

Conservation Successful At Schertel Farm

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water up a steep incline to a new roofed feedlot building, where the cattle have access to a two-nose livestock waterer.

The electric is provided from an existing building attached to the new feedlot shelter. The new system has the capacity of providing 1,200 gallons of water per day. According to Schertel, the stream has never gone dry; however, the family has two wells near the house and original bank barn that could be relied on if needed and still be able to provide the water to the feedlot building.

A few years ago the family constructed a Quonset shelter on higher ground as a bedding area for the cattle. However, with the water source and lush grass on the bottomland, the cattle preferred to use a small implement shelter for lounging, staying near their water source. Although the newer shelter was on higher ground, the area surrounding the building would still have an accumulation of manure from the cattle as well as mud during periods of rain or melting snow.

As a means of eliminating this situation, a roofed feedlot and manure stacking pad were erected onto the one end of the Quonset hut. The 37-foot by 100-foot open-sided feedlot and

manure pad has 4-foot concrete walls with a cantilevered roof that eliminates odors and provides increased air circulation. Thirty feet of the new pole building is used as a manure stacking pad, with the concrete floor sloped to provide a pit-type effect, where approximately 90 days of manure can be stored.

Between the manure pad and the Quonset hut bedding area is 70 feet used as a feedlot where the cattle have access to round bales, free-choice minerals, and shelter from the elements. The free-choice minerals are offered to the cattle by recycling a rear tractor tire. Schertel wedged a piece of 2-inch by 4-inch lumber crosswise inside the top of the tire to keep it apart. The tire is then hung from the overhead support system of the building and secured along the side wall, thus allowing the animals access from only one side of the tire.

The mineral blocks or free-choice minerals are put inside the bottom of the tire. The concrete floor of the new building is grooved for better footing of the animals. There is a foundation drain along the one side of the feedlot and storage pad that helps collect the water along the steep slope behind the new building.

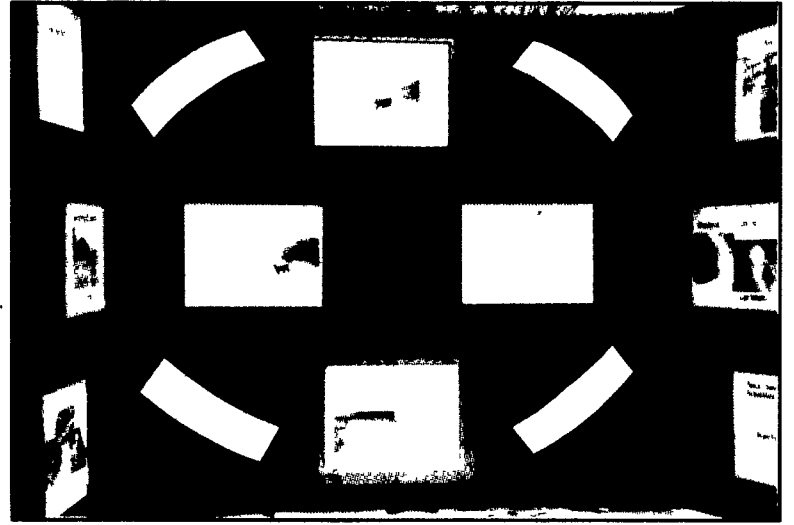
The roofed runoff system di-

rects rain water through roof gutters, drop boxes, and a piping system into the stream, where prior to the construction of this building, rain water and melting snow would mix with the manure and make its way down the steep slope to the stream.

Since all phases of this conservation project tied into each other, they were all completed as one big project. With flag marking for the stream bank fencing starting in June 2002 and the covered feedlot being completed in January 2003, the past year has been a busy one at the Schertel farm.

The goal of protecting and improving the quality of the stream flowing through their property has been accomplished by providing limited drinking and crossing access to the stream, providing a drinking source in the feedlot area, providing a roofed area for the cattle to feed and lounge, and by providing a roofed manure storage pad.

Implementing these best management practices (BMP) was accomplished through the cooperation of the Schertel family, Ducks Unlimited (DU), Lehigh County Conservation District, Southeast Resources and Conservation and Development Council (SEPA RC &D), Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection Growing Greener Grant, 319 Clean Water Act Program, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP).



The Lehigh County Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) erected this "before and after," display showing the many conservation measures undertaken at the Lynn Township farm of Mark, Marie, and George Schertel during the past year.



Some of the Schertel's cow-calf herd cautiously waits for the opportunity to enter the roofed feedlot during a recent tour of the conservation measures constructed on the farm to protect the quality of the stream and water that flows through the pasture.



Looking downhill at part of the Schertel's cattle pasture, an observer can clearly see the benefits of stream bank fencing and the livestock stream crossing. A substantial improvement in water quality was realized by these conservation measures.

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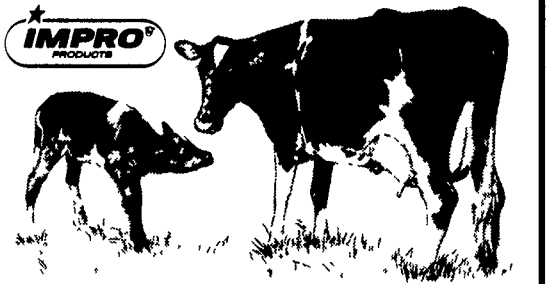
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