

CREP Tree Plantings to Benefit Lebanon County Pasture

LEBANON (Lebanon Co.) — Those 225 white "birthday candles" dotting a field at the busy intersection of Hill Church and Tunnel Hill Roads north of Cleona are attracting a lot of attention lately. Exactly what are they and why are they scattered over the hillsides of Fay Bowman's cow pasture? That's what everyone wants to know!

There have been plenty of theories. Because they appeared one day in mid-April, some thought the four-foot tall tubes with white net "wicks" on top were part of an Easter celebration. One assumed a vigil was being held, while another wondered what time the Easter sunrise service was going to start. Others thought an orchard or a vineyard was in the making.

The 225 translucent plastic candlelike structures are actually tree shelters for six varieties of hardwood saplings recently planted in the Bowman farm's pasture under the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP).

Less visible are the 500 white pine and spruce seedlings, as well as 250 dogwoods and 100 chokeberry shrubs, which were also planted on the 3.4-acre tract. This triangle of newly forested land surrounds the headwaters of a small stream originating in the southeastern section of the larger 10-acre Bowman meadow.

All plantings were done by LandStudies, a Lititz-based ecological firm qualified in CREP riparian buffer installation. An eight-member crew headed by foreman Lorne Bacher completed the entire project in just a little over one working day.

In addition to planting 850 units of bare root stock, their installation of swamp oak, white oak, red maple, sweet gum, green ash, and tulip poplar saplings involved placement of the protective tree shelters to guard against possible damage from rodents or deer; white netting stretched across the tops of the tree shelters offers defense against marauding birds.

Each tree is surrounded at



Workers are planting trees for conservation in Fay Bowman's pasture.

ground level by a sheet of sturdy black plastic anchored by landscape staples to provide long term weed control around the little trees.

Evergreen Fence of Lebanon arrived at the scene on April 30 to complete the project. They installed 963 feet of two-strand stream bank fencing powered by a solar charger along the border of the new plantings to prevent the heifers soon to be pastured nearby from damaging the trees and shrubs. An added benefit is that the bovines will no longer be able to walk through the swampy area of this wetlands.

The Bowman family originally learned about CREP from a full-page advertisement in the December 15, 2001 issue of *Lancaster Farming* newspaper. That led the farm's manager, Sue Bowman, to contact the Lebanon County Farm Service Agency (FSA). It wasn't long before Tim Emenheiser and Charlene Zeigler of the FSA staff met with Sue and outlined the numerous benefits of CREP participation.

In the Bownmans' case, CREP meant further stabilizing a steeply sloped meadow area, creating long-term habitat for wildlife and waterfowl, and improving groundwater quality by keeping pastured cows out of the waterway originating in this field.

Since the existing perimeter fencing around this pasture is frequently the victim of vehicle mishaps, the installation of solar powered fencing around the planting area will also mean less stress from emergency fence repairs along the roadside. Neighbor Joe Meily, who's been pasturing his heifers at the Bownmans for more than ten years, especially appreciated the prospect of fewer late night "rodeos"!

CREP is a federal/state partnership with the goal of enrolling 100,000 acres of highly erodible cropland and pasture in conservation plantings to improve water quality and provide improved wildlife and fisheries habitat.

Participating farmers and landowners must agree to enter into a 10 to 15 year contract, but

maintain control of their land with some minimal restrictions. All cropland or marginal pasture within 180 feet of a stream is eligible, as is some highly erodible cropland farther than 180 feet from a stream.

CREP not only pays participants an annual per acre rental payment, but generally the plantings and fencing are fully reimbursable. There are also additional incentive payments to make the program even more attractive. Interested parties should contact their county FSA office.

The Bowman farm, which is owned by E. Fay Bowman and the J. Alfred Bowman Trust, has been in the Bowman family for over 100 years.

In August 2002, this farm was honored during a special ceremony when it became the 6,000th acre of farmland to be preserved by the Lebanon County Agricultural Land Preservation Board.

The Bownmans feel that CREP is a good fit with their preserved farm status and provides a further way for them to be good stewards of their family's legacy.

Apply For Direct Marketing Conference Scholarships

SOUTHAMPTON, Mass. — The North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Association (NAFDMA) is now accepting applications for its 2004 Earl Tywater Scholarship, which provides financial aid for two members of a farm family to attend the 2004 North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Conference and Trade Show. The conference will be take place Feb. 2-8 at the Sheraton Grand Sacramento Hotel and Sacramento Convention Center in Sacramento, Calif.

Applications are being accepted through Sept. 1 at 5 p.m. EDT. Applications are available in the Back Forty (members only section) of the NAFDMA Web site at www.nafdma.com. You can also request an application by calling the NAFDMA office at (413) 529-0386.

The scholarship, valued at more than \$1,200, pays for two people from a farm family to attend the conference, the pre-conference bus tour, workshops, and the NAFDMA awards banquet. The scholarship is open only to any NAFDMA member or affiliated member who has never attended a NAFDMA conference. Applicants must meet several eligibility requirements, including an established need for financial support and a willingness to share the NAFDMA experience with farmers in his or her home state.

The recipient will be announced on Nov. 1.
Find out more about NAFDMA at www.nafdma.com.

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