



SHERMAN BEEF CATTLE FARM

Increasing profits through
sustainable practices

PROJECT GOALS

Develop a beef cattle operation that employs sustainable practices while enhancing its profitability.

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS

- Decreased veterinary expenses.
- Increased economic benefits to downstream recreational businesses and farms.
- Reduction in cattle illnesses and injuries.
- Additional grazing time for cattle.
- Increase in market value thanks to grass-fed beef label.

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

- Restoration of a native brook trout stream.
- Creation of wildlife corridor through buffer installation.
- Increased profitability preserved the farmland, rather than selling to developers.
- Reduction in stormwater and manure runoff.
- Access to cleaner drinking water for livestock.

CONSERVATION PROJECTS INSTALLED

- Riparian buffers.
- Streambank fencing.
- Off-stream watering system.
- Conveyor belt diverters.
- Animal trail and walkways.
- Cropland conversion.
- Stabilized heavy use area.
- Waste water filtration system.
- Roof gutter rainwater transfer system.
- Manure stacking area.
- Roofed heavy use area.
- Rotational grazing system.
- Pollinator habitats.



Photo: Megan Lehman

“ It’s just as important to optimize the environment where cattle are produced as it is to strengthen their genetic makeup. Investing in conservation measures to improve the environment enables cattle to express their true genetic potential, and this has enhanced the overall profitability and sustainability of our farming operation. What’s good for the land is good for the cattle. What’s good for the cattle is good for our farm. And I take pride in knowing we do our part to enhance water quality.

- Michael Sherman

PROJECT SUMMARY

Michael Sherman acquired his family farm in 2006, where he raises Registered Polled Hereford and Black Hereford cattle. Wanting to keep pace with the ever-changing face of agriculture, while at the same time preserving the farm for the next generation, Sherman restored a small, impaired stream on his land using best management practices such as streambank fencing and riparian buffers. Following this restoration, a diverse ecosystem re-emerged, that also benefited livestock health. The implementation of additional conservation practices has increased production capability, while decreasing overhead expenses, leading to improved sustainability and economic success. The farm now acts as a “living classroom” for consumers, legislators and agricultural producers. It has won numerous conservation and agricultural awards, including the Chesapeake Bay Clean Water Farm Award, PA Cattlemen Association’s Environmental Stewardship Award, and Lycoming County Conservation District Cooperator of the Year.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Take a holistic approach to ensure that crops, livestock and the environment can coexist and flourish.
- Expect to have some trial and error as you seek to decrease your environmental footprint.
- Consider your future goals given a changing agricultural environment.
- Plan projects with flexibility in case you need to change your business model.
- Don’t hesitate to think outside the box on environmental improvements. By doing so, you may be able to decrease or eliminate costs that others consider unavoidable.

THE PARTNERS AND FUNDING SOURCES

- Lycoming County Conservation District.
- USDA Farm Service Agency.
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.
- Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program.
- Environmental Quality Incentives Program.
- Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative.
- Conservation Stewardship Program

CONTACT

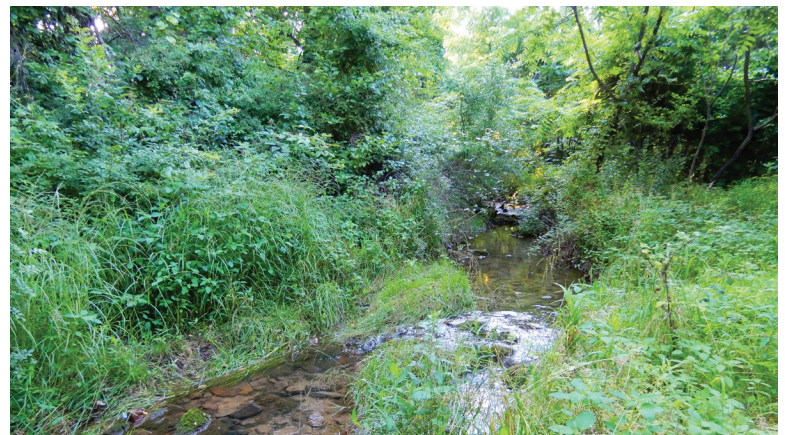
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There are more than a dozen conservation measures in place at Sherman Beef Cattle Farm in Pennsylvania. (Photo: Michael Sherman)



Sherman found that cattle put on weight faster by spending more time on pasture and a grass-fed beef label added market value to product. (Photo: Michael Sherman)



Sherman’s plan for environmental improvement began with restoring an impaired stream on his farm. (Photo: Megan Lehman)