

'Zero Potential' For Runoff Pollution From Lancaster's Award-Winning Conservation Farm

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Lancaster Farming Staff

NEW HOLLAND (Lancaster Co.) — It's an almost unheard of task for any conservation farmer: develop a bunch of methods so there is no chance — in other words, zero potential — for polluted runoff to enter streams bordering a property.

That daunting task fell successfully on one such farm.

For their far-reaching efforts to preserve soil, protect the environment, and maintain a large-scale Lancaster County dairy, Red Knob Farm from Wakefield, Little Bri-

tain Township, was honored Thursday night as the Lancaster County Conservation District Cooperator of the Year at Yoder's Restaurant in New Holland.

Attended by more than 250 conservation cooperators, agribusinesses, and friends of the district, the district's 48th annual dinner meeting and banquet honored Red Knob, composed of the Young family, and others for environmental stewardship and commitment to conservation.

Gerald R. Whiteside, Chesapeake Bay technician with the district, who helped present the

award, noted that Red Knob Farm "has taken on the enormous task of developing and committing to a goal of zero potential for polluted runoff entering the streams that border the property," he said.

How did they do it?

Two large sediment control basins lie on either side of the farm. The farm uses 2,500 feet of grassed diversion and 1,200 feet of gradient terrace. That combination conveys any runoff leaving the cropland to one of two control basins.

Some think the setup complicated. Simply put, during a rain

event, any manure that may run off carried through the pipe outlet terrace system or that seeps into the subsurface drainage will end up at one control point in either of the two basins. The basins are situated in such a way to allow for the "creation of a wetland environment as an added benefit and filter."

The dairy, a farm partnership owned by Henry Young and two sons Matthew and David, irrigate the liquid manure. A combination of primary and secondary discharges ensure that any runoff during irrigation goes through a series of underground pipes, grassed

diversions, and waterways back to one of two basins located below the second-stage lagoon, at which point it can be pumped back into the lagoon, according to Whiteside. If there is a large rain or mechanical failure during irrigation, any polluted runoff will be controlled and directed back to the storage facility.

According to Whiteside, the Red Knob Dairy partnership began in 1974 when the family established a new dairy operation on a farm owned by Henry. The partnership then leased the farm for 10 years until it was purchased by the

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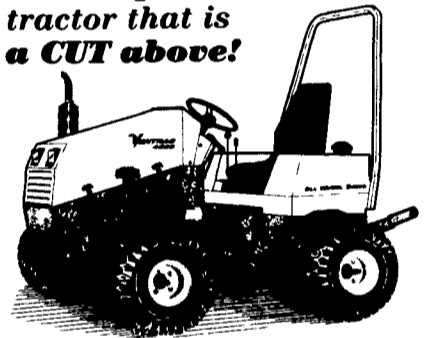
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