Blair County Tributary Strategy

2008 Update

The Blair County Conservation District is shifting the direction for Ag. BMP's for 2008. The existing No-Till/Cover Crop program has had success, but there is little new interest in the program. The USDA-NRCS office, with the cooperation of the District has done a good job at signing farmers up for the EQIP funding for no-till and cover cropping. This funding appears to be more lucrative for the farmers. With little interest in the existing District No-till/Cover crop program, we are looking to shift emphasis on more structural BMP's. We are going to be focusing our efforts on BMPs and projects that will help to reduce the amount of nutrients and sediment reaching the streams of Blair County. We are going to focus on BMP's close to the stream and those that will correct degradation. These BMP's are part of Barnyard controls and rotational grazing systems. We are looking to implement BMP's such as waterways, roof runoff management, use exclusion and stabilized cattle walkways. We are also looking to install BMP's for conversion to rotational grazing systems. Priority will be given to those that are converting crop ground, especially tilled crop ground, to a rotational grazing system. We will also focus on those farms that are converting large continuously grazed "pastures" to a rotational grazing system. BMP's will include stream bank fencing, stream crossings, fencing, stabilized walkways, etc. All rotational grazing systems that are implemented will be done in accordance with a grazing plan that meets the PA Tech guide standards.

With the decrease in interest in the no-till/cover crop program, the Blair County Conservation District feels that implementing BMP's on barnyards and rotational grazing systems are the next step for the District to take to improve water quality in the region. We are going to prioritize barnyards that are located close to streams and rotational grazing systems that convert crop fields to pastures. These BMP's will decrease nutrients and sedimentation from reaching our streams, rivers and the Chesapeake Bay.