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For Immediate Release

July 12, 2017

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Five Pennsylvania Farms Receive Clean Water Farm Award

Harrisburg –The Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts, Inc. (PACD) in conjunction with the award sponsor, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), presented the operators of five farms with the Clean Water Farm Award during its annual conference on July 12, 2017 in Harrisburg, PA. The honor is awarded annually to farmers who manage their daily farm operations in an environmentally conscious manner that helps to protect Pennsylvania’s water quality.

DEP has sponsored this award for the past thirty-one years. Recipients receive a certificate signed by the DEP Secretary and a large Clean Water Farm Award sign to erect on their property.

This year’s award recipients are from Armstrong, Berks, Franklin, Susquehanna, and Tioga Counties.

The 2017 Clean Water Farm Award Recipients are:

- **Billy Porter (Armstrong County)**

Billy Porter owns a beef farm in Vandergrift, PA. The farm has 70 acres of cropland and pasture. There are three un-named tributaries to Carnahan Run and the main stem of Carnahan Run that flows through the Porter farm. Over the last several years, riparian forest buffers, streambank fencing, roof runoff management, roofed manure storage, and several other best management practices were installed. The Armstrong

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Conservation District said, “Billy Porter has been a great advocate for conservation practices in Armstrong County. He continuously welcomes farmers to tour his farm operation and talks to them about the benefit of implementing agricultural best management practices.”

- **B.A.D. Farm (Berks County)**

David and Beth Rice and their son Jason operate B.A.D. Farm in Kempton, PA. Their operation includes 30 head of beef cattle, 100 dairy cows, and 200 laying hens.

B.A.D. Farm has 281.9 acres of cropland which is 100% no-till. The farm is located in the Upper Maiden Creek Watershed. Best management practices include a heavy use area, waste storage facility, stream crossing, animal walkways, and more. The Berks County Conservation District said, “Since the completion of their project, they have been more than willing to give tours and answer questions from other farmers in the area which led to water quality improvement projects being completed on at least ten different operations.”

- **Mark & Beth Steck of Green Valley Farm (Franklin County)**

Mark and Beth Steck and family own Green Valley Farm in Dry Run, PA. They have 230 dairy cows, 200 acres of cropland, and 27 acres of pasture. Best management practices include a stacking pad, manure storage, strip-cropping, and a rotational grazing system. The Stecks practice 100% no-till and grow cover crops on all of the fields. The Franklin County Conservation District said, “Neighboring farmers regularly stop by his operation to see the practices that were installed and to ask Mark about his experience.”

- **Claude Bennett (Susquehanna County)**

Claude Bennett owns a farm with 100 beef cattle and 60 laying hens on over 250 acres of farmland plus 140 acres of rented hay land in Montrose, PA. Best management practices installed on the farm include a roofed barnyard, manure storage facility, and water control structures. They also use rotational grazing and fence off sensitive wetland areas. The Susquehanna County Conservation District said, “All of these soil and water conservation practices have helped to keep clean water clean by reducing the amount of sediment and nutrients in surface and groundwater.”

- **Luke & Julie Hess (Tioga County)**

Luke and Julie Hess own a dairy farm with 250 animals, 309 acres of cropland, and 159 acres of pasture in Millerton, PA. The Hess’s updated their conservation plan in 2014 and installed best management practices including roof runoff, waste storage facilities, fencing, and rotational grazing. The Tioga County Conservation District said, “Cover crops are used on the farm to hold the soil in place. The livestock have been fenced out of the pond/wetland area and the streams.”

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The Clean Water Farm award was initiated in 1986. Recipients of the award are nominated by their local county conservation districts. Financial support for this award is provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection through the Chesapeake Bay Regulatory and Accountability Program and the Pennsylvania Chesapeake Bay Education Office (administered by the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts, Inc.).

For more information, visit www.pacd.org.

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The Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts, Inc. (PACD) is a non-profit organization whose guiding values include: Sustainable Resource Conservation; Integrity, Local; Education and Outreach; and Partnerships. PACD primarily serves as the collective voice for Pennsylvania's 66 county conservation districts. For more information about PACD, visit www.pacd.org.