

# Herrs' Nottingham Pasture Project Saves Fence, Improves Stream

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This year Herr-Hope Farms was recognized with the Octoraro Riverkeeper Award presented at the association's banquet at the end of April.

The award is part of two or three given each year at the banquet. A variety of projects are usually recognized, such as an elementary school's wildlife habitat, according to Fasano.

The recognition is "long overdue" said Fasano. Herr Sr. is one of the founders and past president of the Octoraro Watershed Association.

Being conservation-minded began years ago, when A. Dale Sr. and did a lot of custom work. "I'd get around and see how other farms were being contoured and how things were being plowed," he said. "When I got home and had to plow over gutters, I said to my father that we had to do something about this."

Contours, however, were only a first step in changes on the farm. In 1970 Herr put first terrace in, a practice that is continued today, as Herr is working on installing more terraces on the farm.

"I think conservation has come a long way in the last 25 years," he said. "Farmers in the area are really doing a great job. There

are a lot of farms around where they're doing a beautiful job doing conservation terraces and no-till fields."

To combat the hilly fields of their area, the Herrs "do as much no-till as we can," said Herr Sr.

Herr Jr., who speaks of "being conscious of our own practices," and "showing the way," is enthusiastic about the management practices put in place on the farm.

Other farm management practices at Herr-Hope Farms include no-till corn and grain fields, plus many pipe outlet terraces, which direct the water into a pipe that trickles underground.

The farm includes almost 300 acres of tillable ground and 50 acres of woods. The Herrs plant more than 100 acres of corn, almost 100 acres of beans, with the balance in wheat, timothy hay, and tobacco, besides 20 acres of pastures that includes a stream. The Herrs pasture bred heifers for their neighbors.

The Herrs have not regretted fencing the heifers out of the stream. "I can't understand why every little stream in Lancaster isn't fenced in," said Herr Jr. "The money is available."

"I knew the time was coming when we would have to keep the cows out of there," said Herr Sr.

Since money was not available, the Herrs put the fence in themselves.

"A lot of people that have done it (fenced the cows out) realize that their cows do much better when they're not in the steam," he said.

Fencing animals out, said Scott Reinhart, program biologist for Ducks Unlimited Inc., provides not only better habitat for wildlife but also health benefits to the herd, decreasing mastitis and hoof problems, among other illnesses.

Besides decreasing herd health problems, the plants that begin to grow between the fences are beneficial. "The vegetation serves as a huge grass waterway that slows flooding and helps take out nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus," said Reinhart.

Since 1937 Ducks Unlimited Inc. has worked to protect and restore wetland areas. The organization can provide money to assist landowners to restore wetlands.

For example Ducks Unlimited will pay the full cost of fencing



The west branch of the Octoraro River no longer curves toward the fence, thanks to several stream bank management practices put in place in recent years at Herr-Hope Farms.


and plantings. The landowner is responsible for the cost of installing stabilized crossing or watering access points.

If a producer would like to install other practices such as grass waterways, barnyard curbs, barn-

yard roofing, or diversions, they can earn cost-share credits (at \$1,000 per acre) by installing larger-than-minimum buffers. Minimum size is 15 feet.

Contact Scott Reinhart at (610) 824-2678 for more information.

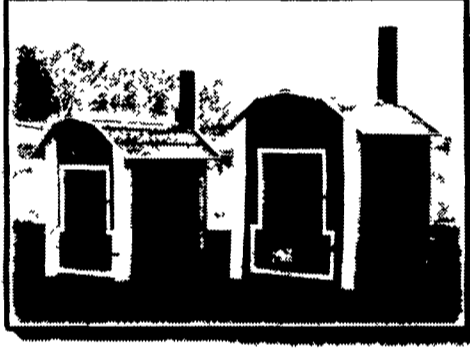
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