

# Franklin Hog Farm Manager

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the media in light of increasing attention to issues such as odor, water quality, and animal treatment on hog farms.

Part of the training included agricultural reporters asking them questions about hog production. That was the easy part, according to Sollenberger. A mock television interview was more challenging.

"They were asking tough questions," Sollenberger said.

At home, Sollenberger hasn't had any problems with neighbors or media challenging the operation. One likely reason is that the farm's location in the Cumberland Valley near the Tuscarora Mountains seems ideal. It is mostly surrounded by dairy farms, and no housing developments can be seen for miles around.

While the farm itself is only 96 acres, about 1,500 acres of neighboring land are approved through the Pennsylvania Nutri-

ent Management Act to receive manure from the operation. Most of the land belongs to dairy farmers who get the manure for free and are usually happy to have it.

The 1,500 acres is actually about three times as many acres as are required by law for the size of the operation, Sollenberger said. But because of weather challenges (especially in wet years such as this one) and farmer preferences, the extra acres allow a lot more flexibility in getting the manure out without compacting soil or overapplying nutrients.

Giving away the manure helps keep hauling costs down, because nearby farmers are more likely to take it.

"If you give it, they want it more, and you don't have to haul it as far," Sollenberger said.

"We try to keep our manure within a three-mile radius," he said. "I can't say it always happens, but we try."

He estimated about 90 percent of the manure is spread on fields within three miles of the farm.



Franklin Hog Farm's location in the Cumberland Valley near the Tuscarora Mountains seems ideal for avoiding neighborhood conflicts. It is mostly surrounded by dairy farms, and no housing developments can be seen for miles around.

Franklin Hog Farm uses a two-stage lagoon system. In the first stage, solids drop out and the less concentrated manure then moves to the second stage.

The stage-2 manure has only about one-third of the original nitrogen concentration, allowing more flexibility for spreading on neighbors' fields with less risk of applying too much nitrogen or phosphorus.

Sollenberger said he is prepared for phosphorus planning to be required in the near future as part of the state's Nutrient Management Act overhaul.

Another way Sollenberger has tried to stay ahead of the regulation curve: "We made sure our (manure) hauler is certified."

According to Sollenberger, the Nutrient Management Act, as it

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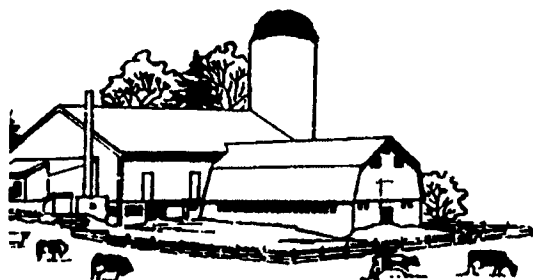
Bill Stoner, front, and Eric Huang are at work inseminating sows. Stoner is holding a device used for deep intrauterine insemination.



Sollenberger takes a look through the microscope, used for checking semen samples. This laboratory is used for semen analysis and short-term semen storage.

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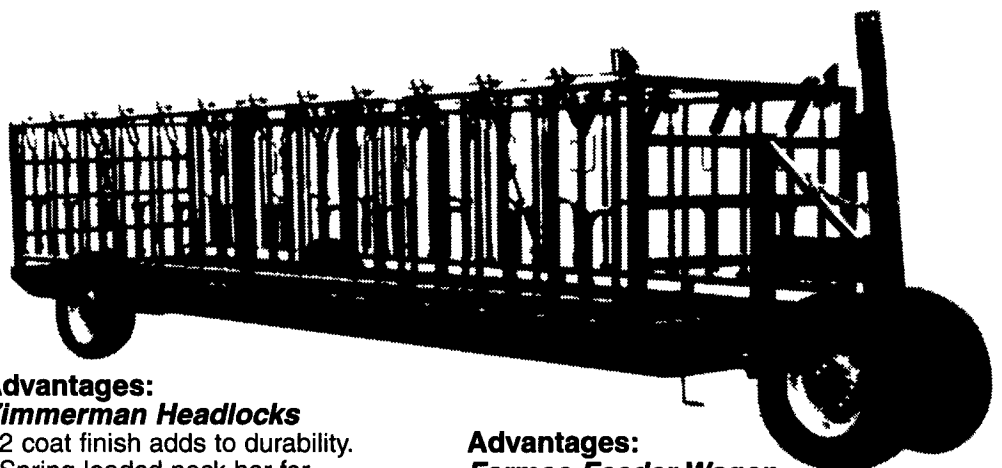
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