

# Conservation Learned At Early Age

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Teresa said her sons already accompany their father and grandfather on several tasks on the farm.

It was early on, too, that David remembers learning a lot about how to work the Lykens Valley farm — including the essential conservation practices that not only contribute to farm productivity but enhance the rural environment.

For education and compliance with conservation techniques early on, the Feidts were recently honored as the Dauphin County Conservation Farmers of the Year.

Eugene's father, Floyd, signed up with the district in 1955. Conservation practices were installed in the years since, and additional improvements were made after Eugene purchased the farm in 1986.

Eugene said the farm tills about

250 acres altogether, spread over two separate farms and including rented acres. The Feidts plant about 130 acres of corn and 80 acres of alfalfa, in addition to about 30 acres of barley. They maintain about 75 acres of woodland and 10 acres of pasture.

The Feidts take care of about 80 milking cows, about 75 percent of which are registered and the remainder grade. They maintain the same number of replacement stock. Milking is from tiestall to pipeline, and they are signed up with the Atlantic Dairy Cooperative.

"I feel that strip and contour farming is beneficial in controlling erosion, along with no-till and minimum-till," said Eugene. "Our manure storage is saving us on use of fertilizer."

David said that contour acreage equals about 100 acres, with



David Feldt shovels grain into a wagon for his son, Nicholas, to feed the cows.



Eugene Feldt begins milking. Notice the use of extensive newspaper bedding for cow comfort.



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another 150 acres in strip cropping. In the Lykens Valley, there are a great deal of hilly areas, and drainage and handling the water are special challenges.

But those challenges were met years ago with the installation of about 2,500 feet of tile drainage. A drainage basin was installed last fall. "Water maintenance" is often the key to successful conservation farming techniques, and using this system, the water does not wash away soil. The sites hold water for slow emptying into the Wiconisco Creek, which drains into the Susquehanna River.

Dealing with the qualities of the land and the soil is a challenge, too, considering the characteristics of the shale/slate soil, what soil experts call a Calvin-Lechhill shaley/silt loam. But the drainage site has worked well since its installation, even despite the heavy snow melt from the harsh winter season, according to David.

The Dauphin County Conservation District helped the Feidts sign up for cost sharing with the Chesapeake Bay program to install a manure storage structure. The circular concrete structure, which holds 350,000 gallons and is emptied twice a year, was installed in the fall of 1990.

One of the challenges that farmers in the areas face in the coming years, according to Deloris, is the problems with manure application. Even last summer, some "hot" manure was applied on a particularly muggy day, according to Eugene. Oftentimes the Feidts wonder if urban encroachment



Jordy Feldt, 3½, has learned how to clean the manure from the floor of the tie stall barn.

won't affect some of the things they do on the farm in the future.

Teresa said that, perhaps, spreading manure will be more of a "hassle" for farmers in the coming years. Deloris said that farmers will have to somehow try to get by considering all the DER and

"other laws and rules" farmers are becoming subject to.

But whatever the case may be, the Feidts are confident that the generation to take over the farm in the years to come will have plenty of education and experience to help them with their decision-making.

## Md. To Host Game Bird Seminar

COLLEGE PARK, Md. — Game bird breeders throughout the Mid-Atlantic area are invited to attend a Saturday seminar on biosecurity and disease prevention.

The all-day event is scheduled April 9 at the Maryland Department of Agriculture headquarters building on the northwest edge of historic Annapolis, Md.

Sponsoring organizations include the Maryland Department of Agriculture and the Mid-Atlantic Cooperative Extension Poultry Health & Management Unit (MACE), an amalgamation of avian health professionals associated with land-grant universities in New York, New Jersey, Pen-

nsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia, state departments of agriculture in four states, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Financial support is being furnished by feed supplies and the Delmarva Poultry Industry, Inc. Donors will be recognized at the conference. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m., and the program runs from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Noon lunch will be provided.

Free handout packets will include medication and soil treatment guides for game bird operators, a "Twenty Questions" sheet, and a "Good Neighbors" brochure, just published by MACE, that presents a detailed health

program for specialty flocks.

Roger E. Olson, program coordinator, notes that the seminar is the first of its kind ever held in the Northeast — and possibly in the nation. Olson is assistant state veterinarian for Maryland and assistant chief of the MDA's Animal Health section. He notes that game bird breeders are becoming aware of the need for biosecurity practices to ward off avian disease problems that threaten their operations.

Program topics will include avian influenza, Newcastle, and other diseases; laboratory diagnosis; biosecurity, nutrition, and other aspects of avian health management.