. Swarr learned about

conservation through his father and by doing custom work on farms that had terraces already installed, according to the district.

There are two wildlife areas on the farm. One contains a wetland which they believe adds character to the farm. A farm pond was built in 1951 and was reconditioned in 1991. It has proved useful for irrigation purposes in five of the past 11 years.

Swarr practices conservation on the land which he rents. District records show that these acres are located on 12 different tracts, some of which are next to urban areas.

A nutrient management plan was written that uses the pig and cow manure on both the owned and rented land. When yield checks were done eight years ago, Swarr was unable to find a yield response, so he stopped using starter fertilizer.

On the home farm the following crops are cultivated: 130 acres of corn; five acres of soybeans; eight acres of tobacco; eight acres of wheat; and five acres of meadow.

Only the tobacco ground gets plowed. Some of the other ground is minimum tilled with straight teeth on a chisel and about 40 percent of the ground is cover cropped in strips.

Jere Swarr said that farmers have to educate themselves "to understand the importance of what we do, and the long-term importance of our actions. If farmers would keep that in the back of their minds, conservation will just happen automatically."

Swarr and Bonnie have two sons, Eric, 9 and Tyler, 7. The Swarrs attend Bethel Mennonite Church.

Also honored at the banquet were Shirley Chrobot, for her contributions to the Youth Conservation School, and Don Robinson, district administrator, for contributions to the district.



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HEIFER AUCTION

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 30, 1994

10:30 A.M.

LOCATION: 10905 Keysville Rd., Emmitsburg, Md. DIRECTIONS: From Frederick take Rt. 15 N. to Rt. 140, Taneytown exit. Take Rt. 140 east towards Taneytown, make 2nd right on Toms Creek Church Rd., go to stop sign and turn left, then make immediate right back onto Toms Creek Church Rd., go to stop sign, turn right on Keysville Rd., Sale at first place on left. Watch for signs.

65 HEAD 65

Most are registered some with and some without papers. The majority are black and white Holstein; (5) red and white Holstein and (2) registered Brown Swiss.

(20) Bred heifers from 60 days - calving (20); (20) Open heifers at breeding age (20); (25) Open heifers 500-600 lb. (25).

All heifers have been calf vaccinated and are all tested for interstate shipment in last 30 days.

AUCTIONEERS NOTE: These heifers are in good body condition and have been well taken care of. If you need some good heifers don't miss this auction. Many are AI sired and raised out of herd of high producing cows with good udders and legs.

TERMS: Cash/Good check day of sale. Not responsible for accidents.

Auctioneers: Randy Ruby (301) 271-2321

Jay Ruby (301) 447-3675

Office (800) 443-9580

Owners:
Harry & Louise Ruby Glad Ray Farms
10905 Keysville Rd. Jim Kalholtz & Family
Emmitsburg, MD 21727 10609 Keysville Rd.
(301) 447-2657 Emmitsburg, MD 21727

LUNCH RIGHTS RESERVED

PUBLIC SALE

SAT., APRIL 2

At 9:00 A.M.

Farm Machinery and Misc. farm items of Roy Gladfelter. Located along Rt. 216, 4 1/2 miles west of Glen Rock, Pa. York Co.

FARM MACHINERY

IH #656 Diesel tractor w/wide front end, J.D. MT tractor, IH rubber tire wagon w/dump hoist, Killbros gravity bin wagon, IH #430 baler w/thrower, IH side delivery rake pto, IH 4 bottom plow, Shaver post driver, IH flail chopper, Century 3 pt. weed sprayer, J.D. #38 sickle bar mower 7 ft., 2 bottom plow and cultivators to fit MT tractor, rubber tire wagon, IH 4 row corn planter needs repairs, 2 wheel auger trailer, J.D. 13 disc grain drill, front end snow blade, Brillion cultipacker, MT J.D. tractor for parts.

MISC. FARM ITEMS

Small grain elevator, ground scoop, large Agway round hog feeder, fodder shredder, 2 good gasoline pumps, pto grass seeder, 100 locust posts, 2 platform scales, 3 rolls new fence wire, galvanized water trough, paper baler, grindstone, metal fence posts, chicken coop, wooden barrels, butcher kettle, and wagon load of misc. small items.

Refreshment rights reserved

Not responsible for any accidents

Terms: Cash or approved checks.

MR. AND MRS. ROY GLADFELTER

R.D. #3 Box 126

Glen Rock, Pa.

Tel. 235-1326

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Wehry's Clerks



Also honored at the banquet was Shirley Chrobot, center, for her contributions to the Youth Conservation School. From left, Sonia Wasco, Chrobot, and Nevin Greiner.

