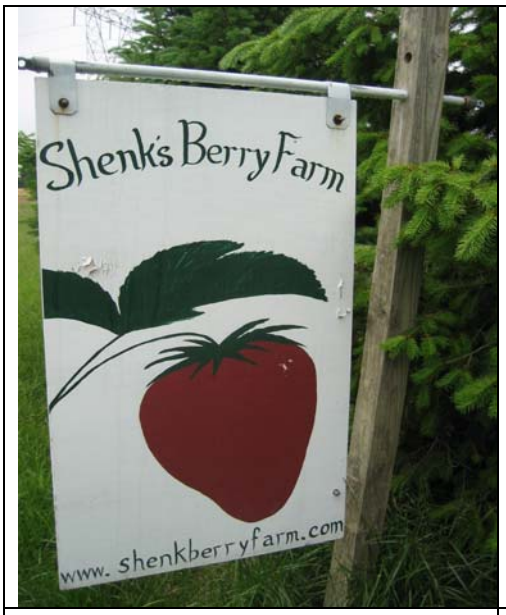
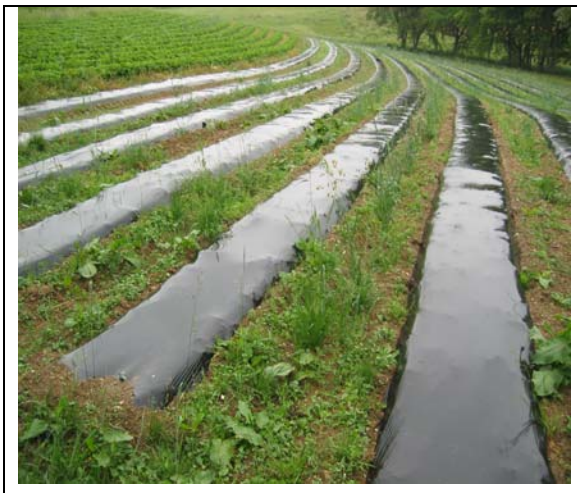
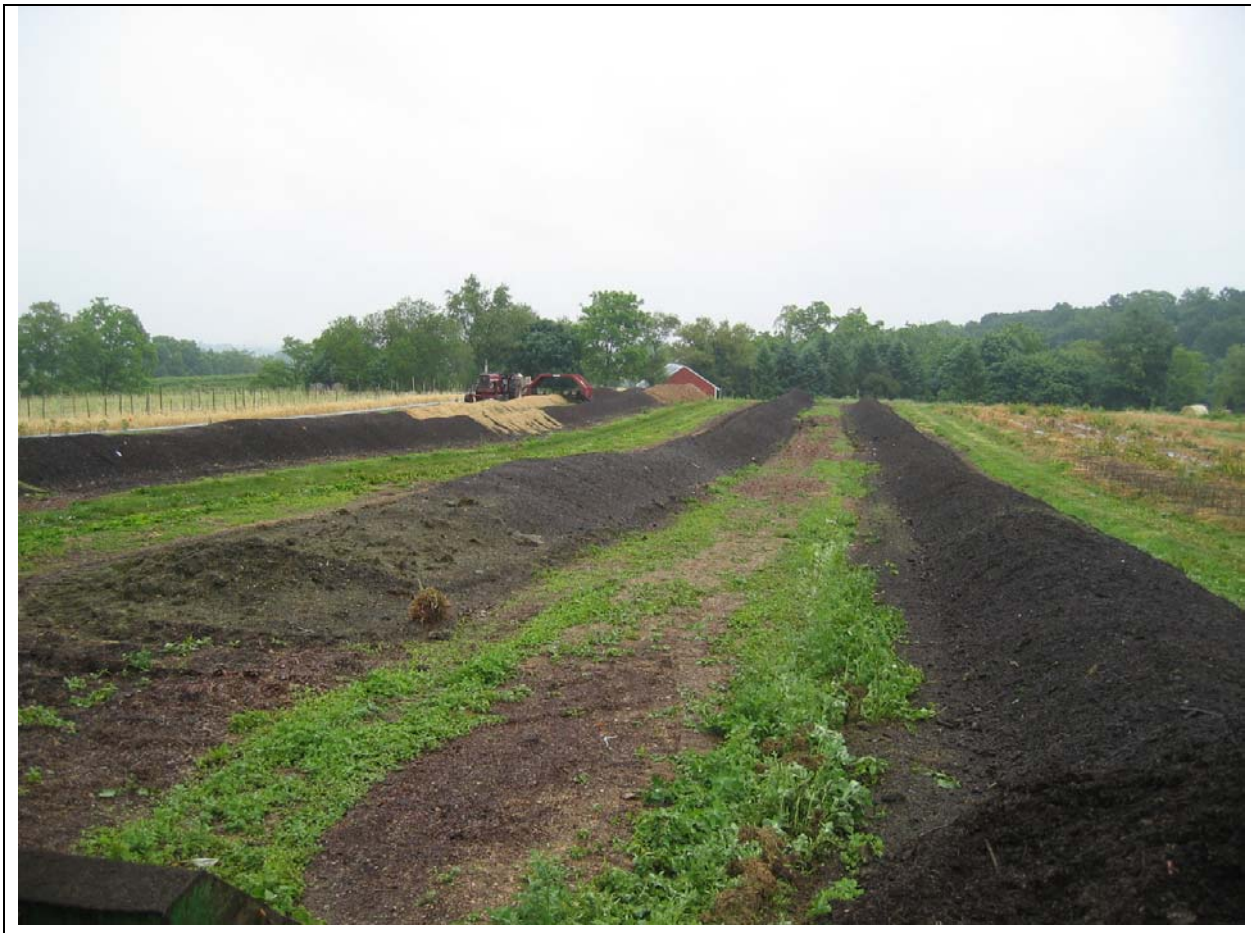


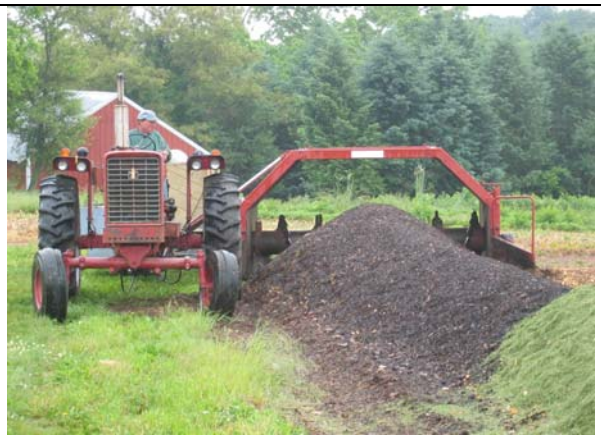
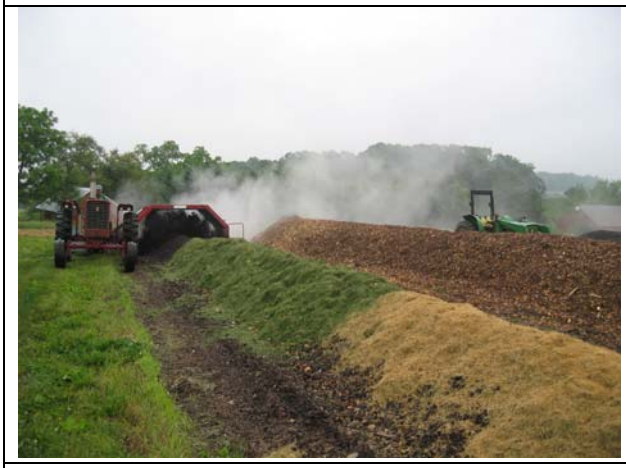
The John Shenk Family has operated a 40-acre fruit and berry farm in Warwick Township, Lancaster County since the mid 1980s. The farm has been making and using compost as part of an on-going fertilization and disease prevention program.

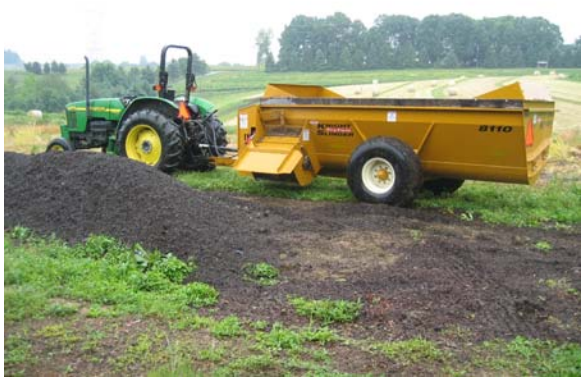
The strawberry rows are interplanted with a grass crop that is mowed down to prevent weed growth. The rows are covered with black plastic mulch to control weeds within the plants. The plastic mulch is recycled at the end of the growing season.

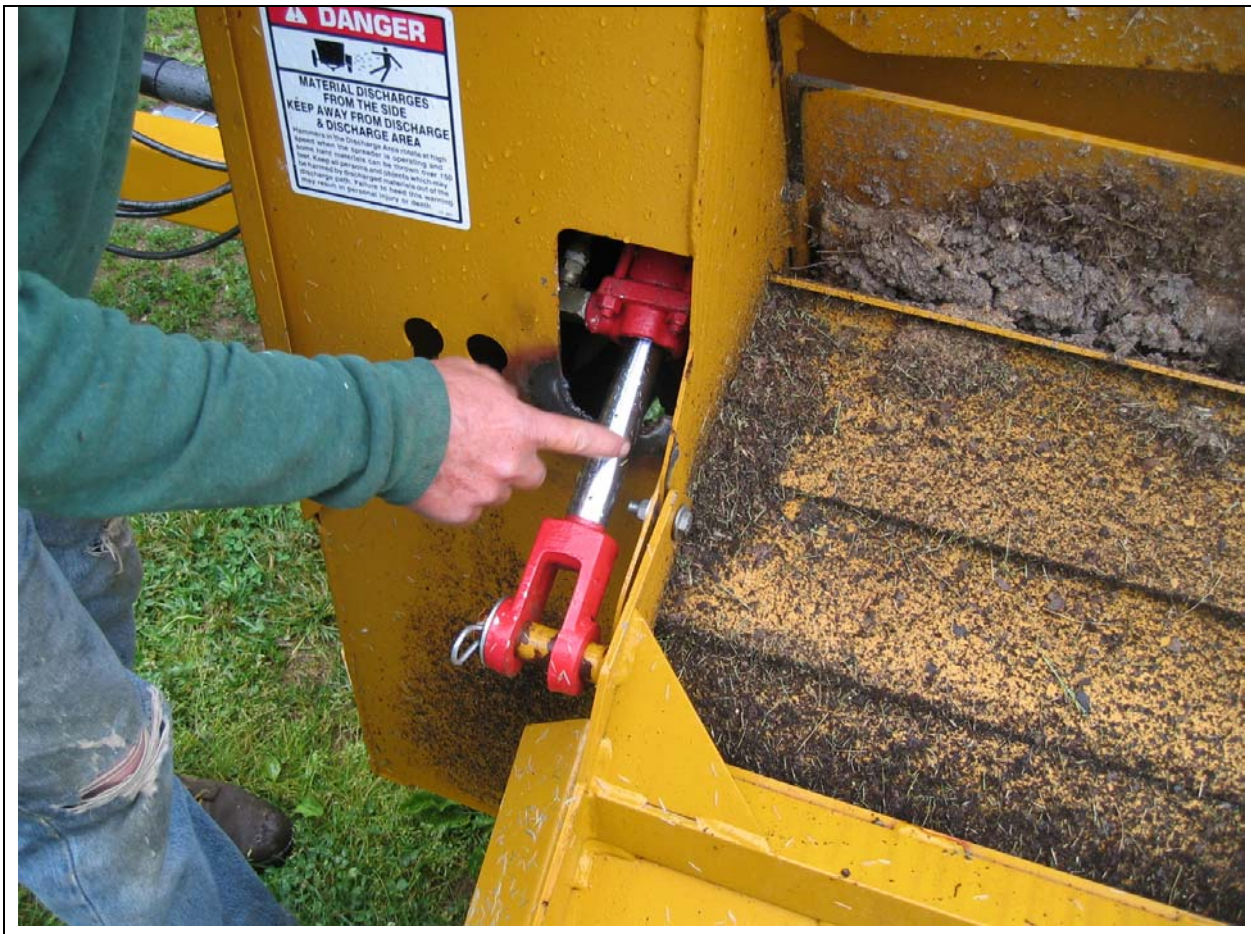
	Each fall the Shenks plant new rows of strawberries. The new plants are placed directly into the black plastic mulch.
Harvest season begins in June. The Shenks market the strawberries from a stand at the farm and through farmers markets in Lancaster Co. and Philadelphia. Also, a portion of the farm is dedicated to a “pick your own” business.	



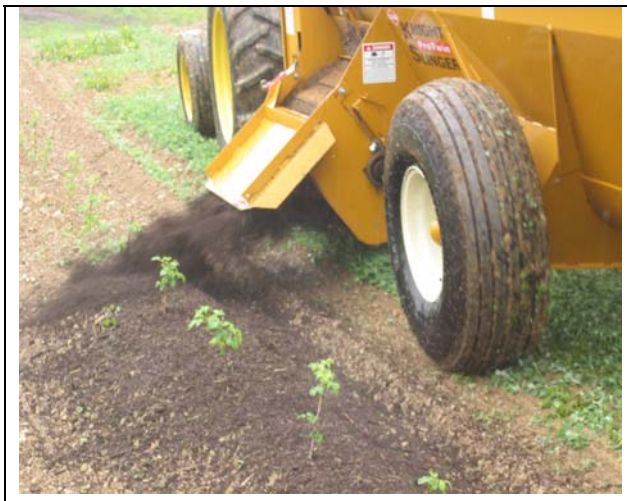
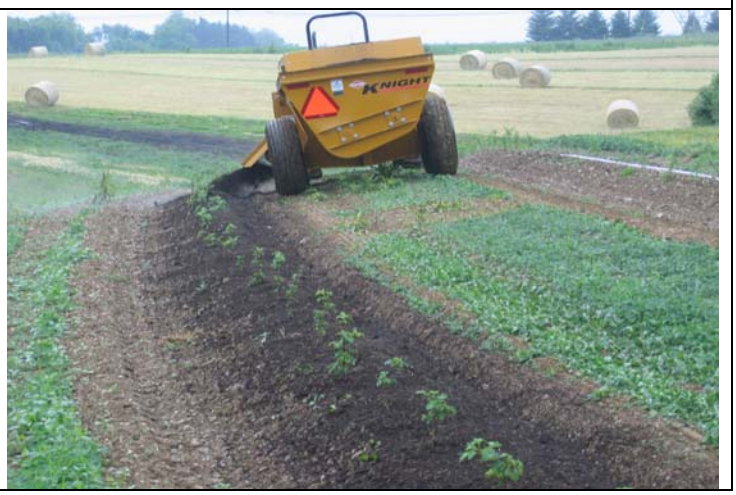
In the fall, Shenk's Berry Farm accepts leaves collected by Lititz Borough. When the leaves arrive they are placed into long rows, or windrows, for composting. The farm receives about 60 truckloads of organic materials each leaf collection season. The finished compost is ready to be used during the following planting season.

	
A windrow turner helps to mix the organic materials throughout the decomposition phase of composting. Windrow turning allows excess heat to escape, provides the composting microbes more organic material to decompose, and blends the materials into a homogenous mix.	Farmer John begins turning and mixing the compost at the end of the pile. Fresh grass clippings will be thoroughly mixed by the compost turner. Grass clippings add nitrogen to the carbon-rich leaves.
	
Heat generated during the composting process is released from the pile as steam. This indicates that the optimum conditions have been created and decomposition is occurring.	After turning, the compost windrow is much darker compared to the adjacent unturned windrow. This shows that the organic materials are breaking down into a rich compost.

	John Shenk uses a modified manure spreader to broadcast finished compost onto his rows of raspberries. The spreader has a chute for side dressing that provides a direct and accurate application.
The spreader and tractor were purchased with funding through the DEP Compost Infrastructure Grant Program. Finished compost from last season is loaded into the spreader.	
	Twin augers inside the spreader keep the compost moving to the discharge chute.



John Shenk points to a modification he made to the compost spreader. He installed a longer hydraulic arm to permit the discharge chute to extend to a lower angle on the machine. This helped to more precisely direct the application of finished compost to the rows of raspberries.

	Compost is applied as a mulch to a depth of 3 inches on recently planted raspberry plants. The compost retains moisture and helps to control disease.
The spreader applies the compost at an even rate over the crop.	

Shenk's strawberries are hand-picked and packed for shipment.

One of the fruits of successful farming at Shenk’s Berry Farm!