Progress Report on Canandaigua AEM Implementation

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Working closely with the Ontario County Soil & Water Conservation District, the Canandaigua Lake Watershed Agricultural Program Committee (made up of farmers) has helped to promote nearly $2 million worth of conservation practices on 24 farms since 1999. Participating farm operations have stepped up to the call by contributing $328,000 to implement BMPs on their own farms. A summary of the major projects implemented as well as those to be implemented during the next two construction seasons are listed below.

Exclusion Fence for Streams- Keeps cattle from entering streams where they can erode stream banks and deposit manure directly into the stream. Over the last three years 35,100 feet of fencing were put in on various farms throughout the watershed. Three water supply systems have been installed to replace the stream as a water source.

Grassed Waterway-Captures surface runoff and conveys water from agricultural operations. The vegetated waterway can filter out sediments, nutrients and bacteria. In the last three years 11,100 feet of grassed waterway were installed.

Manure Storage Facility- A properly designed storage area reduces the surface and subsurface loss of nutrients and bacteria. See article below.

Barnyard Runoff Management- Excluding excess rainwater from the barnyard area reduces the

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Managing Manure on the Button Farm

For Leon and Dianne Button of Vine Valley, managing and operating a 150 head dairy is more than a job, it's a family tradition dating back to 1885. For the Button's the single most important challenge to be addressed involved the collection of silage leachate or runoff and the storage of manure.

The family sought to adequately treat and store milk house waste and manure along with runoff from a large silage bunker.

The solution: With technical assistance from the District and NRCS along with cost sharing made available through New York State, a 750,000 waste storage facility was constructed. In addition a ½ acre filter strip was constructed to treat the high flows from the silage bunker while an 1,100 gallon pump tank was installed to collect and pump milk house wastes and concentrated leachate from the bunker to the waste storage for land application.

Leon Button, owner and operator of Button Farms, saw the advantages of the storage facility. "The manure storage facility is making it so we can manage the manure and sileage leachate much better by being able to spread the manure when it isn't wet. The cost share made it possible to do it."

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transport of nutrients, sediments and bacteria from these areas of high livestock concentrations to streams and eventually the lake. Examples of projects include: barn roof gutters, drainage diversions and safely disposing of water landing in the livestock area to a filter strip. Seven farm operations have installed a variety of these systems over the last three years.

Proper Fuel Storage- Secondary containment devices around tanks will trap and hold any leaks. Two storage areas have been installed.

Nutrient Management Plans- Excess nutrients placed on the land will either be lost through runoff or leaching into the groundwater. This is also true for residential lawns (see lawn care section). Plans are developed for the farmer to help map out a strategy on the most effective and efficient way of providing fertilizers on land while minimizing nutrient loss. Several nutrient management plans have been designed.

Heavy Use Laneways and Stream Crossings- Livestock and equipment are constantly moving on a farm. The proper construction and maintenance of laneways and stream crossings significantly reduces erosion and stream destruction. Approximately 7,200 feet of heavy use laneway and 11 stream crossings have been or will be installed.

A 20-minute video describing the Canandaigua AEM program is available from Bob Stryker at (716) 396-3478.

Reliable Water Supply for the Brahm Farm

Constructed water supplies, such as the new pond on the Brahm Farm, can eliminate water supply shortages, reduce water erosion problems, and provide clean water for livestock.

For Tom and Paul Brahm of South Bristol, maintaining a clean and reliable water source has always posed a challenge. While the scenic hills of their 210-acre farm are a ideal location for grape production neither the underlying geology nor the small streams provide enough water to meet the demands for their 50 beef cows that graze the hillside pastures.

Because the Brahms knew that wells were inadequate and their cattle would erode existing stream gullies a solution was sought to obtain an adequate water supply while protecting water quality.

The solution: In 1999 an alternative water pond (see picture) in the uppermost pasture was constructed along with the installation of 3,500 feet of water distribution lines. Using gravity to their advantage the Brahms are now able to easily distribute water to any one of their seven pastures and barn located down gradient.