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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 22, 2010

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PA Farmers Recognized for Improving Water Quality Destined to the Chesapeake Bay

The Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts (PACD) is pleased to announce that Travis and Christine Sherman of T-n-C Farm in Wellsville, Alvin and Michael Herman of Albavale Farm in Canton, Morrill and Melody Curtis of Port Trevorton and Jim and Carol Biddle of Mill Hill Farms in Williamsburg were named as the 2010 Pennsylvania Chesapeake Bay Clean Water Farm Award recipients. PACD will recognize these award winning farms on July 20, 2010 in State College, PA during the Annual Conservation Awards program of the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts. To further acknowledge their accomplishments, the landowners will receive certificates and large “Clean Water Farm Award” signs to erect on their property.

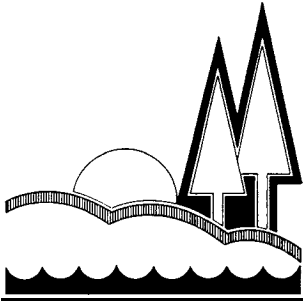
The Clean Water Farm Award, initiated in 1986, recognizes farmers within Pennsylvania’s portion of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, who manage their daily farm operation while keeping a watchful eye on water quality. The farms’ conservation plans address issues that help control potential pollutants such as eroded soil, pesticides, and fertilizers from entering streams or groundwater supplies.

T-n-C Farm, a small, beef farm, operated by Travis and Christine Sherman, was nominated by the York County Conservation District for their labors to protect the waters of the Conewago Water Shed and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay. The Shermans implement many Best Management Practices (BMPs), a combination of practices determined to be the most effective, and practical means of reducing pollution. They have addressed nutrient management, soil erosion and a riparian buffer area to insure protecting Doe Run, a stream that passes through the farm. Their long term goals include maintaining the best management practices and keeping the land a productive farm as part of the York County Agricultural Land Preservations Board’s Easement Program.

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Recipients Alvin and Michael Herman of Albavale Farm operate a 420-acre dairy farm and were nominated for the award by the Bradford County Conservation District. Albavale's pasture system highlights the Herman's conservation ethic. The herd is rotationally grazed and the tributary that bisects the farm and pasture are completely fenced to eliminate cattle access to the stream. The Herman's current focus is transition to no-till production, which allows the maximum amount of organic residue to be managed. Abavale Farm is a past recipient of the Dairy of Distinction Award and the 2009 Bradford County Conservation District Cooperator of the Year Award.

Morrill ("Mac") and Melody ("Tweet") Curtis, who operate a poultry farm in Port Trevorton were nominated for the Chesapeake Bay Clean Water Farm Award by the Snyder County Conservation District. Mac and Tweet's farm consists of 110 acres that are no-tilled. Conservation practices are installed throughout the operation including a recent poultry manure burner that utilizes turkey manure as an alternative heat source in place of propane. Research suggests this practice will improve the environment by decreasing the amount of nutrients running off the land and eventually reaching the Chesapeake Bay.

Lastly, Mill Hill Farms, located just outside of Williamsburg, was nominated for the award by the Blair County Conservation District. The farm has been in the Biddle family since 1797 and is currently owned by Jim and Carol Biddle. Their farm includes 600 acres for crop production along with a 370 head dairy operation. The Biddles have a long history of implementing Best Management Practices including subsurface drainage, no-till, cover cropping, stream bank protection and manure storage. All of these practices help reduce soil erosion and nutrient loss, which ultimately improved the water quality of a local wild brown trout stream.

Recipients of the annual Chesapeake Bay Clean Water Farm Award are nominated by their local county conservation districts. This annual award program is coordinated by the Pennsylvania Chesapeake Bay Education Office (administered by PACD, a private, nonprofit organization representing Pennsylvania's sixty-six county conservation districts). The awards are sponsored jointly by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's Chesapeake Bay Program and the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture to recognize farmers who implement Best Management Practices. The Pennsylvania Chesapeake Bay Education Office conducts numerous activities promoting the theme, "We All Live Downstream." For more information, visit www.pacd.org.

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