

Lancaster Conservation District Honors Farm Managers

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In 1953, Rohrer purchased the second farm, where his son-in-law Clyde Kreider lives. Kreider maintains the crops, and Glenn Rohrer takes care of the cows. Donnie Rohrer milks the cows every day and Joe Kark, herdsman, works for the Rohrers in the dairy operation. In addition, they have two part-time employees.

Wilmer Rohrer lives on the third farm, purchased in 1968. In 1985, Glenn and Clyde purchased the Lefever Farm tract, now known as the Rohrer and Kreider Farm. After the Chesapeake Bay Cost-Share Program began in the county, Rohrer Farms were signed up and work on terraces began. Already, 7,000 feet of terraces had been installed on the Lefever Farm, and another 7,000 feet were installed.

The four farms are operated as one unit, according to Heistand. The Rohrers have 21,920 feet of pipe outlet terraces. More than 10,000 feet of pipe have been installed. On the farm north of Blue Rock Road, where Kreider lives, 2,000 feet of diversion were installed in 1992 to catch surface water from the farmstead and filter it before going into the stream. The roof water is piped directly to the stream.

The Rohrers employ a lot of cover cropping. About 45 acres of wheat/barley are double-cropped into soybeans on the fields with a high erosion potential. A majority of the soybeans are planted no-till and on fields least prone to erosion, manure is chiseled in.

Of the 600 tillable acres, 200 are rented from four different tracts. The Rohrers grow 400 acres of

corn, 90 acres of soybeans, 70 acres of alfalfa, 45 acres of barley/wheat, 27 acres of tomatoes, 20 acres of tobacco, and 35 acres of pasture.

Diversity is evident in the farm operation. The Rohrers manage 300-500 feeder pigs and a 236-cow (180 heifers) dairy. They have installed two 98,000-gallon manure storage structures. Animals are housed on all four farms.

One farm has a farm pond, installed in 1964 after the children learned how to swim. The farm properties are well maintained. The Rohrers are active at Millersville Mennonite Church and the Kreiders are active at Marietta Congregational Church.

Glenn Rohrer told those attending the banquet that, regarding conservation practices on the farms, there is still "a lot to do yet in the future."

Also at the banquet, the Youth Conservation School honored four for their efforts for their service: Becky Fox, Ephrata; Tim Landis, Blue Ball; Chris Hall, New Holland; and Scott Reinhart, Denver.

Special conservation awards were also presented. For the state agency, Richard Vannoy, program specialist of the Bureau of Land and Water Conservation, Bradford County, was honored. A private sector award was presented to Harlan Keener, West Lampeter Township, for his pioneering work in biogas digesting using swine manure. The local agency award went to Bob Gregory for 10 years of dedicated service to the county conservation district. The educator award was presented to Clair Witwer, Pequea Valley agriculture instructor, for the FFA chapter's

leadership and service. A special cooperator award was presented to Atlantic Breeders Cooperative, represented by Harry Roth. Goo-

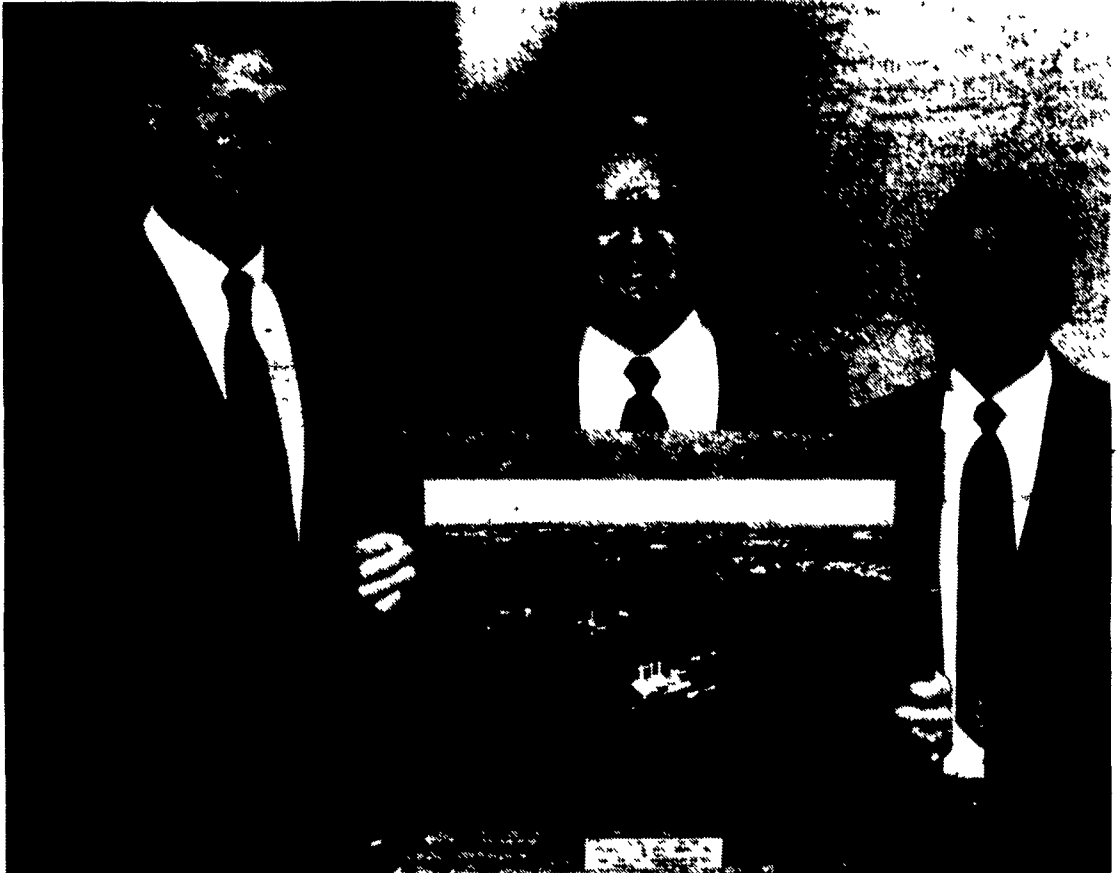
dyear awards were presented to directors and representatives of the district.

A special award was presented

to Nevin Greiner for choosing the new name of the county's conservation newsletter, to be named the "Conservation Crier."



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The Rohrer family, Manor Township, were honored with the Outstanding Cooperator Award Thursday evening at the 44th annual Lancaster County Conservation District banquet at Yoder's Restaurant. From left, Glenn Rohrer, Wilmer Rohrer, and Clyde Kreider.



Also at the banquet, the Youth Conservation School honored four for their efforts for their service. From left, Sonia Wasco, Phil Landis (for son Tim Landis), and Becky Fox.

Cheap Seed May Not Be A Bargain

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.)—Cheaper is not necessarily better when it comes to establishing forage stands, said an agronomist in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences.

"Each year at this time I hear about someone who got a 'real deal' on clover or alfalfa seed," said Dr. Marvin Hall, assistant professor of forage management and director of Penn State's Forage Variety Testing Program.

"But research shows you get what you pay for when buying seed," Hall said. "Some older varieties cost a third of what newer varieties cost, but ultimately you lose money to lower yields and more disease."

Price differences between varieties can be significant, Hall said. "Certified top-yielding red clover seed can cost 40 cents to \$1 more

per pound than non-certified seed. If you plant 12 pounds per acre and the difference in price is \$1 per pound, using a better variety of red clover costs \$12 more per acre. That may seem like a lot of money, especially since the seeds from each variety look the same."

But yield data from the variety testing program indicate that the extra \$12 is a sound investment.

"We tested many varieties at Penn State farms in Landisville and Rock Springs," Hall said. "In both locations, the newer, high-yielding red clover varieties consistently yielded more than common red clover."

Averaged over both locations in 1992 and 1993, common red clover produced .66 fewer tons per acre per year.

"Even if red clover forage is worth only \$75 per ton, the extra

income associated with the additional \$12 investment for high-yielding certified red clover seed would be \$49.50 per year," Hall said. "If the field is kept in red clover for only two years, you \$12 investment would return \$99."

Better seed means a better stand when it comes to alfalfa, too. Alfalfa varieties in Pennsylvania need at least moderate resistance to bacterial wilt, vericillium wilt, fusarium wilt, anthracnose and phytophthor root rot.

"If you have a chance to buy a no-name or older variety for a cheap price, reconsider how much money you're really likely to save," Hall said. "Using newer varieties with higher yields and better disease resistance will increase the alfalfa stand's life expectancy. The longer a stand remains productive, the more

years you have to spread out the high cost of establishing it."

One newer, highly disease-resistant alfalfa variety costs \$30 more per acre than an older variety, assuming a 15-pound-per-acre seeding rate and \$3 versus \$1 per pound of seed.

"But with average production for both old and new varieties and a value of \$80 per ton of alfalfa, the additional cost for the newer variety will be made up by the end of the first production year," said Hall. "By the end of the fourth production year, the newer variety

will have grossed nearly \$600 more per acre than the older one, which would have been plowed up at the end of the third production year."

The Penn State Forage Trials Report contains more detailed information on the performance of forage species including red clover, alfalfa, timothy, tall fescue, bromegrass, perennial ryegrass and reed canarygrass in Pennsylvania. The free report is available from the Penn State Cooperative Extension office in your county.

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