

Susquehanna County Conservation District Holds Pasture Walk



Attendees listen to discussion led by Hepler Farm owners and local USDA NRCS staff. Photo courtesy of SCCD.

The Susquehanna County Conservation District (SCCD), in cooperation with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), recently hosted a grazing and nutrient management evening field day at Hepler Beef Farm in New Milford Township.

The Hepler Beef operation has been in business since 1980 when Curt Hepler bought his first beef cows. The operation now has almost 150 animals which graze more than 100 acres of pasture land. Curt's son, Brian, and grandsons Ben and Brett (both who own part of the herd), are active in the haymaking, feeding, pasture rotation decisions, cow moving and fence maintenance. The beef herd features, Angus, Devon, Red Polls and a mixed Herford beef cows.

The first half hour of the evening session covered the new nutrient (manure and fertilizer) management rules. Later, the group took a guided walking tour. During the tour, discussion topics included rotational grazing and pasture management, touching on how the efficiency and effectiveness of these practices were beneficial to the farmer's operation and the environment.

During the last part of the evening session, the group shared conversation and ideas while enjoying locally-made ice cream. Bob Wagner, USDA NRCS Soil Conservation Technician and Laura Holbrook, the district's Chesapeake Bay Technician was pleased with the outcome and attendance of this event. "The pasture walk served as a great opportunity for the public and local cooperators to come together and learn from one another," Holbrook said.

