

Land Preserved In Nick Of Time For Farm Viability

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there wasn't enough land per animal unit to take care of manure generated on the farm.

So, in what Noel describes as the "nick of time," an opportunity presented itself: he could acquire more land, about another 88 acres nearby. So he did — and promptly placed all of his land under agricultural preservation.

On Friday morning at the Noel and Elizabeth Schlegel Farm in Longswamp Township, Tipton, the Berks County Agricultural Land Preservation Board scheduled a celebration to commemorate 10,000 acres of preserved farmland in Berks County.

The celebration, under a tent erected in a hayfield on the Schlegel Farm, honored those who have also preserved their farms. Sam Hayes, Jr., state secretary of agriculture, was scheduled to speak at the commemoration.

The preservation board, along with the Berks County Board of Commissioners, invited the public to the celebration. The event, according to Susanne Sharadin,

director of the Berks County Agricultural Land Preservation Board, honored those responsible for the creation and administration of the agricultural land preservation program and those landowners who have protected their farms.

A brass quartet from Kutztown University was scheduled to entertain those at the event. Also, light refreshments of coffees, teas, juices, milk, and sweets were served, according to Sharadin.

The Schlegels have been farming the property since 1983 and purchased the property from Elizabeth's parents, Harry and Thelma Herbert, in 1986. The farm, close to Tipton, includes about 188 acres altogether. Of the 188 acres, 171 are in ag preservation. The Schlegels till about 230 acres, including rented ground.

Of the 230 tillable acres, 125 are in corn, 15 are in wheat, 50 are in alfalfa, 40 are in soybeans, and 33 acres are double-cropped in rye. The Schlegels milk 60 cows and care for another 45 replacements. They also have about 45 steers.

The Schlegels use a TMR from a



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At the Tipton farm, Noel said that he cares for the cropping and feeding programs at the dairy. Elizabeth, shown here, cares for the cows and keeps the records.



Some of the nice cows are pretty good producers, too — including "Carrot," a 3-year-old Holstein who milked 26,000 pounds as a 2-year-old, Noel noted.

commercial company.

On Pa.DHIA, the herd average is 25,500 pounds of milk. Milking is from tiestall to pipeline twice a day, at 5 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. They sell the milk to Rosenberger Dairy in Hatfield.

The farm sign reads "Shaynah Kee," Dutch for "nice cows," said Noel. Some of the nice cows are pretty good producers, too — including "Carrot," a 3-year-old Holstein who milked 26,000 pounds as a 2-year-old. The highest on record is a 4-year-old, "Susie," who milks 35,322 pounds.

Importantly, the additional land purchased gives them a good land base for the number of animals and the manure produced, according to Schlegel.

Schlegel believes that, previously, they could have been getting into trouble, according to the state nutrient law, for not having enough land for the manure generated. Now, with the additional

acres, "we feel we have a good land/animal/family operation," he said.

Also, additional land means more feed for the animals, enough so that the Schlegels shouldn't have to go elsewhere for feed.

The Schlegels maintain four upright silos, including a 20-foot by 80-foot for corn silage, a 20 by 70 for haylage, a 20 by 40 for high moisture corn, and a 16 by 50 for rye, haylage, corn silage, or whatever extra feed they have.

When they began farming, 80 acres was sufficient. But with more development, rented acreage had fallen and it was getting more difficult to find land to farm. "We got pinched," said Noel.

"This land came along in the nick of time."

The land will be used for additional corn and rye harvesting.

"We feel we're at a nice spot," said Schlegel, in terms of farm profitability. It's important that, with less worries over land availability,

you take the stress off yourself, he said, and allow farming "to be fun."

Years before, the Schlegels used to finish hogs and sell bull calves. They abandoned the hog operation to concentrate on the dairy.

Noel Schlegel said that he used to farm in Dryville with his father, Francis Schlegel. He still cares for land now that he dad is retired.

At the Tipton farm, Noel said that he cares for the cropping and feeding programs at the dairy. Elizabeth cares for the cows and keeps the records.

The Schlegels have three children: Sherry, 25, who works for a travel agency and is married to Dave Kutz; Kris, 22, who will soon be a graduate of Kings College in Wilkes-Barre; and Sheila, 18, a senior at Brandywine High School.

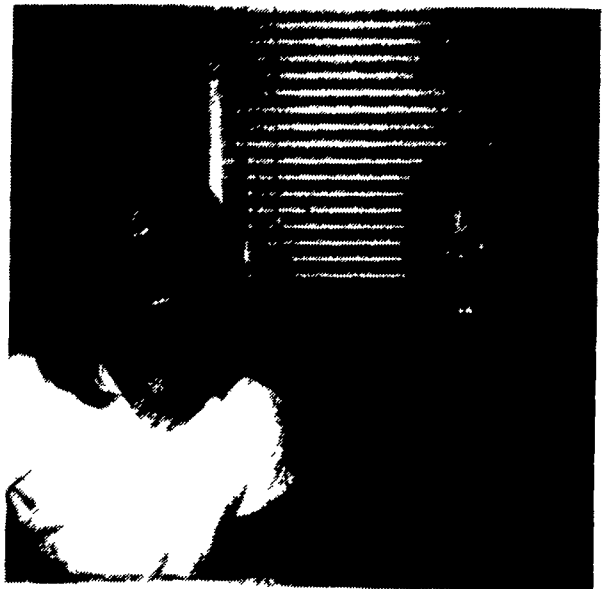
For more information about farm preservation, call the preservation board at (610) 378-1844.

Manor FFA Schedules Horse Show

MILLERSVILLE (Lancaster Co.) — The Manor FFA Chapter of Millersville will be holding its 5th annual Benefit Horse Show on May 17. The show is open to the public and everyone young and old are invited.

The show will be held at Columbia Riding Club, and will have classes for English and Western riders. The gaming classes will be in the upper stone dust ring and will start at 9:30 a.m. The English and Western classes will be held in the lower class ring and will start at 9 a.m.

All the proceeds from the show will go to help FFA members with their SAE projects, sponsor awards, and to help pay for the senior trip to Kansas City. If you would like more information or have any questions, call Laura Trautman at (717) 397-3996 or Carole Fay (adviser) at Penn Manor High School (717) 872-9520 ext. 1593.



Laura Trautman, chair of the Manor FFA Horse Show Committee and Ryan Nelson.

