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Lancaster Farming

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For Promoting Conservation, State Honors Manheim Farm Family

ANDY ANDREWS
Lancaster Farming Staff
MANHEIM (Lancaster Co.) — In the so-called "good old days," Bonnie Swarr remembers how the steer feedlot wall had a hole in it so the runoff would run out into a stream which fed into a spring, carrying manure.

Routinely, farmers would use starter fertilizer whether the crops needed it or not.

Sloped land would carry sheets of soil downward, often depositing it into a small area of wetlands on their Rapho Valley Farm.

But, thankfully, those days are far behind. For efforts to stem soil erosion and to keep their land viable and profitable for farming, the Swarrs — Jere, Bonnie, and sons Eric, 10 and Tyler, 8 — were honored with the state Agway/Conservation Farmer of the Year recognition recently at the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts (PACD) annual awards banquet in Greensburg.

The Swarr family (honored as outstanding cooperators with the

district in March of this year) maintain about 167 acres on the home farm (about 148 tillable) and rent additional land, for a total of 300 tillable acres. They finish out about 1,200 head of hogs and about 360 head of beef heifers each year.

For more than six years, since the Swarrs joined the Lancaster Conservation District, the Rapho Valley Farm family has worked to preserve and protect soil and nutrient quality on their farm.

In an interview with *Lancaster Farming*, Jere remembered, years back, when something had to be done to stop the manure from getting into a half of an acre of wetlands on the farm. "When they experienced a real "gully-washer," said Jere, "we were having trouble with manure getting in."

Following the footsteps of his father, Earl, Jere began implementing no-till practices, which comprise about 30 percent of the total crops grown on the farm, to
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For efforts to stem soil erosion and to keep their land viable and profitable for farming, the Swarrs — from left, Eric, 10; Jere; Bonnie; and Tyler, 8 — were honored with the state Agway/Conservation Farmer of the Year recognition recently at the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts (PACD) annual awards banquet in Greensburg. Photo by Andy Andrews

Grober Inc. Presents A Modern Veal Raising Facility

VERNON ACHENBACH JR.
Lancaster Farming Staff
NORTHAMPTON (Northampton Co.) — The most modern veal-raising facility in the United States was presented to the public Wednesday, as milk replacement manufacturer for veal calves, Grober Inc., held a ribbon cutting ceremony at its newest research

farm near Bath. Representatives of the veal industry, officials from the state Department of Agriculture and others interested in the veal industry attended the event, which included a tour of the 360-stall Blue Mountain View Farm facility.

Grober Inc., founded in Canada

in 1974, specializes in veal feeds and in manufacturing milk replacers. It has since become international and has a headquarters not only in Canada, but in the Lehigh Valley, about seven miles from the site of the new research facility.

On first glance, the facility appears to be nothing out of the ordinary — it could well be a

180-foot, by 82-foot red-sided, modern dairy barn.

But closer inspection reveals that it is much more than that.

The layout of the building is such that the center is the feed storage, mixing and distribution center.

Projecting out from the center of the single-story building is a load-

ing dock that is outfitted with a moveable gate system so that the 2,000-pound containers of feed can be offloaded, or a shipment of calves can be brought in or trucked out with the least amount of stress to handler and animal.

Extending out on either side of

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Berks Extension Reports Year's Accomplishments, Goals

LOU ANN GOOD
Lancaster Farming Staff
LEESPORT (Berks Co.) — About 170 people attended what Steve Krupa calls the "annual shareholders meeting" held at the Berks County 4-H Community

Center on Monday night. Krupa, president of the board of directors, was referring to the Berks County Cooperative Extension Association 80th annual meeting, which reports on the activities of the extension, elects

new board members, and recognizes those who make the program successful.

Newly elected to the board were Becky Stubbs, Annamarie Schick, Ted Bowers, and Thomas Versagli. Ralph Sanner will replace an

ex-officio member. Evalina Bonilla was presented with a Nittany Lion statue for her 25 years as an adviser for the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP).

As an adviser Bonilla has taught

hundreds of women who lived in housing projects, mushroom growing areas, and low-income housing how to cook nutritiously. Through her efforts, many mothers were able to reclaim children who

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Providence Acres Provides New Home For Abma Family



Providence Acres, owned and operated by Shawn, Dorothy and Henry Abma, is a Dairy of Distinction located in the Endless Mountains of Pennsylvania.

CAROLYN N. MOYER
Bradford Co. Correspondent
EAST TROY (Bradford Co.) — God is in control.

These simple words printed on a chalk board greet all visitors to the Abma farm and serve as a simple testament to a faith that allowed 45-year-old Henry Abma, his wife, Dorothy, and their youngest son, Shawn, to make a move into unknown territory.

That unknown territory not only meant moving to a new location, but also starting a totally new career.

"We moved on May 26, 1981 from Wyckoff, New Jersey. The farm we came from was a poultry and a truck farm operation. It was called Abma's Farm. There we raised chickens and we had a big farm store that we used to sell products to the public. There were also retail and wholesale routes," said Dorothy.

The idea to move was sparked mainly because of a deteriorating

egg market. It became cheaper to buy eggs and the egg routes themselves were falling off. In addition, Henry's two brothers and their families were also active on the farm.

"We decided it's time we move," said Dorothy.

So the family started doing their homework. They contacted farm accountant Duane Mattocks through a mutual friend and he helped them every step of the way.

"We wanted to know what we needed. We had the money to buy a farm, but we wanted to know how much money we needed to buy our cows, your spring needs and all," said Dorothy.

"My husband had looked for almost 10 years for a farm. We really wanted to be beef farmers but we realized that we couldn't. We always looked in this area. He circled a spot on a map, and right in the center is where we landed," she said.

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