

## For Promoting Conservation, State Honors Manheim Farm Family

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stop erosion.

As a result, the wetlands are "in a lot better shape than they were," said Jere.

"My dad was conservation-minded," he said. "He'd always leave places where he'd lift the plow and leave waterways when he farmed and things like that so the soil didn't wash."

Jere purchased the farm from his father in 1981. Since then, he has installed a circular, raised, 480,000-gallon manure storage structure (1990). Also, the Swarrs have installed 800 feet of waterway, 2,350 feet of subsurface drainage, 1,225 feet of pipe outlet terrace, 635 feet of underground outlet, and 1,650 feet of diversion, according to district records. He cover crops with rye (no-tilled) and grows (on the home farm) 130 acres of corn, five acres of soybeans (no-till), eight acres of tobacco, eight acres of wheat, and five acres of meadow grass. 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.

One of the biggest challenges the Swarrs faced was what to do with the manure from the hog and beef operations.

The farm has about a 1/2 mile of stream which begins at a spring on their farm and ends on a spring, also on the farm. "We're right next to a small stream," said Jere. "It's determined that the small stream goes underground. So it was important. We had to do something. We wanted to do something. So that's how the manure storage came about."

The storage structure, with a 480,000-gallon capacity, is emptied twice a year. The structure was completed with cost-share money available through the Chesapeake Bay Program. The manure is chisel-plowed into the ground in the spring and the fall.

To save money and to reduce nitrate problems, the Swarrs reduced the amount of starter fertilizer and sidedress nitrogen used on the corn.

"We quit using starter fertilizer for corn eight years ago," said Jere.

"Most people just routinely used it," said Bonnie.

Some of the corn is sidedressed, if necessary. Mostly, the corn is chiseled to allow oxygen to get to the roots and improve aeration.

A lot of heavy rains caused some significant erosion on a lot of county farms this year. Jere said there were some places in the township that dirt accumulated on

roadways that had to be plowed off. Also, the rivers and creeks were muddy in July and August.

The only problems with some erosion were with the tobacco acreage because of the conventional moldboard plowing. But the soil in the other acreage held up despite heavy stormwater pressure.

In the future, Jere said he wants to add more terracing, either gradient or piped out. "That's kind of my long-term conservation plan. There's always things you can do."

Jere said the award recognizes those who have undertaken steps to not only install conservation techniques, but to promote those efforts. "They give the award to promote conservation. It's part of the program to sell conservation. I view it as though I've been appointed as kind of a spokesman for conservation."

As a spokesman, Jere has already appeared on two television programs about conservation, including a guest appearance on Blue Ridge Channel 11 ("Face the Issues" with Bob Brenneman) and on a "Day In the Life of the Bay," a special documentary with Channel 2 (Baltimore). The Swarrs served as host to Millersville University Students and to students from an earth science course at F&M College. (Jere said students conducted water tests on the pond, stream, and well, and found the nitrate levels well within safety limits.) Also, Rapho Valley Farm hosted a group of conservationists from Czechoslovakia and Jere has spoken to the Lancaster Chamber of Commerce.

Jere has been happy with the attitude of the Lancaster Conservation District toward the farms in its jurisdiction. "The conservation district has a more gentle, kinder approach. They'll work with you. If there's a problem, they'll warn you about it. They'll help you find a solution."

What worries Jere is the encroaching rules and regulations coming down the pike as a result of environmental litigation — and how those rules and regulations will affect farming.

Jere said the regulations will become more stringent. "But I like the way the county conservation district approaches" the regulations, he said, working as much as they do for the farmer's particular concerns and interests. "If we get to the point we're over-regulated, that's not good. Maybe some people would say we're there now. The regulations should equal the amount of environmental protection we need."



In the future, Jere, left said he wants to add more terracing, either gradient or piped out. "That's kind of my long-term conservation plan. There's always things you can do." Inspecting the terraces is Jere's wife, Bonnie.



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## Buttermore's Aged Cow Champion Holstein

DAVID HIEBERT  
Westmoreland Co. Correspondent

MUTUAL (Westmoreland Co.) — Though showers dampened the opening three days of the Westmoreland County Fair, a one-day count of 8,100 at midweek set a one-day attendance record for the fair, held at the county fairgrounds, in Mutual.

Total attendance peaked in 1991 at 78,000, and, despite the record one-day attendance, totalled 71,000 this year. According to Don Fretz, fair director, "The showers came at a most inopportune time."

However, attendance at the dairy shows was strong.

In the open Holstein competition, J.W. Buttermore, of Mt. Pleasant, showed an aged cow to capture grand champion title. James McQuaide, of Slickville, showed a 4-year-old to win the title of reserve grand champion.

In the youth division show, Kathy Hudson, of New Alexandria, showed the grand champion, a summer yearling, on her first time exhibiting cattle in a show.

The youth division reserve

grand champion was shown by Elizabeth McQuaide, of Slickville.

In the Jersey competition, Robert Lydic showed the senior and grand champion, while Brad Miller showed the reserve senior and reserve grand champion

animal.

The junior champion Jersey was shown by Joy Vance, while Janet Vance showed the reserve junior Jersey.

Dairy show judge was Dwight

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From the left, J.W. Buttermore holds the halter of his grand champion Holstein, while James McQuaide shows his reserve grand champion.