December 2014

**Happy Holidays!** 

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2014 AEM Awards

Conservation
Partner Award

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## Contact Us

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If you would like to receive your

Conservation news by email rather than hard copy, please contact

Wyoming County Soil & Water Conservation

District at:

585-786-5070 or email wcswcd@frontiernet.net

Thank You!



# Norm, Dianne, Adam & Kate Becker Outback Dairy 2014 Conservation Farm of the Year

Wyoming County Soil and Water Conservation District is pleased to announce that this year's winners of the Conservation Farm of the Year Award is Outback Dairy, a dairy operation run by Norm, Dianne, Adam and Kate Becker of Varysburg, NY. The award is given each year to honor a farm with an immeasurable commitment to soil conservation and water quality protection.

Outback Dairy is a 5th generation family farm, purchased by Norm's great grandfather in 1867. Norm and Dianne have been running the farm since 1979, and their son Adam has been working on the farm fulltime since 2002. The Becker's are currently milking about 300 Holsteins and grow corn, haylage, soybeans, and wheat.



The Becker's have been voluntarily practicing conservation for decades. They began working with the District in 1981 and have completed all 5 tiers of the Agricultural Environmental Management Program. In addition, they have developed and maintained a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan. They have utilized a long list of conservation practices that protect soil and water resources, including contour strip cropping, stripcropping, no-till planting, conservation tillage, tiling, diversion ditches, stone chutes, sod waterways, manure management system, heavy use area protection, silage leachate management system, agricultural waste transfer system, vegetated treatment area, barnyard runoff control, cover crops, manure setbacks, and ag plastics recycling. This commitment to conservation over the years is what makes Outback Dairy the 2014 Conservation Farm of the Year!

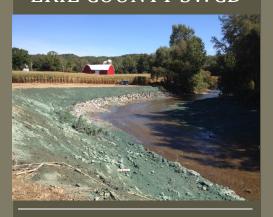
## **AEM AWARD WINNERS**



Zielenieski Farms, Inc



## **ERIE COUNTY SWCD**



RONALD P. HERMAN, SR.
PARTNERS IN
CONSERVATION
AWARD

Erie County Soil and Water
Conservation District was awarded
the Partners in Conservation Award
for outstanding cooperation and
assistance in stream channel
restoration and implementation
of agricultural best management
practices in the
Buffalo Creek Watershed.

## Streamside Buffers: Inexpensive but Effective Conservation

By Jim LaGioia, NRCS

Western New York is blessed with an abundance of natural resources that other parts of the world can only envy. Rich fertile soils and a seemingly endless supply of fresh water decorate our landscape. The Natural Resources Conservation Service and New York's Soil and Water Conservation Districts exist mainly to help improve the use of these natural resources. Sometimes we focus on complex and often expensive conservation practices such as manure storages or rock liked waterways to improve these resources. Although these practices are often necessary and can be very effective tools for combating erosion and water quality issues, there may be a simpler solution.

Experts in the field of conservation agree that one of the most effective conservation practices we can implement is the use of a simple streamside buffer. At first glance you may think that riparian buffers are a great way to protect our stream banks from eroding; and they are, but they accomplish much more than that. Riparian buffers work to filter sediments, nutrients and chemicals before they can find their way into our water supply. They also reduce stream temperatures and provide a source of food for aquatic organisms. Streams with buffers have stronger and more diverse ecosystems. These ecosystems act as nature's own water purification system. The Natural Resources Conservation Service as well as New York's Soil and Water Conservation Districts are proud to offer funding opportunities to install both herbaceous and forested riparian buffers near your stream or waterway. If you would like to learn more about riparian buffers or funding opportunities, please contact the Wyoming County NRCS or SWCD at (585) 786-5070, or in person at 31 Duncan Street in Warsaw.

# Winter Manure Management Tips

A recent article entitled, "Reducing risk of manure loss" by PRO-DAIRY Crop and Environmental Specialist Karl Czymmek highlighted some of the ways farms can manage manure in winter months to reduce the risk of runoff. The full article can be found at http://ansci.cornell.edu/pdfs/PD-e-alert-Sep14a.pdf. Summarized below are some of the key tips.

- Have enough storage Contact Soil and Water or NRCS if you need additional storage and are cutting it close every year. Another option is to better manage the storage that you do have.
- Clearly assign the lead person on manure management Make sure this person has enough time to actually take care of this responsibility.
- Ensure field staff are well trained Field staff should understand how to apply the correct rates, how to look for problems, how to deal with no spread zones, know who to call for help and know how to implement an emergency spill plan.
- Maximize storage capacity in the fall Separate solids and store or reuse them elsewhere. Clean out accumulated solids this fall. Trade storage with a neighboring farm, with agreements to haul it back out in the spring. Install a storage cover.
- Apply manure in a safer manner

Incorporate manure if it fits with other farm goals. Apply manure to fields with good soil cover. Avoid spreading



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when weather conditions are calling for rain or snowmelt. Avoid sensitive fields, especially if frozen or snow covered and warm weather conditions are forecasted. Be cautious spreading manure when tile outlets are flowing. If spreading when outlets are flowing is unavoidable, monitor tile outlets and stop operations immediately if outflow becomes cloudy. Have last resort, emergency spreading locations based on farm experience, recommendations from a CAFO planner or information from SWCD or NRCS.

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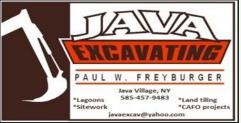
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# District receives \$25,000 for Soil Health Program

Wyoming County Soil and Water Conservation District received \$25,000 of funding through the NYS Ecosystem-Based Management Soil Health Mini-Grants for the Great Lakes and Mohawk River Watersheds. We were one of thirteen Soil and Water Conservation Districts to receive funding as part of this \$295,000 project. Our project is a partnership with Western New York Crop Management Association.

The Genesee River Basin Soil Health Program in Wyoming County will focus on cover crops and riparian buffers. Cover crops help reduce runoff and erosion, recycle nutrients, reduce soil compaction, and increase resilience against flooding and drought. Riparian buffers, which are areas of managed vegetation between water and upland areas, help reduce erosion, stabilize streambanks, and filter out sediment and nutrients.

Given all of these benefits to the farm and the environment, this grant provides the opportunity to expand usage of these practices in Wyoming County. Our program will help break down some of the barriers to implementation. First, we will hold a workshop to show the production benefits of soil health practices in the reality of a working farm, discussing lessons learned and funding opportunities. Then, the program will fund

# Interested in participating?

Contact Kim Falbo at kfalbo@frontier.com or (585) 786-5070 ext 121

cover crops and riparian buffers for those farms that would like to try these practices. This is a rare opportunity where grant funding will pay for 100% of the cost of implementation (at NRCS standard rates)! The District has funding to support almost 1600 linear feet of 30 ft wide riparian buffers and 400 acres of cover crops.

## Together, we can build healthier soils and healthier water!

This publication is the quarterly news letter of the Wyoming County Soil and Water Conservation District and is available at no cost to all District cooperators, all interested landowner and land users, and to the general public. To receive this newsletter, simply send your complete mailing address to our office.

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