

Franklin County Holds its Annual Summer Conservation Farm Tour

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Discussing former animal concentration areas and pasture management.

The Franklin County Conservation District (FCCD) held its second annual Summer Conservation Farm Tour on August 1, 2017, which was made possible through a PACD Nonpoint Source Pollution Prevention Educational Mini-Grant Project. In addition to recognizing the FCCD's Conservation Farmer of the Year, this tour also provides attendees with a first-hand look at Best Management Practices (BMPs) that reduce soil and nutrient runoff leaving the farm. This year's Conservation Farmer of the Year was Air Hill Acres Farm (Justin and Doreen Geisinger) in Chambersburg.

Air Hill Acres Farm is a smaller, 100% grazing organic dairy and also custom raises steers. The Best Management Practices that have been installed include, but are not limited to, a concrete circular manure storage, concrete barnyard with runoff controls, a grassed waterway, rotational grazing, livestock fencing, waterers, stream crossings and conversion to all pasture and grass hay.

The farm tour began after the FCCD Chairman, Evan Burkholder, presented the Conservation Farmer of the Year Award to the Geisingers. Attendees were able to see "before" pictures of all

the areas which had BMPs installed, including the Animal Concentration Areas (ACAs) that are now in permanent vegetation. The crowd was free to ask questions as the tour moved along and Justin covered topics such as soil testing, manure management, preventing ACAs, rotational grazing and weed management in organic pastures/hay. The FCCD asked that Justin share his real-life experiences with implementing and maintaining his BMPs. These experiences included topics such as converting to 100% grass hay and pasture, surprises during construction, what he would change about the BMPs and how the BMPs are currently working.



The Geisingers after receiving their award.

There were over 70 people in attendance, including other farmers, the general public, agency staff and legislative aides for Senator Alloway and Representative Kauffman. County Commissioners Keller, Thomas and Ziobrowski were in attendance as well and congratulated the Geisingers. The FCCD thanks Justin and Doreen Geisinger (and the rest of their family) for all of their hard work that allowed this tour to take place.



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