

Lebanon Conservation District Tours Farms

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Lancaster Farming Staff
LEBANON COUNTY — Although change in farming practices can be dramatic, it is not always apparent to the rest of the farming community, must less to the general population.

In that consideration, the Lebanon County Conservation District recently sponsored a tour of seven farms in the county to provide a demonstration of the types of soil, water and nutrient conservation practices that are being installed on area farms.

The program was held by the Lebanon County Conservation District in cooperation with with the county's Chesapeake Bay effort and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS, formerly the Soil Conservation Service).

Those visited who have adopted or plan to adopt some of the practices, most using cost-sharing, said they see benefit not only for conservation of resources on their farms, but also benefits to the operation of their farms.

Farms visited included the Gary and Barbara Lentz dairy farm, Dream-On Holsteins, well-known to area Holstein breeders; the Dave and Christine Williams farm, featured in *Lancaster Farming* for conservation practices and for lifestyle; the Thomas Shuey dairy farm with an existing cost-shared manure storage in the development of a spring development project and waterway construction; the Barry Donmoyer dairy operation with a huge top-loaded manure storage facility; the Harry Buck dairy farm; the Peter Hanson farm with a self-installed stream crossing and cost-shared streambank fencing (without permitting public access); and the Richard Wizar

farm and nursery, where a federally cost-shared wetland has been constructed within the past year.

The tour was primarily arranged by Douglas Wolfgang, agricultural resources coordinator for the Lebanon County Conservation District, but also had assistance by Ann Fackler with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Johan Berger, representing the state Department of Environmental Protection.

Berger was involved with the stream fencing project at the Hansen farm.

Fackler, a technician for NRCS, designs projects, does field work, inspections, and works one-to-one with farmers on technical aspects of project designs, such as how it fits into the farmer's operational plans, especially if a livestock expansion is to be considered.

She is authorized to design and approve waterways and diversions, spring developments, and well-head protections. She also does official inspections of manure storages as they are being put in.

Not all the farms were Chesapeake Bay contract projects. The Wizar shallow water wetland was done through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and represents the first wetland constructed to specifications in the county that serves as a model of what can be done.

Wolfgang said the overall purpose of the tour was to inform the general public and non-participating farmers on the possibilities of conservation projects through the Chesapeake Bay Program, or others through the Conservation District.

According to Wolfgang, up to \$30,000 of Chesapeake Bay Program moneys are available per landowner to assist in the design and



Ann Fackler, wearing sunglasses, with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, talks about the shallow water wetland installed on a farm through cost sharing with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.



Doug Wolfgang stands in front of this manure storage facility for Gary Lentz's (second from left) Holstein herd and discusses some of the considerations made in constructing the facility.

implementation of nutrient control and conservation practices.

Other programs can offer cost-sharing or funding or streambank fencing.

As of the tour, the county held

42 contracts with "high priority" farms in the county's portion of the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

"High priority" farms are those with serious problems needing immediate help.

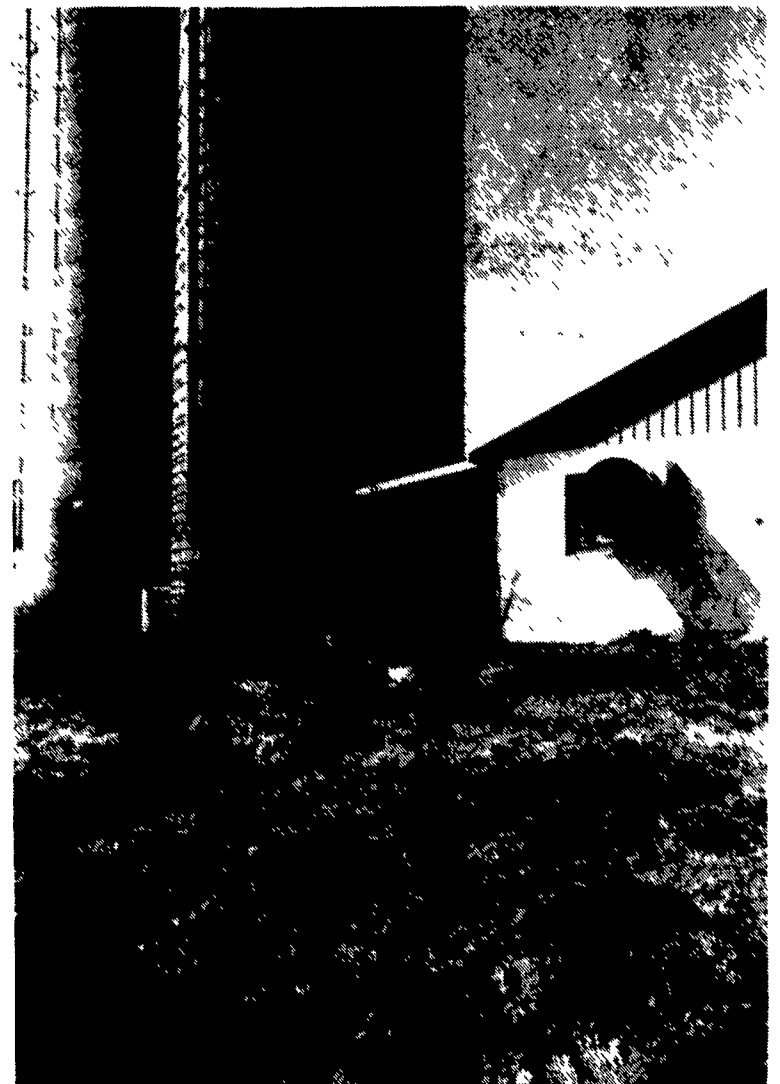
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At the farm of Peter Hanson, this cattle crossing was voluntarily put in at owner's expense, while the streambank fencing was paid for through a state Department of Environmental Protection conservation program.



Dressed in coveralls, Gary Lentz, owner of this farm, talks with members of a Lebanon County Conservation District farm tour who look at this manure storage facility which handles the manure from his replacement heifers.



Storm water runoff mixed with silage seepage has been eating away at the soil next to the dairy barn and silos at the Dave Williams farm. A concrete pad to collect and air dry silo seepage, and a stormwater diversion are planned as corrective measures.