

Chester Conservation District Honors Members

ATGLEN (Chester Co.) — Several Chester County Conservation District members were recently honored at the annual meeting of the Chester Delaware Farm Bureau here at the West Fallowfield Christian School.

Following were honored:

• The Conservation Innovators Award. This award was presented to Donald Buster Needham and family, cooperators since 1982. The family operates Hy-Tech and Menu Mate Sales. Needham has toured extensively, seeking better technology and management to handle stormwater runoff and odor control.

According to the district, Needham is a pioneer in compost operations by importing equipment to mix and hydrate material used in making compost. The company has also been innovated in minimizing odors from their operations. Hy-Tech is undertaking a horizontal silo project to force air

into the compost.

At the first meeting of the mushroom growers to promote the Red/White Clay Land Treatment Program of NRCS and the conservation district, according to the district, Needham was the only representative from the mushroom community in attendance and who provided input and guidance.

• Stewardship Award. This award was presented to Knight Run Farm, Dennis Bush and family farm, West Fallowfield. The family farm has been an active cooperator with the district since 1963. Dennis Bush signed up in 1987. The Bush family has implemented best management practices such as diversions, waterways, manure storage facilities, contour strips, and nutrient management.

The Bush Family completed the Chesapeake Bay Contract in 1994. In 1984 the Bush Family was recognized with the Conservation Farmer of the Year Award. In 1998

the Bush family participated in a stream bank fencing project on Knight Run. More than 11,500 feet of stream bank fencing and five animal crossings were installed.

• Special Recognition Awards. One award went to NutraSoils, a spent compost recycling operation in the White Clay Watershed in London Grove Township. Another award went to the C.P. Yeatman Mushroom Farm.

For NutraSoils, Michael Losito and Henry Roberts purchased the Hudson Farm Fresh compost facility with the idea that it would make an excellent site to condition spent compost, according to the district. All runoff water is collected from earthen and concrete composting pads and recycled to a spray irrigation area. The spent compost is made into ricks, turned with machinery once each week. The operation produces finished topsoil in 18-28 weeks, rather than the typical two-year process of just

placing it in a field to leach. This operation and others like it will process much of the spent compost that, according to the district, in many places is improperly handled, with the potential for major pollution events. NutraSoils is participating in the Red/White Clay Land Treatment Program.

Another recognition award went to C.P. Yeatman Mushroom Farm in the White Clay Creek Watershed in London Grove Township. This farm family has been a cooperator with the conservation district since March 1948, the year the district began operations. Yeatman Farm is listed as "Cooperator #5."

This farm grows organic mushrooms and field crops. Jim, Bob, and Tim have participated in the Red/White Demonstration Program and the Red/White Clay Land Program. The Yeatmans have installed best management

practices such as waterways, drop boxes, piping, sediment traps, roof runoff management, runoff storage tanks, and nutrient management. This farm has always been open to neighbors, educators, and government officials who educate the public about this type of agriculture.

The Chester County Conservation Farmer of the Year for 1998 went to a plain farmer in West Fallowfield Township who completed a Chesapeake Bay contract. The farmer implemented best management practices which include stream bank fencing, protected animal crossing, a manure storage facility, a nutrient management plan, and roof runoff management. The farmer, who wished to remain anonymous, became a cooperator in 1997, but declined the recognition of the award. The board of directors will recognize his stewardship appropriately with a fruit tree.

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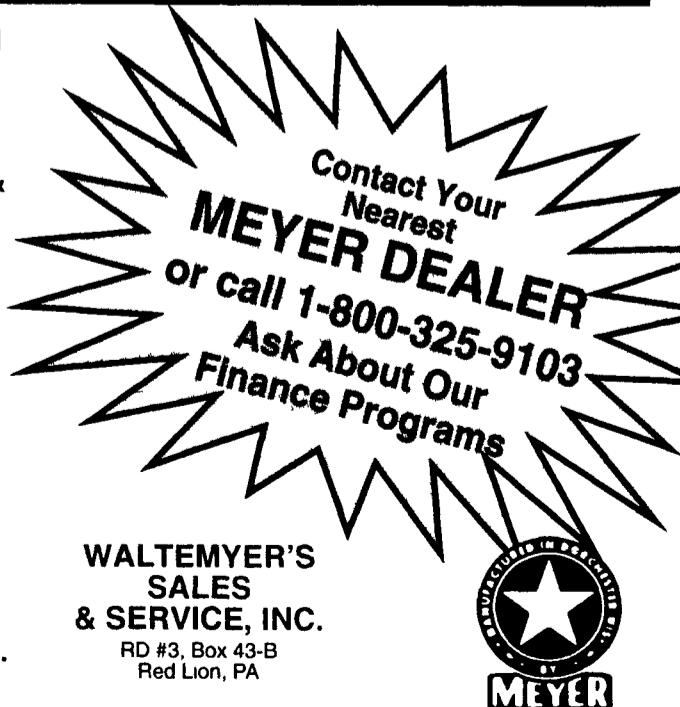
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