

# 'Reach For The Dream' At 2004 Sustainable Farming Conference

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Daydream for a moment. You are in the midst of your milking herd. You have just turned your cows into a new paddock. The only noise you hear is that of succulent green grass succumbing to the predation of voracious appetites. The living mowing machines are contentedly harvesting and processing their nutrients while simultaneously recycling fertility back from whence it came. Your cows are consuming some of the highest quality; lowest cost feed known to exist on God's green earth.

Looking at the last paddock, the remains of a salad bar are being cleaned up by slick young heifers following literally in their mothers foot steps. Ahead of the cows lies a dark green, luxuriant carpet of vegetative mass that promises an abundance of some of the most economical milk that

will ever be produced.

The cows are healthy. They are in their natural habitat doing exactly what nature intended they should do. Your son and daughter are at your side. One just handled the gate for the cows while the other handled the gate for the heifers. No need to worry no PTO shafts involved.

Surveying your land to its boundaries reveals a panorama of more fields like the one you're standing in. Milk production could be higher, but then the cows wouldn't be as healthy. The vet bills are down, as well as feed costs, machinery costs, fuel bills, electric bills, breeding costs, replacement costs, and the wear and tear on buildings has been reduced. Is it any wonder there is more money left for the family?

Aside from the money you also have more time for that family. Farming is good! Life is good!

Does this sound too good to be true? It is extremely difficult to

achieve something you can't conceive. But believe it or not, this has been the experience of more than one grazer.

Top quality grasses and legumes provide the foundation for the above dream come true. Given adequate moisture and the right management, these forages can increase profitability on those poorly drained side hills or the best river bottoms.

You have the opportunity to learn more about these top quality forages. You can have a sounding board for all your forage questions. What varieties work best together? What forages are best for stockpiling? At what vegetative state can you expect the best milk yield per acre? What forages stand up best to early spring grazing? These are just some examples.

You bring your questions and also learn from the questions of others. We'll do our best to provide the answers. Just attend the Low Input Sustainable Farming Conference at Jordan Hall — New York State Experiment at Geneva, Saturday, Jan. 17, 2004.

Sit in on the Grass Management Panel composed of four seed company representatives from New York and Pennsylvania who have agreed to answer your questions in a generic manner. Panel Participants include: Greg Davis of Seedway, Hall, NY; Tim Fritz of Kings AgriSeed, Ronks, PA; Rod Porter of AgriCulver, Trumansburg, NY; and Tim Gutteridge of Barenbrog, Milton, PA.

When was the last time you had this opportunity? For more information or a registration packet just call Cornell Cooperative Extension of Yates County at (315) 536-5123.



Auburn Township farmland in Susquehanna County, owned by Ted and Becky Place, is part of Pennsylvania's Farmland Preservation Program, first in the nation in number of acres preserved.

## Applications Sought For Farmland Preservation

MONTROSE (Susquehanna Co.) — Applications are now available for the 2004 farmland preservation program. The Susquehanna County Agricultural Land Preservation Board was established by the County Commissioners in 1989 to help preserve farmland in Susquehanna County by administering a program to purchase agricultural conservation easements from landowners in the county.

Agricultural Conservation Easement defined: A legal agreement the property owner makes that restricts the land to agricultural production in perpetuity while retaining private ownership. As the private ownership changes, the restrictions remain with the land.

To date 18 farms containing a total of 4264 acres have been preserved in Susquehanna County. The Susquehanna County Board is currently working with two additional farms consisting of over 200 acres to become part of the county program by the end of this year.

The Susquehanna County program is part of the Pennsylvania Farmland Preservation Program.

With over 263,325 acres consisting of 2,245 farms, the Pennsylvania State Farmland Preservation Program is first in the nation in number of acres preserved and is continuing to preserve farmland at a faster rate than any other state.

Local funding comes from an annual allocation by the Susquehanna County Commissioners. These county funds are matched by the State program, which also awards grant money to counties.

To be eligible, farms must be located in an agricultural security area; contain at least 50% of soils in class I through IV, land must be contiguous acreage of at least 50 acres in size unless the tract is at least 10 acres in size and is either utilized for a crop unique to the area or is contiguous to a property that has a perpetual agricultural conservation easement in place, the land must contain the greater of 50% or 10 acres of harvested cropland, pasture or grazing land.


Susquehanna County program applications will be accepted between November 1, 2003 and January 15, 2004. Each application is ranked against all other eligible applicants. A farm's rank is based on the quality of farmland, stewardship, and the likelihood of the conversion of the farm to non-agricultural uses.

For an application and/or more information, contact Evie Coff at the Susquehanna Co. extension office in Montrose (717) 278-1158 or one of the Susquehanna County Board members. The Susquehanna County Board members are: Dewey Lyon, Byron Hunsinger, Clarence Smith, Eleanor Kurosky, John Bencoter, Brian Gesford and Jim Wolf.

**FARM SHOW 2004**

What a treat we have in store for the annual *Lancaster Farming* issue of Farm Show!

Scheduled for the Jan. 10 issue: features from farmers who are going to the winter agricultural showcase event at the Farm Show Complex and their experiences in attending the great event in Harrisburg. Also scheduled: the annual FFA Keystone Degree winners and a complete schedule of events, including the many demonstrations for farmers during Farmer Days.



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