

Two Conservation Easement Purchases Completed On Northumberland County Farms

SUNBURY (Northumberland Co.) — The Northumberland County Agricultural Land Preservation Board (NCALPB) took the final step in purchasing agricultural conservation easements on two farms.

David Unger of Rush Township, NCALPB board chairman, announced that the closings were held in the office of Attorney Charles Saylor, Sunbury, for easements on the Patsy Truckenmiller farm and the Dale and JoAnn Lose farm, both in Delaware Township, Northumberland County.

The NCALPB was able to

purchase the easement through funds provided by Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Farmland Preservation. As a result, these landowners have preserved their valuable farmland for agricultural production for perpetuity.

The Truckenmiller and Lose farms are the seventh and eighth farms to be preserved in Northumberland County. The Truckenmiller farm consists of 141.44-acres, and the Lose farm is 164.27-acres, bringing the total amount of farmland preserved in Northumberland County more than 988-acres. All eight Northumberland County

easements were purchased entirely with state funds, for a total of \$948,203.72 paid to landowners and \$47,701.45 in incidental costs associated with the purchases. Northumberland County provides \$5,000 annually for the NCALPB to administer the preservation program.

The NCALPB is in the process of purchasing easements on two more farms. Unger said, "We anticipate the other two farms will close early in 2001. We are also hoping the state will provide funds to be able to purchase several more in 2001, following our next round of ranking."

Supplemental funds awarded by the state made it possible for the NCALPB board to accomplish what they have in 2000. Unger said, "The farmland preservation program in Northumberland County continues to grow, and our board is quite optimistic about the future of the program."

The purpose of the farmland preservation program is to save quality farmland. Many acres of farmland are taken out of production in Pennsylvania on an annual basis as a result of residential and commercial development. The holder of the conservation easement has the right to prevent development or other improvements to the land for purposes other than agricultural production.

Anyone interested in the farmland preservation program in Northumberland County may contact Carolyn Badman at (570) 568-1942 or Dennis DiOrto at (570) 286-7114, ext. 4.

Emerging Alternatives To Land Application Of Manure — Will There Be Enough To Go Around?

GEORGETOWN, Del. — The Delmarva Peninsula might not have enough poultry manure to meet demand for several projects that offer alternatives to land application of manure. That possibility was raised recently during a Baltimore area research symposium.

Bill Satterfield, executive director of Delmarva Poultry Industry, Inc., (DPI), the trade association for the broiler chicken industry on the Delmarva Peninsula (Delaware, Eastern Shore of Maryland, and Eastern Shore of Virginia) described several projects that are under way or being planned. He questioned whether there would be enough manure for these projects and manure's continuation as a fertilizer source for hundred of farmers. It is estimated that chickens on the Delmarva Peninsula produce approximately 600,000 to 800,000 tons of manure annually.

On the Delmarva Peninsula, at least four projects are under way or being considered.

Perdue Farms Inc. and AgriRecycle, Inc. have formed a partnership to construct a manure-to-pellet plant in Sussex County, Del. This facility will produce pellets that can be exported and used by Midwest farmers who grow corn fed to Delmarva's chickens. This facility is expected to use 80,000 tons of manure annually, or about 13 percent of the broiler chicken manure produced on Delmarva each year.

Allen Family Foods, Inc. is planning to operate a gasification co-generation plant at its Hurlock, Md. chicken processing plant. Power not used by the processing plant will be sold to electricity purchasers. This facility will use about 40,000 tons per year, or about 6.5 percent of

the local chicken manure.

Eastern Shore Forest Products, Inc. of Salisbury, Md. is developing a total litter management system that includes shipping manure off of Delmarva, burning manure to generate energy for a company operated manure-to-fertilizer plant, and setting up one-to-10 megawatt power plants that will be located adjacent to poultry company facilities. These projects will use at least 85,000 tons of chicken manure annually, at least 13 percent of the locally produced manure.

In addition, a British company called FibroShore is working to construct a large-scale manure-burning power plant on Maryland's Eastern Shore. Electricity would be sold to the highest bidder. This facility could use up to 350,000 tons of manure annually; approximately half of what is produced on Delmarva.

Satterfield pointed out that because of advances in feeding programs and new corn varieties, chickens may excrete less phosphorus in the years ahead, thus making more farmland available for manure utilization. Additionally, commercial products that bind phosphorus to the soil and the recently developed phosphorus index could expand the number of acres of farmland that can use manure in an environmentally safe manner.

Not included in the summary of alternative uses are smaller projects that use chicken manure compost and as growing media for flowers and nursery crops.

Satterfield concluded by stating, "Wouldn't it be ironic if Delmarva did not have enough manure to meet all these demands after so many people were critical about the alleged oversupply of manure?"

Crop Adviser Exam Registration Forms Available

EDGEWATER, Md. — Interested in becoming a certified crop adviser? Registration forms for the Feb. 2 Mid-Atlantic Certified Crop Adviser (MACCA) exams are available.

The exams will be offered in Richmond, Virginia, Annapolis, Maryland, and Charleston, W.Va. The sign-up deadline is Dec. 15.

The Mid-Atlantic Certified Crop Adviser Program covers crop advisers operating in New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia.

The MACCA exams are part of the International Certified Crop Adviser (ICCA) Program, a nationally recognized, voluntary certification program developed through the collaborative efforts of the public sector and the agricultural industry to ensure high standards for crop advisers. Local programs are administered by state or regional boards in association with the American Society of Agronomy, which handles similar programs for specialists in agronomy, crop consulting, weed science, and other agricultural disciplines. It is intended for anyone who makes nutrient, pesticide, crop, or environmental recommendations to producers, including dealers, distributors, applicators, consultants, manufacturers, allied industries, and state and federal agency personnel.

To date, 236 individuals have passed the rigorous six hours of exams and become certified in the Mid-Atlantic region.

To become Mid-Atlantic CCA certified, an applicant must:

- Have at least two years of crop advising experience with a bachelor's degree in agriculture, three years of crop advising experience with an associate degree in agriculture, or have a minimum of four years of crop advising experience post high school.

- Provide employer and client reference.

- Pass a national and the two MACCA regional exams.

- Sign a code of ethics.

To remain certified, a member must participate in 40 hours of continuing education during a two-year period with a minimum of 10 hours in any one year, and undergo an audit biannually by the MACCA Board to verify continuing educational and adherence to the code of ethics.

As a Mid-Atlantic certified crop adviser, an individual must receive continuing education credits for a wide variety of agricultural topics.

"The program helps demonstrate that the agricultural industry prides itself on high standards of professionalism and knowledge," said Louise Lawrence, chair of the MACCA.

Lynne Hoot provides administrative services for the MACCA program and can be reached at (410) 956-5771. For registration materials for the MACCA exams, contact Michele Welsh (608) 273-8080, before the Dec. 15 deadline for the Feb. 2 exam.

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