

**Small Farm Conservation Benefits Chesapeake Bay**

**Del Voight - Lebanon County, Pennsylvania**

**June 29, 2012**

Although Del Voight has only owned his farm for 12 years, he is not new to farming. As a professional crop specialist for Penn State University, and a long-time dairy farm worker, he has plenty of farming knowledge and experience under his belt. So, when he realized that his farm had several soil and water resource concerns, he immediately took action.

The 17-acre cow/calf beef operation located in Lebanon County, Pennsylvania is bordered by two streams. In order to keep the water clean, he installed fencing to keep the cows out of the stream, planted one acre of trees along the stream banks to serve as a buffer to prevent any nutrients from reaching the water, and installed stream crossings for the cows through USDA's Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP).

In the barnyard, soil erosion and runoff from the livestock and roof also posed threats to water quality because of its close proximity to the other stream. Through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Del was able to receive financial assistance to install several conservation practices to address these additional resource concerns.

The barnyard was stabilized with a concrete pad surrounded by walls to safely contain manure and prevent runoff, and a slotted curb to direct manure and waste water to a treatment area. Strips of vegetation (i.e., filter strips) were planted near the stream to prevent any manure, nutrients, and sediment from reaching the water. In addition, an underground outlet was installed to direct rain water from the roof away from the barnyard.

These practices will provide numerous public and environmental benefits for years to come. Preventing soil erosion and nutrient runoff will lead to better water quality, which will also help improve aquatic and wildlife habitat. Additionally, the streams will be able to continue to support natural and recreational activities, such as fishing, boating, and swimming, which can be hampered by degraded water quality. These benefits will extend far beyond the scope of just this one property. Since the streams are tributaries to the Susquehanna River, the activities will ultimately benefit the Chesapeake Bay as well.



A concrete pad with walls stabilizes the barnyard to prevent soil erosion and safely contains manure to prevent runoff into the nearby stream.