Conservation across Pennsylvania's Chesapeake Bay Watershed

2010. WOW!

What a Year for Pennsylvania's Chesapeake Bay Watershed!

In 2010, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service applied $11.7 million of conservation practices in the Pennsylvania portion of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. An additional $5.2 million was provided for the preservation of 4,365 acres of farmland, grazing land, and wetlands to protect the environment for future generations.

No-till soybeans thrive in residue from previous crops.

New trees are planted in tree protectors in a riparian buffer.

Conservation Tillage Implemented

New conservation tillage practices, such as no-till, mulch till, and ridge till, were implemented on more than 60 square miles of cropland. That's an area equivalent to the size of Pittsburgh, PA! Conservation tillage practices reduce erosion and runoff, promote soil health, and save energy.

Fields Protected with Cover Crops

Cover crops were planted on more than 40 square miles of cropland. That's an area the size of Buffalo, NY! Cover crops reduce erosion, promote soil health, and cycle nutrients.

Buffers Installed

More than 7 square miles of permanent vegetated borders and conservation cover were established at the edge or around the perimeter of fields. That's an area the size of the city of Lancaster, PA! The establishment of long-term cover provides protection against soil erosion and greatly reduces the loss of nitrogen and phosphorus.

Forested Riparian Buffers Planted

Forested riparian buffers were planted on the equivalent of 714 football fields to reduce erosion and help keep soil from entering adjacent streams.

USDA NRCS
United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

January 2011

Terraces on cropland.

Wildlife flourish in a restored wetland.

A beef heavy use area keeps animals and waste contained.

A fenced animal trail leads to a stream crossing.

Terraces and Diversions Installed

More than 24 miles of terraces and diversions were installed to minimize erosion and control water runoff. Laid end-to-end, they would stretch from Harrisburg to York, PA!

Cropland Rotated

Conservation crop rotation was implemented on more than 75 square miles. That's an area the size of Cleveland, OH! As part of a conservation management system, this practice can reduce erosion, improve soil organic matter, and manage plant nutrients.

Wetlands Restored and Wildlife Habitat Created

Farmers and landowners restored or enhanced wetland ecosystems and provided wildlife habitat on the equivalent of 35 football fields!

Nutrients from Animal Operations Managed

Comprehensive nutrient management plans were written for 95 livestock and poultry farmers. Nutrient management practices were implemented on more than 46 square miles of farmland. That's an area the size of San Francisco, CA! Nutrient management systems apply nutrients at the appropriate rate, in the appropriate form, at the appropriate time, and use the appropriate application method to minimize the potential for nutrient losses.

Animal Access Controlled

More than 86 miles of fencing were installed to control animal access to streams. That would be a fence equal to the length of Interstate 83 between Harrisburg, PA and Baltimore, MD! More than 4 miles of animal trails and walkways were installed to direct animal movement away from concentrated animal areas and 79 stream crossings were installed to improve water quality and reduce stream erosion.