

## The York County Agricultural Preservation Program

### Preservation and Conservation: A Perfect Match

By David Boose Jr., Ag Resource Conservationist



At a time when online dating services are always promising their ability to match you with your soul mate for life, I have decided to join them and make a similar promise. Although I certainly cannot claim to be an expert matchmaker, I can guarantee my choice of a perfect match: Preservation and Conservation. The Deed of Easement, signed by landowners when their farm is preserved through the York County Agricultural Land Preservation Program states, "The agricultural conservation easement created by this Deed shall be a covenant running with the land and shall be effective in perpetuity." When landowners sign the Deed of Easement, they are signing an agreement or "covenant" not only for their current farm operation, but with "the land" within the boundaries of their farm which they offer to the easement program. The easement is perpetual, meaning it is to last forever.

When we realize the seriousness of a perpetual covenant with "the land" on a preserved farm, we can see how conservation and preservation make the perfect match. When we understand and desire that the land on which agricultural production is taking place today will also be used for agricultural production years and years from now, we don't want the resources on that land to wash away, be mismanaged, or degraded. If we truly value the farm we are preserving, we will desire to retain and even enhance the farm's blessings to future generations. We cannot have true preservation without conservation.

Although I do not charge for my matchmaking services, I would be misleading (as with many dating services), if I did not state that as with all perfect unions and worthy goals, there will be challenges and often costs. To implement best management practices in the farm's conservation plan & meet the requirements of the Agricultural Land Preservation Program (which requires the plan to meet the Pa Clean Streams Law), there are costs involved for the landowner and the operator. Having stated this truth, I will then make everyone aware that there are numerous programs and agencies standing ready to partner for the cause of conservation. Two of these partners, who work closely with the Preservation Program are the York County Conservation District, 717-840-7430, and the USDA- Natural Resource Conservation Service, 717-755-2966 Ext 3. When a landowner or operator works with these partners, they can learn about the many funding and technical assistance options available.

Whether you as a reader are the owner or operator of a preserved farm or not, you should be aware that you play an important part in the success of both preservation and conservation in York County. You may be involved as a taxpayer in supporting these goals, or in encouraging your local representatives and officials to support these goals. Even though there are challenges to preserving the land "in perpetuity," our efforts now for preservation and conservation will bring lasting blessings to our community, just as any perfect union.

The County Ag Land Preservation Board holds public monthly meetings on the third Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm in Room 4 of the County Annex Building, 118 Pleasant Acres Road, adjacent to the County Nursing Home.

Phone: 717-840-7400/Monday - Friday 8:00 am to 4:30 pm.