

## Nearly 50,000 Acres In Pennsylvania Offered For Crop Reserve Enrollment

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — Pennsylvania Game Commission Executive Director Vern Ross last week announced that farmers and rural landowners have offered nearly 50,000 acres toward the 100,000-acre goal for enrollment in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP).

"Not only will this program benefit small game hunting, but it also will go a long way toward improving water quality and reducing soil erosion into the Susquehanna and Potomac river basins. The Pennsylvania CREP represents a major step in the state's efforts to help restore our watersheds and meet Gov. Tom Ridge's upstream commitments to help protect the Chesapeake Bay," Ross said.

Eligible land must have a cropping history or be marginal pasture. Land must be planted with conservation cover such as native warm-season grasses, cool-season grasses and legumes, or trees and shrubs. Farmers and landowners are offered annual rental payments (rental rates will vary by county and soil type, but range from about \$55 to \$200 per acre), with the possibility of a one-time bonus payment for implementing certain conservation practices, such as riparian forest buffers, grass filter strips, or creating wetlands. Landowners also receive up to 100 percent cost-share for installing such practices.

CREP does not target Pennsylvania's best farmland, but rather focuses on those lands in most need of conservation. The program will influence less than three percent of the farmland in the 20 counties eligible for CREP, but it will positively influence

water quality, recovery of declining wildlife populations and farm income.

USDA began taking offers for enrollment in CREP on June 1, 2000. Program enrollment will remain open until at least Sept. 30, 2002, or until the 100,000-acre cap is reached. So far, more than 1,600 landowners have offered 49,236 acres for enrollment in CREP in the 20-county region.

A listing of the total acres offered through May 15, for enrollment in the eligible counties is: Adams, 1,573 acres; Bedford, 2,000 acres; Berks, 1,039 acres; Chester, 397 acres; Columbia, 6,340 acres; Cumberland, 847 acres; Dauphin, 2,913 acres; Franklin, 1,802 acres; Fulton, 1,530 acres; Juniata, 1,266 acres; Lancaster, 636 acres; Lebanon, 234 acres; Montour, 2,425 acres; Northumberland, 8,869 acres; Perry, 826 acres; Schuylkill, 3,819 acres; Somerset, 4,080 acres; Snyder, 3,180 acres; Union, 1,777 acres; and York, 3,682 acres.

Klinger noted that wildlife habitat biologists have completed eligibility determinations for 1,036 landowners on about 28,000 acres. He also said that wildlife habitat biologists have completed nearly 700 conservation plans encompassing more than 19,000 acres. Nearly 7,300 of those planned acres also are part of the Game Commission's Cooperative Farm-Game Program, which has improved hunter access to private property for more than 60 years. Almost 5,000 acres are planned to be planted this spring with native warm-season grasses, and nearly 800 acres are forested riparian buffers.

Landowners interested in par-

ticipating in CREP are encouraged to contact the habitat biologist assigned to their respective county:

- Brian Wolff is working with landowners in Bedford, Fulton and Somerset counties. He can be reached at (814) 445-6876, ext. 130;

- Colleen DeLong is working with landowners in Northumberland and Union counties. She can be reached at (570) 286-7114, ext. 114;

- Dean Shank is working with landowners in Adams and York counties. He can be reached at (717) 334-2317, ext. 119;

- Sharon Scarborough is working with landowners in Cumberland and Franklin counties. She can be reached at (717) 249-3924, ext. 113;

- Roger Coup is working with landowners in Dauphin, Lebanon and Perry counties. He can be reached at (717) 921-2380, ext. 180;

- Scott Singer is working with landowners in Columbia and Montour counties. He can be reached at (570) 784-1062, ext. 126;

- Kevin Wenner is working with landowners in Berks and Schuylkill counties. He can be reached at (570) 622-1312, ext. 119;

- Chad Spencer is working with landowners in Juniata and Snyder counties. He can be reached at (570) 837-0007, ext. 113; and

- Josh Homyack is working with landowners in Chester and Lancaster counties. He can be reached at (717) 396-9423.

Landowners also may contact the USDA Service Center in their county, which is listed in the telephone book blue pages.

## Pennsylvania Represented At Conservation Reserve Forum

ST. MICHAELS, Md. — Representatives from 31 states gathered here last week to discuss the USDA's Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). CREP was lauded as the most effective federal conservation program, capable of addressing up to five million acres of agricultural land in the 50 states.

The focus of the CREP Forum was implementation strategies of the different states and the status of the 2002 federal Farm Bill that will determine the future of CREP, as well as other federal farmland programs.

Highlights of the forum included a discussion by Congressman Wayne Gilchrest of Maryland on the importance of CREP in Maryland and his perspectives on the Farm Bill. Congressman Tim Holden of Pennsylvania, a member of the House Agriculture Committee, was represented at this meeting by a member of his staff. In addition, Tim Searchinger of Environmental Defense and Ron Helinski of the Wildlife Management Institute also spoke on the benefits of CREP and their organizations' perspective on the 2002 Farm Bill.

Pennsylvania's

CREP was presented by Scott Klinger of the Pennsylvania Game Commission. In addition, existing CREP efforts in North Carolina, Delaware, Illinois, Maryland, Minnesota, New York, Oregon, Virginia, Ohio, Michigan, North Dakota, Missouri, and Washington were also described.

Pennsylvania's CREP is a partnership between the state and federal governments, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, the

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, and others designed to improve water quality and wildlife habitat. Pennsylvania's CREP focuses on highly erodible farmland in a 20-county region in the Susquehanna and Potomac watersheds.

For more information, contact Steve Taglang at (717) 783-8727 or e-mail taglang.steven@dep.state.pa.us.

## Farmers Sought To Serve As Sustainable Farmer Educators

BURLINGTON, Vt. — Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) announces a new program to promote sustainable agriculture in which three farmers will be selected to serve as Sustainable Farmer Educators.

These farmers will be proven experts in their fields who have experience sharing their knowledge with other farmers, extension educators and other agricultural professionals. They will have spoken at meetings, conferences, workshops, seminars, and field days, answered questions by telephone, e-mail and fax, and otherwise generously responded to requests for help and information.

In the upcoming year, Northeast SARE will reimburse these Sustainable Farmer-Educators for their time and the expenses they incur as they continue to share their knowledge.

For 2002, three Sustainable Farmer Educators will be chosen, one from each of the following subject areas: grazing management for dairy cows, horticultural crops, and agronomic crops.

Each of the Sustainable Farmer Educators will be awarded a grant for up to \$8,000 to reimburse travel, phone, fax, and e-mail expenses and to compensate for their time.

The activities of each farmer will be reviewed annually, and there is the possibility of extending the award for a total of three years.

Applicants should farm within the region, which is made up of Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia, and Washington, D.C.

This is a competitive program, and applications should be in the Northeast SARE office by Sept. 28. Selections will be made by Nov. 1.

To learn more about this initiative and Northeast SARE, call (802) 656-0471.

## Portable Sawmill Day Scheduled In Ohio

COLUMBUS, Ohio - Operating a portable sawmill takes more than buying a mill and locating logs to saw, said Ed Smith, natural resources specialist at the East District office of Ohio State University Extension.

Whether landowners are purchasing a mill for full-time employment or to produce lumber for their own property, they need to learn how to maximize its efficiency and use it properly.

Landowners and others interested in portable sawmills should attend Portable Sawmill Day, Saturday, July 14, from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Bruce Tree Farm in Monroe County. The day will offer basic information on owning and operating portable sawmills and considerations of buying a mill.

In the past 15 years, interest in portable sawmills has grown, Smith said. Today, there are more than 80 firms manufacturing portable sawmills.

"There are more than 200 models of portable sawmills available on the market," he said. "They range in price from less than \$5,000 to \$50,000 or more."

There are three basic types of mills: circular, band and chain. "The amount of production

and the quality of the product you will want to produce will determine the type of mill you should purchase. Generally, higher-priced mills will have more features and labor-saving devices than lower-priced mills," he said. At least two mills will be demonstrated throughout the day, and a number of resource people will be on hand to answer technical questions. A panel discussion of existing operators and a manufacturer is scheduled.

Other topics to be covered include sawing patterns; grading, stacking and drying wood; complying with governmental regulations; waste disposal; and sawmill safety.

Preregistration for the program is requested. Registration is \$10 per person and includes lunch. The Bruce Tree Farm is located approximately 10 miles north of Lewisville off Township Road 68.

For registration or additional information, contact the Monroe County office of Ohio State University Extension, (740) 472-0810; a county or local Extension office, service forester, or Soil and Water Conservation District; or Smith, (740) 732-2381, smith.25@osu.edu.

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