

Dauphin Soil Conservation Banquet Emphasizes Preservation

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Lancaster Farming Staff

DAUPHIN (Dauphin Co.) —

Honoring farmers, organizations, and students for their dedication to conservation, the Dauphin County Conservation District held its 2000 annual awards banquet at the Agriculture and Natural Resource Center last week.

During the meeting, three awards were presented, along with presentations to the high school speech contest winners. Award presentations focused on the efforts of award winners to conserving Dauphin County resources.

The Leffler Family was recognized as the 1999 Outstanding Conservation Farm Family. Mother Alfreida and sons Neal and Dennis farm 206 acres in Lykens Township, northern Dauphin County. The District commended them for their conservation ethic on their farm, implementing many conservation practices to conserve Dauphin County's water resources.

The Lefflers own 71 acres and rent 132 acres of land, all of which is included in their conservation plan. They also milk 80 head of dairy cattle. The Lefflers have been cooperating with the District for 10 years. Neal Leffler accepted the award for the family.

Joseph Ibberson was awarded the 1999 Forest Steward Conservationist Award. According to award presenter Jay Book, District board member, it takes 17 trees to clean up after every car that is driven today. "This gentleman helps those of us who don't own our 17 trees," Book said.

Ibberson owns 1,800 acres of timberland, which has been certified as a Tree Farm for 31 years. He has planted 12,000 seedlings, improved 1,095 acres with timber stands, built 15 miles of access roads, and constructed nine ponds on his property. Ibberson's natural sanctuary is also used as part of many educational programs.

In 1999, Ibberson donated about 200 acres of forestland and adjacent fields to the Bureau of State Parks. Known as the Ibberson Conservation Area, the park is used for informal recreation and forestry education. He recently endowed the Joseph E. Ibberson Chair of Forest Management at Penn State University. He was also honored as the 1998 Pennsylvania Tree Farmer of The Year.

The 1999 Outstanding Conservation Organization award went to the Wiconisco Creek Restoration Association, which includes 15 volunteer members. The association was honored for their commitment to the promotion of conservation and improvement of the Wiconisco Creek Watershed.

Some of the projects the association has been involved in include repairing and restoring a diversion well near Muir to correct the pH of the water flowing into the creek, sanddosing projects in the watershed's stream, stream debris cleanup in northern Dauphin County, and planting more than 6,000 trees in the Rodichok riparian buffer area near Sheridan.

The ultimate goal of the Wiconisco Creek Restoration Association is to make the Wiconisco Creek fishable, canoeable, and swimmable from its headwaters to the Susquehanna River.

Winners of a high school

speech contest were also honored during the banquet. The speech focused on the topic, "Wetland Preservation." Award winners included Patricia Minchoff from Upper Dauphin High School who received first place, Rachel Dutcher from Milton Hershey High School who received second, and Kenya Lewis from Milton Hershey High School who placed third. The girls received framed certificates and cash awards.

Minchoff gave her award-winning speech during the banquet, which highlighted ways to conserve wetlands. According to Minchoff, wetlands are disappearing at a devastating rate, up to 100,000 acres per year throughout the United States.

Educating people about the role of wetlands in the food cycle and in preservation of our environment was one suggestion that Minchoff gave for conserving wetlands.

President of the Dauphin County Conservation District



The Soil Conservation District honored the top three high school speech contest winners, including from left Rachel Dutcher, second place winner; Patricia Minchoff, first place winner; and Kenya Lewis, third place winner.

Board of Directors David Coble led the meeting and recognized board members and staff who attended the meeting. The guest speaker was Ken Hunter, an award-winning wildlife artist, who presented a program on "Research of a Wildlife Artist."

The Dauphin County Conser-

vation District was established in 1952 with primary emphasis on soil conservation with the farm community. To keep up with changing landscapes in Dauphin County, the District now focuses 60 percent of its work on urban or nonagricultural programs.

Annual Ohio Bull Test Sale April 15

BELLE VALLEY, Ohio — Belle Valley will echo with the sounds of determined buyers and bellowing cattle at the Ohio Bull Test Sale, April 15, beginning at 1 p.m.

This year's 31st annual performance tested bull sale is a cooperative effort of the Ohio Cattlemen's Association, Ohio State University Extension and the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center. The sale will feature several breeds including Angus, Charolais, Chimaine, Gelbvieh, Polled Hereford, and Simmental.

"The Ohio Bull Test is a 112-day performance test that primarily examines a bull's growth potential by measuring traits such as average daily gain (ADG) and weight per day of age (WPD)," said Eric Dorr, OSU Extension associate and director of beef improvement programs for the Ohio Cattlemen's Association.

The test serves as a way for seedstock producers to have their animals compared against those of other breeders, while providing them a proven marketing outlet at the end of the test, Dorr said.

"The test is an educational tool that demonstrates the variation in growth patterns of different types, breeds and kinds of cattle. It provides a standard, impartial post-weaning test for

rate of gain, soundness and condition. It's also an opportunity for breeders to collect progeny group information on herd sires," Dorr said.

The bull test begins in early November with the delivery of young, weaned, registered bulls to the Eastern Ohio Resource Development Center in Belle Valley, Noble County. Every 28 days, the bulls are weighed and their progress documented. On day 84, the bulls are weighed, ultrasounded for ribeye area and fat thickness and intramuscular fat (marbling), measured for hip height and frame score, and measured for scrotal circumference. The test ends March 15, and at that time, the bull test committee determines which bulls will qualify for sale.

Dorr said in order for a bull to qualify, he must have a Performance Index ratio of 90 or higher within his own breed test group.

"The ratio is established using a combined index of ADG and WPD between all the bulls in the same breed group. If a breed group has fewer than six head entered in the test, they are grouped with other breeds with fewer than six head — forming one mixed group."

A ratio of 100 equals the average ADG and WPD within each group. A bull with a ratio of 110 grew 10 percent faster than the average of the test group. A bull whose ratio equals 90 grew 10 percent slower than the average of that test group. The other minimum qualifications for sale bulls include a minimum scrotal circumference of 30 centimeters and a minimum frame score of 4.5. In addition to meeting these sale requirements, bulls are also evaluated on breeding soundness, which includes a semen check and reproductive examination, and must be classified a "Satisfactory Potential Breeders" to be included in the sale.

There is a minimum bid of \$1,000 on every bull. Producers will be able to purchase bulls

from four remote sale locations again this year. Bulls purchased from a remote location will be delivered free of charge to that remote sale location. Each remote site will have a video available. The video will feature bulls that will be sold on April 15. Anyone interested in purchasing bulls from a remote site should contact the following individuals for details about sale day procedures.

•Carroll County OSU Extension office: Court House, 119 Public Square, Carrollton. Contact Mike Hogan, (330) 627-4310.

•Knox County OSU Extension office: 1025 Harcourt Road, Mt. Vernon. Contact Troy Cooper, (740) 397-0401.

•Shelby County OSU Extension office: 810 Fair Road, Sidney. Contact Woody Joslin, (937) 498-7239 or Steve Foster, (937) 548-5215.

•South District OSU

MTBE A Boon

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The National Farmers Union (NFU) applauds the announcement by Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Carol Browner and USDA Secretary Dan Glickman that phases out the use of methyl tertiary butyl ether (MTBE).

More importantly for farmers, their announcement encourages additional use of renewable fuels that use farmer-produced commodities such as corn, a component in the production of ethanol.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposal calls for an eventual ban of the gasoline additive MTBE. The agency strongly backs the use of oxygenated fuels, but for some time has questioned whether it is safe to use MTEB as an oxygenate in gasoline. Because to its propensity to seep out of storage tanks and contaminate groundwater, the agency has recommended Congress eliminate it as one of the additives that cut exhaust emissions and

raise octane.

"This announcement is welcome news for family farmers," said NFU President Leland Swenson. "Establishing a renewable fuels standard provides a solid foundation on which the ethanol industry will grow," he said.

Last year, the NFU endorsed a national renewable fuels standard as well as legislation by Sen. Tom Daschle, D-S.D., that encourages the use of ethanol as the most practical additive for reducing ozone-forming carbon monoxide in reformulated gasoline.

"With the issues of sustainable energy and environmental integrity regaining prominence in the national consciousness, farmers are uniquely positioned to respond to this challenge of stewardship and production," said Swenson. "We are pleased with the leadership EPA has taken in proposing this change. We hope that Congress will work swiftly to enact this vital proposal."



The 1999 Outstanding Conservation Organization award was presented to Wiconisco Creek Restoration Association. Accepting the award for the association was from left Bill Nare, treasurer; Walt Finch, president; and Dave Fennell, secretary.