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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 17, 2019 in Williamsport, 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-three 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 Bedford, Cumberland, Franklin, Washington, and York Counties.

The 2019 Clean Water Farm Award Recipients are:

- **Snider Homestead Farm (Bedford County)**
Berneta and Brad Gable own Snider Homestead Farm which includes 243 acres of cropland and 53 acres of pasture. The dairy farm is located in New Enterprise, PA. The Gables installed best management practices (BMPs) such as stream bank

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fencing, a stream crossing, and watering facility. A liquid storage facility handles cow manure and milkhouse waste. “The changes they made helped them to improve water quality in Beaver Creek and ground water. This farm is very well managed,” the Bedford County Conservation District said.

- **Hard Earned Acres, Bob and Barb Keefer (Cumberland County)**
Bob and Barb Keefer own Hard Earned Acres which includes 1,000 acres of cropland and 20 acres of pasture. The dairy farm is located in Shippensburg, PA. Best management practices (BMPs) include concrete barnyard improvements directed stormwater to a vegetative treatment area. Also, an anaerobic digester and a solids separator were installed on the farm. The Cumberland County Conservation District said, “Food waste is also brought onto the farm to mix with the anaerobic digester which allows it to operate much more efficiently.”
- **Martin Farms, Josh & Brandi Martin and Robert & Patsy Martin (Franklin County)**
Josh & Brandi Martin and Robert & Patsy Martin own Martin Farms in Chambersburg, PA. This dairy operation includes 1,059 acres of cropland. Best management practices (BMPs) include several concrete manure storage tanks, silage leachate collection system, stream bank fencing, and roofed manure stacking areas. “Martin Farms has recently been intentional about doing things not just because they have to, but because they make sense and are ways to be good stewards of the land,” said the Franklin County Conservation District.
- **Iams Farm (Washington County)**
The Iams farm is a beef operation with 155 acres of cropland and 220 acres of pasture. The farm is located in Amity, PA. The farm is entirely a grass-based operation and the only tillage occurs when crop fields are rejuvenated back to alfalfa. They use contour strips, intensive rotational grazing, and covered manure storage structures. “The Iams family promotes agriculture and watershed activities within the community and county through hosting farm events and outreach,” said the Washington County Conservation District.

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- **Belview Valley Farms LLC, Eric Gemmill (York County)**
Eric Gemmill runs Belview Valley Farms in Delta, PA. The hog farm includes 700 acres of cropland and 15 acres of pasture. Best management practices (BMPs) include crop rotation, no-till, cover crops, grassed waterways, and riparian forest buffers. The York County Conservation District said, “We are pleased to recognize Belview Valley Farms for the improvements they have already implemented and their continued dedication to protecting our soil and water resources!”

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.

