

Chesapeake Bay and NPS Section 319 Mini-grant Projects Focus on Rotational Grazing as Strategies for Reducing Water Pollution and Improving Local Watersheds

Over the last year, five conservation districts utilized mini-grant funds to protect Pennsylvania's watersheds by holding educational events that included a focus on rotational grazing. The projects included three NPS Section 319 mini-grants titled "Fundamentals of Successful Farming: Rotational Grazing", "Project Grass Conference and Farm Tours", and "Rotational Grazing as Nutrient Management Tool", conducted by Indiana, Jefferson and Warren conservation districts respectively, and two Chesapeake Bay mini-grants titled "Horses and Watershed Health" and "Horse Pasture Management", conducted by Clearfield and Lebanon conservation districts respectively. The Indiana project also aimed to reach farmers in the Amish community, which it accomplished as demonstrated by solid participation from this target audience.

All five projects resulted in concrete and meaningful outcomes for Pennsylvania watersheds as evidenced by the following:

- 220 people were reached within the target audiences of Contractors, Equine Owners, Farmers (including those in the Amish community), Local/State Agency Staff, Media, and Watershed Groups.
- 17 separate educational publications and presentations were developed.
- 16 educational workshops and 8 field days were conducted.
- 60% of participants reported an intention to install Agricultural BMPs (such as rotational grazing, streambank fencing and other pasture management techniques).
- 98% of participants who responded to project surveys demonstrated an increased level of knowledge of the focus topic. Additionally, participants demonstrated an increased level of knowledge of local watersheds, nonpoint source pollution, and strategies for reducing water pollution and improving water quality.

As part of the mini-grant program, audiences are encouraged to take concrete action as a result of their participation. For example, as a result of their participation in the Project Grass Conference and Farm Tour, attendees reported the following:

- Over 300 acres were impacted by Conservation Plan development.
- Nearly 300 acres of cover crops were planted.
- 40 acres are now being managed through precision feed and foraging.
- 3 Nutrient Management plans were implemented.
- Over 100 acres were impacted through a conversion to off-stream watering systems.
- Over 100 acres were impacted through a conversion to precision grazing.
- 2 manure storage facilities and 1 water diversion system were installed.

Each project was instrumental in furthering the goals of the mini-grant program by providing education on adopting rotational grazing as a tool for reducing water pollution and improving water quality in local watersheds. For more information on these projects, please contact the following conservation district staff:

Clearfield: Bob Edwards, Nutrient Management Technician, at bedwardsccd@atlanticbba.net or 814-765-2629

Indiana: Emily Bloom, Nutrient Management Technician, at e.bloom@icdpa.org or 724-463-8547

Jefferson: Amber Siar, Watershed Specialist, at acgillung@alltel.net or 814-849-7463

Lebanon: Lynette Gelsinger, Nutrient Management Specialist, at lynette.gelsinger@pa.nacdnet.net or 717-272-3908

Warren: Michael Wright, Agricultural Conservation Technician, at michael.wright@pa.nacdnet.net or 814-563-3117

These projects are funded by PACD through grants from the PA Department of Environmental Protection under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act (administered by the US Environmental Protection Agency) and the PA Chesapeake Bay Program. For more information, please visit our website at www.PACD.org and click on the "grant assistance" icon.

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Rainy day pasture walk at Spas Family grass fed beef farm as part of the Warren project.



A visit to Plum-Hollow Dairy as part of Jefferson project. Viewed here is a paddock improvement to reduce NPS pollution by redesigning the lane that used to run straight up and down the hill. This improvement eliminated the gully that used to form when it rained.



A visit to Hughey Acres as part of Jefferson project. Viewed here are divided paddocks for rotational grazing.