For Land's Sake

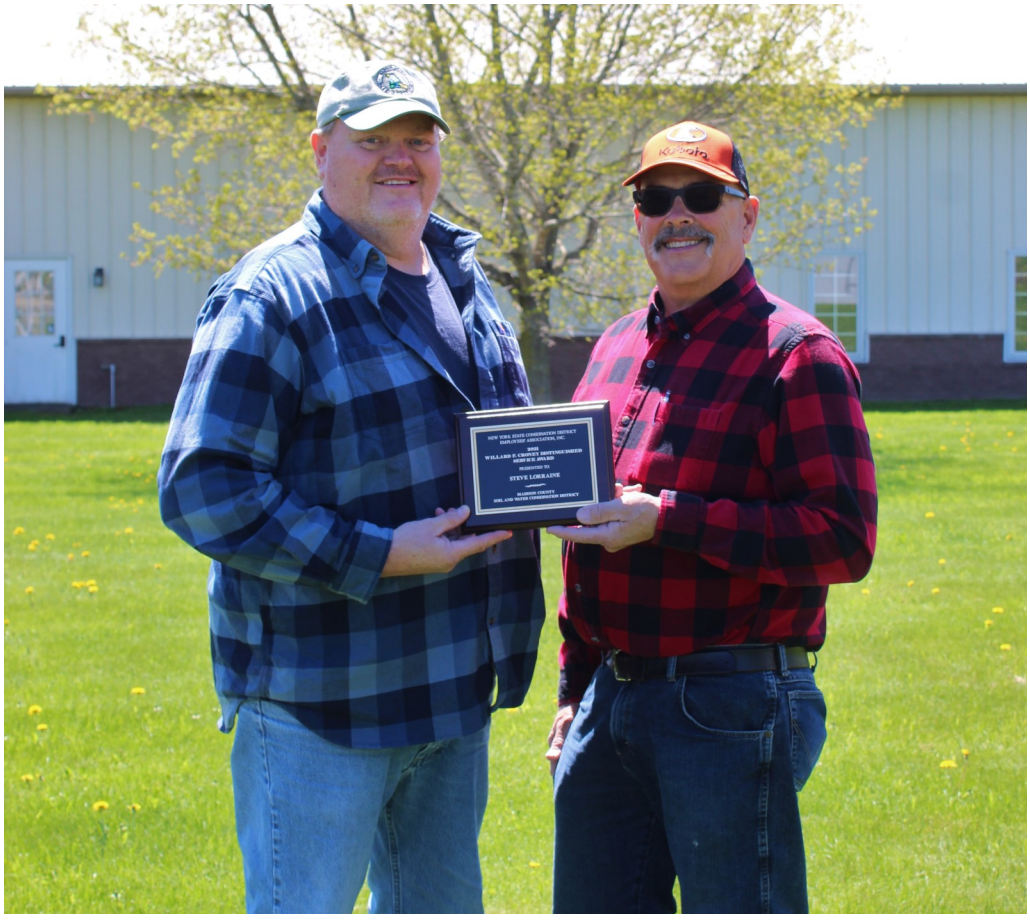
Winter 2021

Steve Lorraine Honored with Willard F. Croney Distinguished Service Award

At the 2021 New York State Conservation District Employees' Association (NYS CDEA) annual training symposium and awards banquet, Steve Lorraine was honored with the prestigious Willard F. Croney Distinguished Service Award for excelling as an outstanding Conservation District employee in the state.

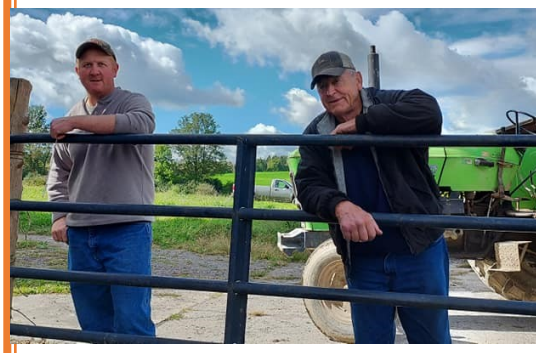
Lorraine has served as NYS CDEA president, vice president and division rep, committee chair, symposium and skills workshop instructor, as well as a Madison County District Manager and valuable employee. Madison County SWCD Board Chair Doug Holdridge said, "He has a genuine concern for mentoring District employees as well as unrelenting service to the agricultural community." The Madison County SWCD has garnered millions of dollars for customer projects and initiatives, added a diverse staff of certified professionals ,and has been recognized nationally for its achievements, all under the leadership of Mr. Lorraine.

Franklin County SWCD Manager Chasity Miller added, "Steve has always been involved and dedicated to improving the 58th New York State Conservation Districts in any way possible … he has provided valuable on-the-ground knowledge and practical leadership to the New York State Conservation Committee, NY-NRCS, New York Ag and Markets, NYACD and a multitude of NGOs and legislators."



Cody Farms awarded 40th Madison County Conservation Farm of the Year

By Troy Bishopp



Cazenovia, NY---To most people, they see dirt. To the farmer, they see a living soil of potential.

Over 150 years ago an eighteen-year-old Kendall Cody saw the great possibilities of starting a farm in Madison County on the Honeoye rich soils in the Town of Fenner within the Chittenango Creek watershed. By 1868 standards Kendall's true grit, hard work, and skillful artistry for growing hops and raising horses put him on the map as one of the largest operations in New York State. He lived through the powdery mildew fungus that decimated the New York hops industry and he quickly transitioned the farm to cows. And just like milk helps to build strong bones, the Cody family built a strong foundation with their dairy farm operation.

Kendall's legacy lives on through the Cody lineage and family stories. The only tangible existence of great-grandad Kendall exists in the well-laid wooden buildings with crop notes on boards that he constructed. Now in the third, fourth, and fifth generations of farm life, the 180-cow dairy operation working over 500 acres of healthy soil, represents a community-based focused ideal where the farming lifestyle isn't just about animals or crops. "It's about beliefs and values passed down through generations ensuring things are left better for those yet to come. It's about our heritage and our future," said Bill Cody.

"The land gives us our "lively-hood" and provides for our family. We're mindful that we not only cultivate the land underneath our feet, but care for fields far from the farmstead. That's why everything we grow and create has Mother Earth in mind. Our farmstead is a respected partnership between us and nature," says the Cody's.

The Cody's send their milk to the Dairy Farmers of America Marketing Cooperative (DFA) and have garnered many "Super Milk" distinctions for producing high quality, tasty, nutritious milk.

The Dairy of Distinction Farm and 2019 Heritage Farm Award honoree has been proactive in building soil and animal health as well as installing and managing water quality conservation practices while being good neighbors in the community. The Madison County Soil and Water Conservation District recognizes this commitment to a collaborative approach in implementing common sense conservation practices that include: a comprehensive nutrient management plan, a precision dairy feed management program, strip cropping, milk-house waste system, silage leachate control system, roof water management, and animal waste management systems.

These measures have enhanced water quality throughout the property using the family's resources and sweat equity along with program funding and technical assistance from the Madison County Soil and Water Conservation District, New York State Agricultural Environmental Management Program, New York State Environmental Protection Fund, and Finger Lakes - Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance (FL-LOWPA).

"We appreciate working with Ken, Bill, and the whole family to create pro-active farming systems that enhance the natural resources for all Madison County residents and supporting the farm's endeavors for the future," said Steve Lorraine, Madison County SWCD District Manager.

Bill and Monica Cody and their five children have diversified into "Farmstead 1868"LLC (www.farmstead1868.com) with the mission to bring wholesome products from their farm to local families and beyond.

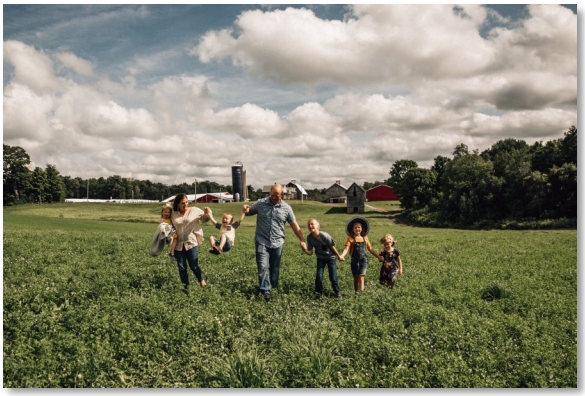
As we look to the next century we are proud stewards of The Farmstead. The past was filled with hard times and

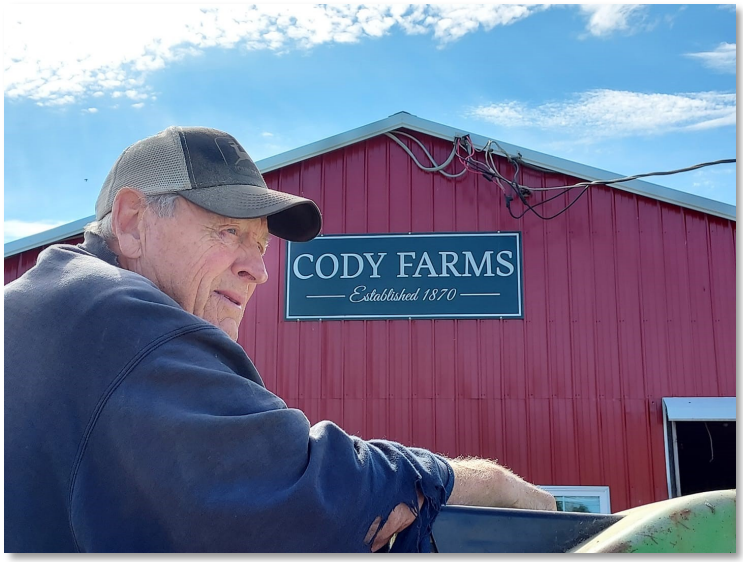
Continued on page 3

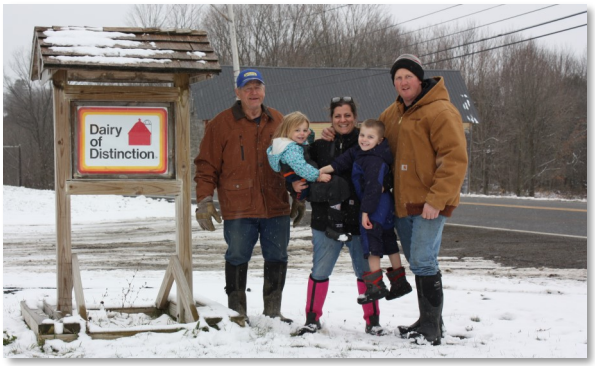
good times, land acquisitions and sales, births and deaths, crops, and cows. Farming is not an easy lifestyle, only 1% of our great country does it. But farming is a choice we have wholeheartedly made because it is an experience like no other, it is our family legacy. With five kids and plenty of livestock to take care of one would think, "How do you find time for something new with all that needs to get done?! Well, we're farmers. Growing is what we do. It's in our heritage."

In addition to their dairy farming prowess the family is leading a non-profit project in conjunction with Cornell Cooperative Extension, from the Literacy Coalition of Madison County, which cultivates the next generation of farmers through the "Growing Minds to Feed the Future" initiative. The initiative brings agriculture and literacy together for 10 county libraries and 10 county school districts.

The Madison County Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Directors congratulates the Cody family on 153 years of success and for their positive community impacts and volunteerism within the county. To learn more about the positive attributes of conservation planning and implementation, give the Madison County Soil and Water Conservation District a call at 315-824-9849 or visit www.madcoswcd.com.



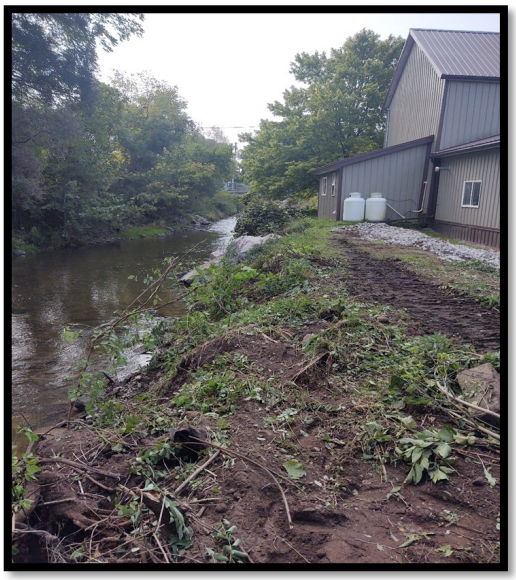




District Flood Mitigation Program

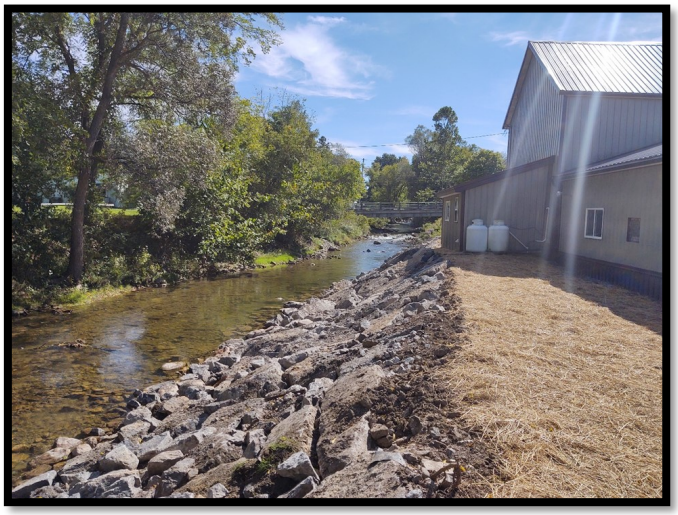
The Madison County SWCD continues to receive funding from the Madison County Board of Supervisors to design and implement flood mitigation projects across the County. This funding coupled with additional funding that the District has secured from New York State, is utilized to implement flood mitigation projects for both municipalities and private landowners. Potential projects are inventoried and ranked by District staff through a ranking system that was developed in cooperation with the County Planning Department and County Highway Department. Once the ranked list is developed, high ranking projects undergo an engineering review to develop cost estimates utilized in determining which projects will receive funding in a given year. At this point the chosen projects have fully engineered designs completed, permits are obtained and contractors are solicited to complete the work. District staff oversees construction from start to finish to ensure the project is constructed as designed.

Oneida Creek in Munnsville

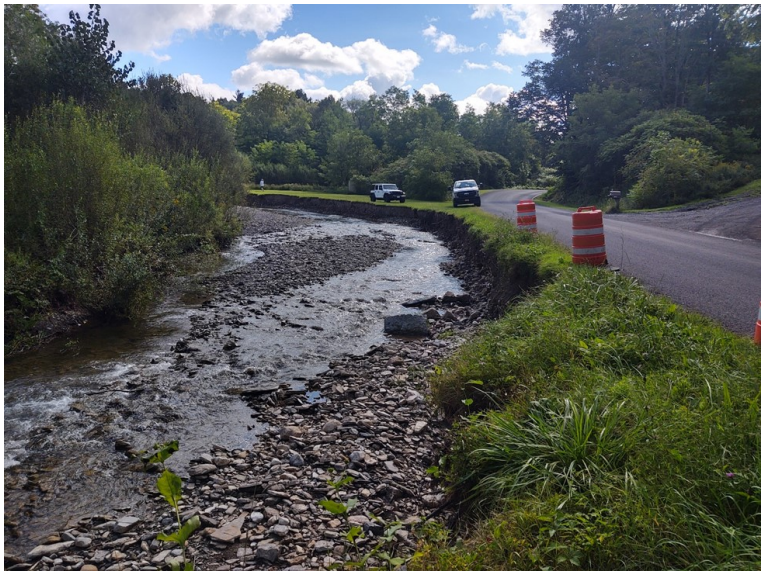


Oneida Creek had eroded the stream bank to within a few feet of the structure as can be seen in this picture.

In order to protect the structure, the design called for very large rock as the velocities in this stream channel during flood events is very high. The existing stream bank was laid back to a stable slope and then the rock rip-rap was installed to protect the structure while maintaining the proper stream channel dimensions.

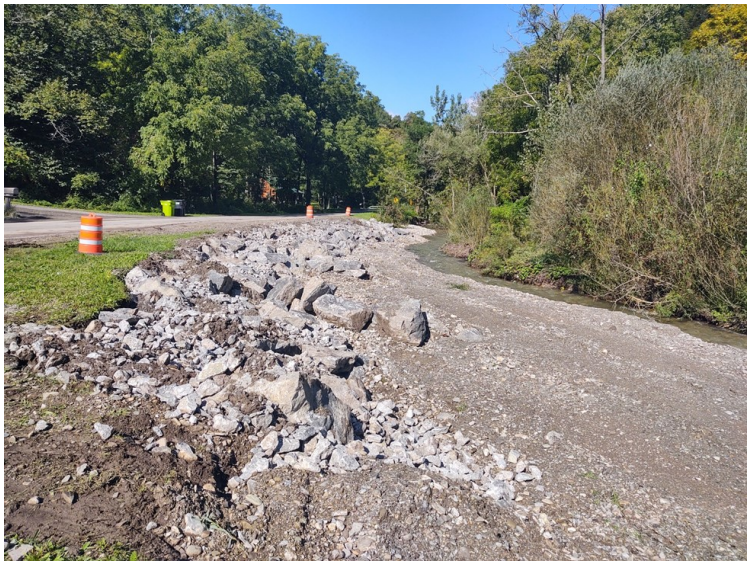


Cowaselon Creek in Chittenango



As seen in this photo the stream has eroded the bank to within a few feet of Creek Road. The Sullivan Highway Department contacted the District because they were concerned they were going to lose the road in the next storm if something was not done to repair the damage to the stream bank.

District staff Jerry Boyd and Andy Hauslaur completed a survey of the site, put together a design that would handle the volume and velocity of water that flows through this channel during storm events, and worked with NYS DEC to get the project permitted (this stream is a NYS DEC classified trout stream). District staff working with the Sullivan Highway Department staff implemented the engineered design that consisted of large rip-rap and stream barbs to direct water off of the outside bank and back to the center of the channel.



It was a good thing this project was implemented when it was because a significant rain event hit the area on October 26 and the project held up beautifully with no damage evident as the flood waters receded.

Trees For Tributaries

By supporting plantings along tributaries, small streams that feed larger rivers and lakes, the program helps create healthier, more climate-resilient communities

Do you own property along a stream, creek or body of water within the Headwaters of the Susquehanna River? Even Intermittent streams qualify!

Free Trees Must Supply Stream

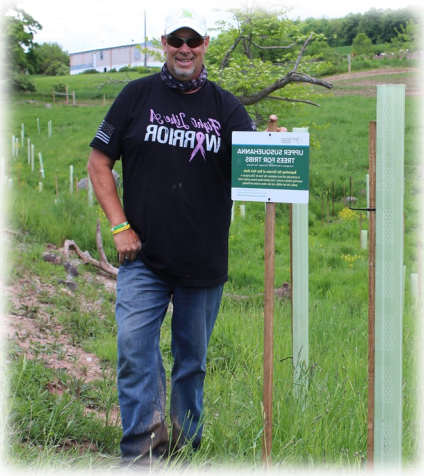
We have many different trees and shrubs that attract anything from pollinators to deer and other animals

Would you like to increase flood protection and reduce stream bank erosion? Or interested in increasing wildlife value on your land?

The Trees for Tribs Program allows us to help improve the water quality throughout our watershed by offering Free Trees to plant Riparian Buffers

NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY | Department of Environmental Conservation

For More Information: Email: Joann-Burke@verizon.net or Bufferteam@u-s-c.org



Agricultural Assessment Filing Deadline is March 1, 2022

Farmers and agricultural use landowners should be thinking about the Agricultural Assessment Program if not already enrolled. This program was established under Agricultural Districts' Law to reduce property tax bills for land in agricultural production by limiting the property tax assessment of such land to its prescribed agricultural assessment value. Owners whose land satisfies the eligibility requirements may apply for an agricultural assessment.

Agricultural Assessment applies only to agricultural land that includes crop land, pasture, orchards, vineyards, sugarbush, and support land acreage either set aside or retired under soil conservation programs. Up to 50 acres of farm woodland is eligible for an agricultural assessment per eligible tax parcel. Land and water used for aquacultural production are eligible, as is land under a structure within which crops, livestock or livestock products are produced.

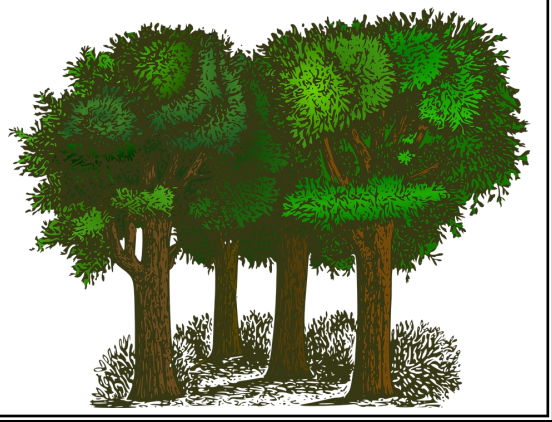
Eligibility is determined by the assessor or board of assessors where the application is filed. Land generally must consist of 7 or more acres that were used in the past 2 years for production for sale of crops, livestock or livestock products. Agricultural producing land less than 7 acres that is adjacent to a larger producing tract may be eligible as well. The annual gross sale of agricultural products must generally average $10,000 or more for the past 2 years. If an agricultural enterprise is less than 7 acres, it may qualify if average annual gross sales equal $50,000 or more. A commercial horse boarding operation may qualify if there are at least 7 acres of land, the operation boards at least 10 horses, and the operation receives $10,000 or more in gross receipts annually.

To apply , the landowner's first step is to contact their town assessor to find out if they qualify. If they qualify they would then need to contact the District for a soil group worksheet. The application and soil group worksheets need to be submitted to the town assessor no later than March 1st.

DON'T WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE!

2022 Tree Sale Order Forms Coming Soon

Order forms for the 2022 Madison County Soil and Water Conservation District Tree and Shrub sale will be available the first week of January on our website. If you are currently on the District's email list you will receive the order form around the same time. All prepaid orders will be due on March 13, 2022 with pick up on April 18th. If you are looking for trees or shrubs that are not currently offered please contact our office and we will try to offer them the following year.



Madison County Farms and Conservation District Host NYACD Tour

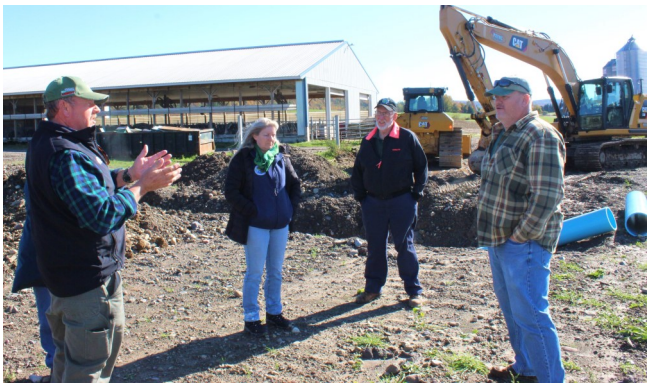
By Troy Bishopp

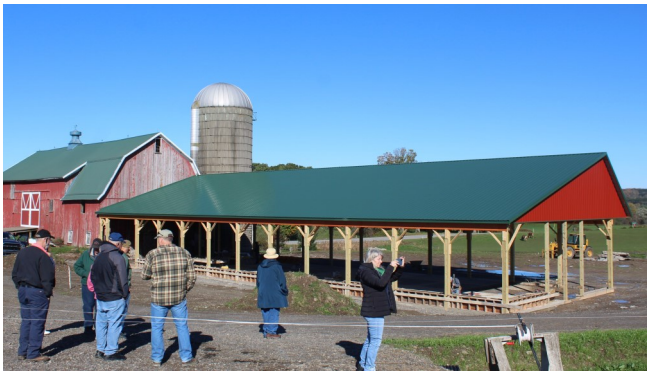
On a picturesque fall afternoon Madison County SWCD Manager Steve Lorraine led a tour of district directors and guests on a 2 hour tour of 3 dairy farms who are implementing water quality practices. He also shared a glimpse of cover crops growing and a history of the area reservoirs that feed New York's canal system.

The first stop highlighted an ongoing lined-earthen manure storage and transfer system project for a 200-cow dairy farm. This farm also utilizes robots to milk the cows so they have more time for crop production and family. The second farm was a grass-fed organic operation nestled above the pristine Nelson Swamp which rotationally grazes 50 cows on 80 acres. Directors witnessed a covered barnyard project being built because of the barn's close proximity to a watercourse. The district was also installing a grass waterway leading into a water and sediment control basin.

The last farm was a CAFO dairy facility where Steve showed guests an elaborate silage leachate collection system with associated wetland cell treatment area. A newly built manure storage facility for holding solids during inclement weather was also discussed. Finally, the directors learned about the county's cover crop planting efforts in which 17 farmers utilized the equipment and staff to plant over 700 acres of rye and triticale on corn silage fields within the Upper Susquehanna River Watershed.

Guests enjoyed the relaxed, informative look at what happens on the land and the conservation decision-making and diverse funding that guide the water quality projects. It also didn't hurt, that the tour featured plenty of cold, delectable, chocolate milk for everyone to enjoy. For any questions about the practices featured contact Madison County SWCD at (315) 824-9849





Jerry Boyd Retires

By Troy Bishopp

For 13 years "Country" Jerry Boyd has served farmers, municipalities, and residents in all phases of putting conservation practices on the ground. Whether at a culvert crossing, stream-reach, barnyard project, tree planting, or assisting landowners with NYS DEC permits, his attention to delivering practical solutions were appreciated by all.

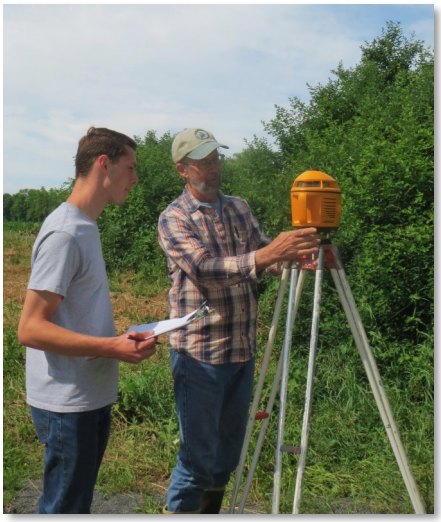
Jerry, a former self-employed landscaper and crew leader, came to the Madison County Soil and Water Conservation District and immediately made an impact. He increased his knowledge base of design work by cramming through countless books on conservation practices, inhaling training opportunities, and going to the field and learning from District staff (some of which have since retired). He was short on words (unless engaged about hunting or fishing) but long on rolling up his sleeves, listening, and practical figuring.

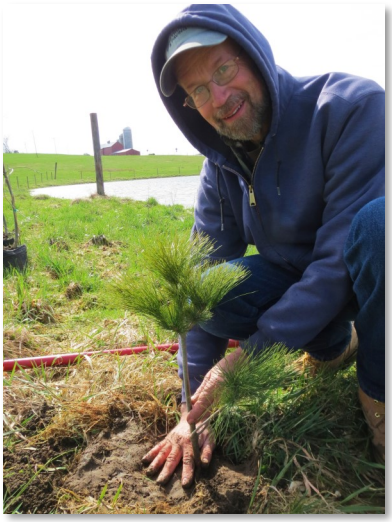
He was a relentless worker in the field and his common-sense personality made him an invaluable asset in working with people, many who historically feared agencies and programs. His approach of taking a complicated computer design and transferring it to an easy to read field-ready design has garnered praise from farmers, contractors , and municipal officials. His work ethic and personable nature inspired folks to want to work with the district on many levels from farmstead practices to streambank stabilizations.

He helped get projects like the Ag Non-Point Source Programs on the ground which optimizes the mission of Conservation Districts. He packed, planted, and gave advice on trees; pounded posts and strung high-tensile fence on buffers, took soil samples for nutrient management plans, designed projects with NRCS to help get EQIP projects in, poured concrete, and was always ready on the working end of a shovel. His prowess as a hands-on teacher and mentor helped countless interns and staff develop life-long technical and personal skills.

"An overlooked attribute is his ability to think outside the box and/or find information and people to brainstorm alternatives to ideas and designs to fit the field situation that meet customer goals and needs", says District Manager, Steve Lorraine. Jerry was cost conscience when he designed or worked on budgets which give projects a great amount of integrity. His honesty and straightforwardness got results as well as always being on the job to monitor the work performed.

We all wish Jerry and Ruth a fulfilling retirement in the country.





NYS Agricultural Environmental Management

Madison County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) leads in the implementation of the NYS Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) program. AEM is a voluntary, confidential, locally-led, and comprehensive approach that further advances environmental management on New York's farms, across all sizes and commodities. This program delivers technical support and financial incentives needed to help farmers to implement conservation practices critical to the protection of water quality and other natural resources. AEM helps to ensure that New York's farms remain viable and continue to meet their business objectives in an everchanging market place. Over the last two decades, over 12,000 farms across New York State have participated in AEM by working with local SWCDs and partnering with resource professionals, to develop and implement comprehensive, farm-specific plans using AEM's 5-Tier approach.

Tier 1: Inventory current activities, and future plans of the farm business.

Tier 2: Assess current environmental stewardship and opportunities for improvement.

Tier 3: Develop conservation plans addressing concerns and opportunities tailored to farm goals.

Tier 4: Implement plans utilizing available financial, educational, and technical assistance.

Tier 5: Evaluate practices and plans to ensure the protection of farm viability and the environment.

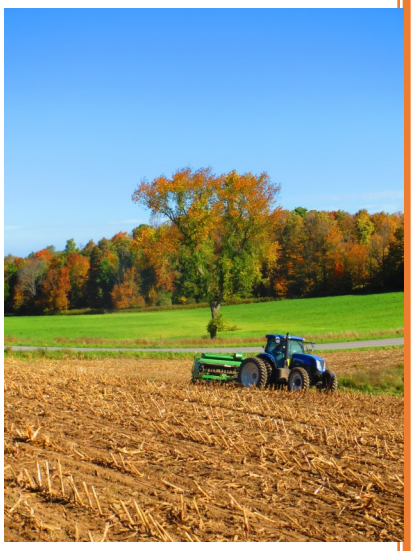
Completing this step provides farms the opportunity to become more engaged with the AEM program, often leading to further work through the Tiers to address farm and natural resource needs. Advancing through the AEM Tiers, opens doors for farms to apply for cost-share funding to implement priority practices. AEM takes a whole farm view to address not only nutrient management but also farmstead water supplies, pasture management, pesticide mixing, loading and storage, erosion control, stream and floodplain management, irrigation water management, and soil health to name a few. AEM can also address farm-to-neighbor relations and agriculture in the community. In today's climate of environmental awareness AEM's technical and financial resources are valuable to assist farmers in maintaining their commitment to conservation. Proactively advancing conservation practices is central to economic viability on today's farms. Any farm can participate in AEM.

Madison County SWCD is currently reviewing potential projects for funding through the AEM process.

Madison County Soil and Water Conservation District continues their long record of leading and implementing AEM with farmers at the county level, supported by statewide leadership from the Department of Agriculture and Markets and the NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee. To learn more about AEM or to get involved in the AEM program contact Madison County SWCD at 315-824-9849 ext. 5.

Covering up Madison County Soil

By Troy Bishopp



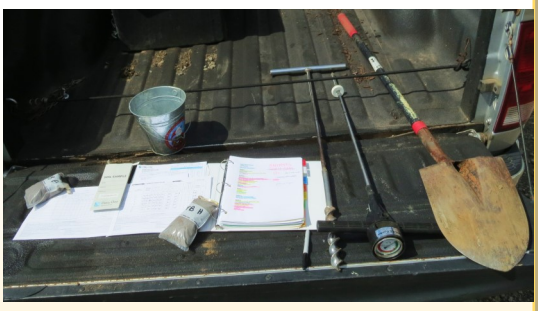
"A farmer's productive capacity is directly related to the health of his or her soil," said Iowa crop farmer, Howard Buffet. Farmers across the county are partnering with the District and planting acres of cover crops to meet nutrient management strategies each season. Because of the TMDL pollution diet regulations, resources are being directed in the Upper Susquehanna River Watershed as a cover cropping model area.

Cover crops and their roots reduce erosion and the cost of fertilizer by supplying nutrients to the soil and if planned, can be used as additional forage in the spring. Area-wide, the trend of planting cover crops is going up and is moving from annual and cereal ryes to more mixtures including oats and barley, clover and radishes, and peas and triticale.

Now in its 9th season of planting cover crops, the Madison County Soil and Water Conservation District sowed over 730 acres of certified annual rye and triticale seed, in a rain-soaked 2021 fall season. The District used their 15 foot John Deere 750 no-till drill and rental tractor from Clinton Tractor Company operated by Conservation Technician, Andrew Haslauer. Funding for the Cover Crop Initiative over the last 9 seasons has been provided by The Upper Susquehanna Coalition, NYS DEC, NYS Ag & Mkts, The Finger Lakes-Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance, and participating farmers. "The success is in the logistics and getting seed in the ground as soon as the corn choppers harvest the first plants", said District Manager Steve Lorraine. Contact the office if you're interested in pursuing cover crops.

Soil Testing --- Probing for Knowledge

By Jessica Heim



With the high price of fertilizer inputs, whether you're a farmer or gardener, it's important to know just how healthy your soil is before making any management decisions. "If you can't measure it, you can't manage it."

Soil tests can determine many things, including but not limited to; pH, organic matter levels, and the amount of micro and macronutrients in the soil. The pH is the measure of a soils acidity or alkalinity based on a scale from 0-14 with 0 being very acidic and 14 being very alkaline. Generally 6 to 7 is ideal but different crops require different environments to flourish. If the pH is unbalanced it can directly affect the nutrient uptake and the type of crops that can be grown successfully.

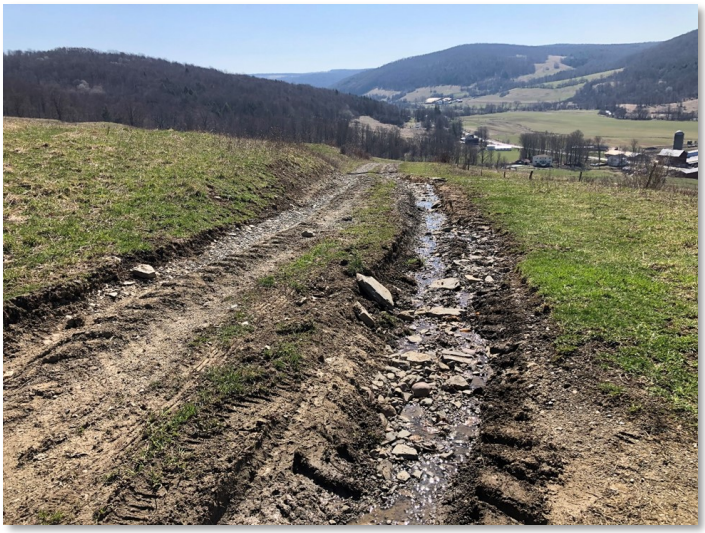
If you know your soil pH and available nutrients you can then decide what needs to be done in order to meet the requirements for a healthy crop. Will you need lime? Fertilizer? Manure? If so, how much? Without a soil test you may not put enough fertilizer on your crop, leading to low yields and returns. If you put too much fertilizer on, you risk wasting money or potentially causing surface or groundwater pollution. Knowing appropriate fertilizer application can increase yields, reduce costs, and prevent pollution. Soil testing is an important tool in making these quality decisions.

Have some soil you need tested? Madison County SWCD can assist you with the steps of preparing your soil sample for analysis and interpretation. Soil testing prices vary depending on crops grown and types of tests performed but start at about $9. To learn more about getting your soils analyzed give Madison County Soil and Water a call at 315-824-9849 or email jessica-heim@verizon.net

Madison County SWCD Agricultural Project Spotlight

One of the main areas of concern at the District is soil erosion as it has multiple negative impacts on farmland and water quality. Severe rain events over that past few years have created an issue for one of the farms we work with and they contacted our office looking for solutions to their concerns. The farm was experiencing significant erosion on an access road that is used to get to multiple farm fields. The design to fix this problem included subsurface drainage, access road, water bars, and seeding and mulching. Water bars are designed to shed water of the roadway to help reduce erosion after installation.

Before



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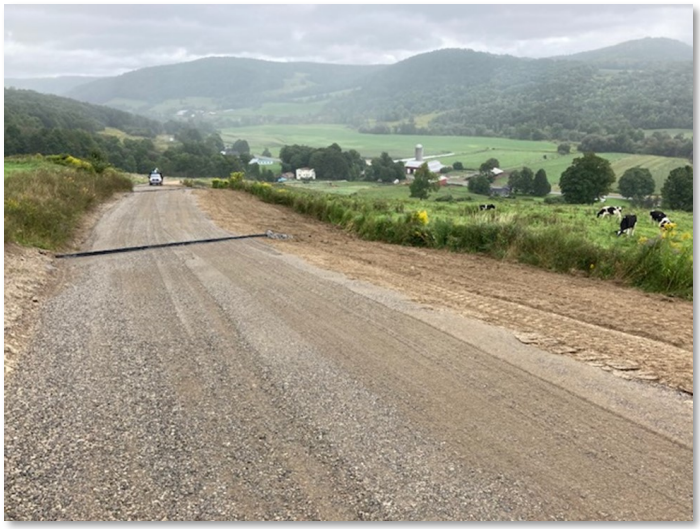
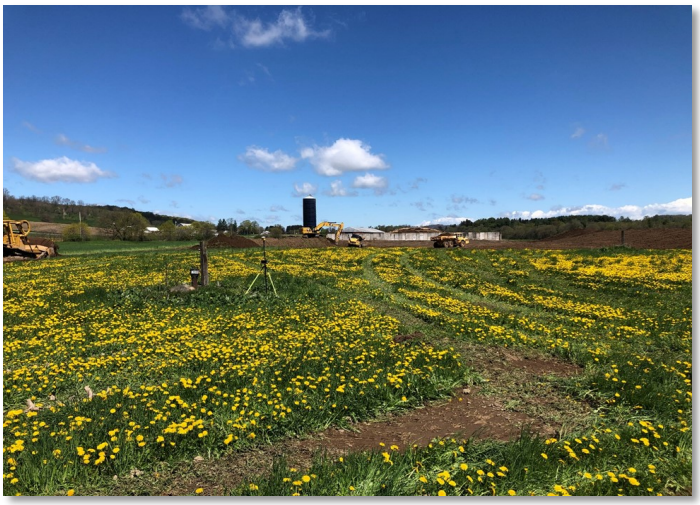


Switching gears from soil erosion to non-point source pollution control, a farm was planning to expand their bunk silo and asked the District for assistance in designing the bunk and a silage leachate collection and treatment system. A 2+ acre heavy use area was design to handle the equipment loads that would be utilizing this pad. This included high strength steel rebar and a lot of concrete. In order to treat the runoff from this site, a collection tank was installed to collect the low flow leachate so it can be mixed with manure and land applied according to the farm's comprehensive nutrient management plan. High flow runoff during storm events is directed to a series of wetland cells for pre treatment prior to being dispersed across a vegetative treatment area.

Before



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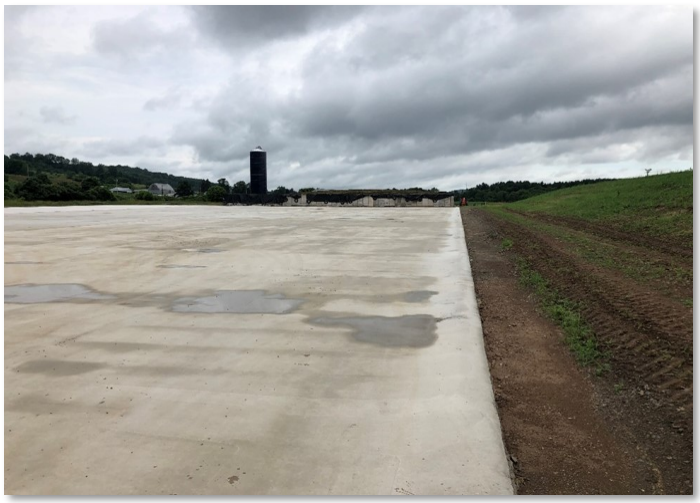
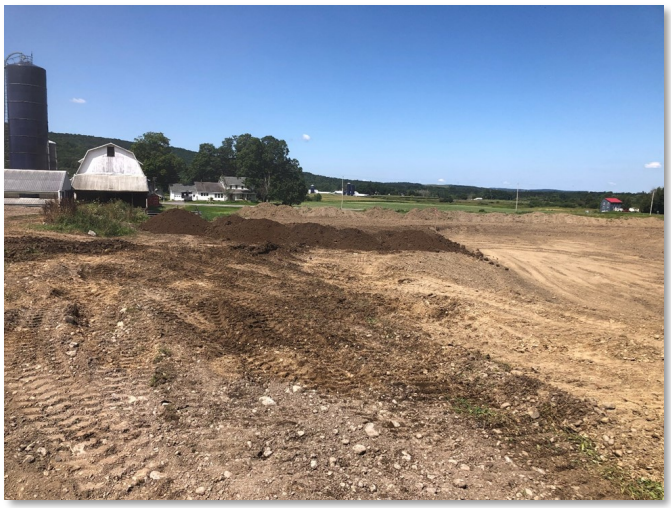
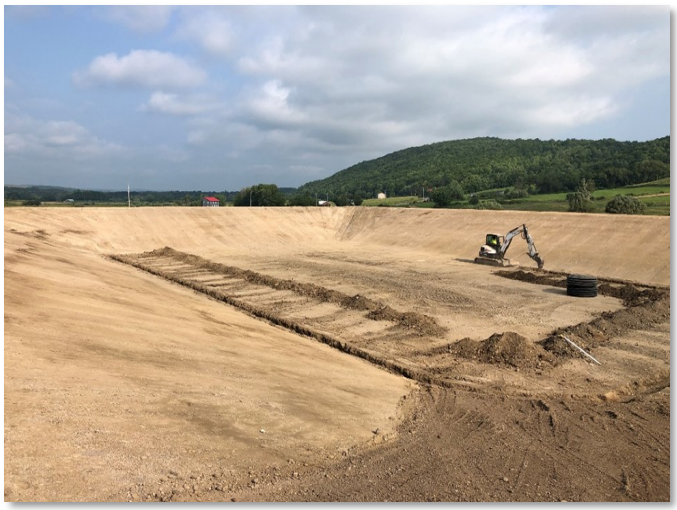


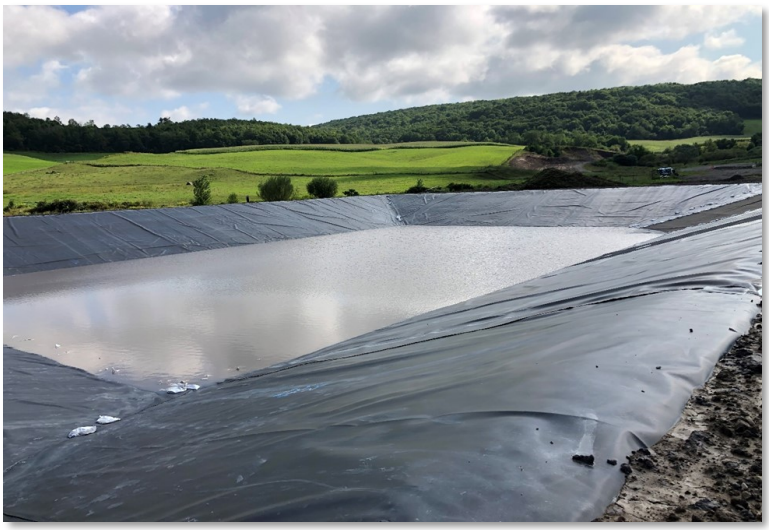
As the cost of synthetic fertilizers continue to go up with no end in site, it becomes more critical for dairy farms to utilize their manure as efficiently as possible to help reduce costs on the farm. Long term manure storage has multiple benefits for the farm, the environment, and the community as a whole. The farm can see reduced input cost by land applying the manure closer to when the crops need the nutrients in that manure. Land applying manure at more appropriate times results in reduced runoff from the farm land and less mud being tracked in the roads when fields are wet and saturated from rain and snow melt. This project consisted of a lined earthen manure storage with two manure transfer stations. The liner used is similar to those used in landfills and is installed to eliminate any leakage from the storage facility.



Before

Leak detection system installation



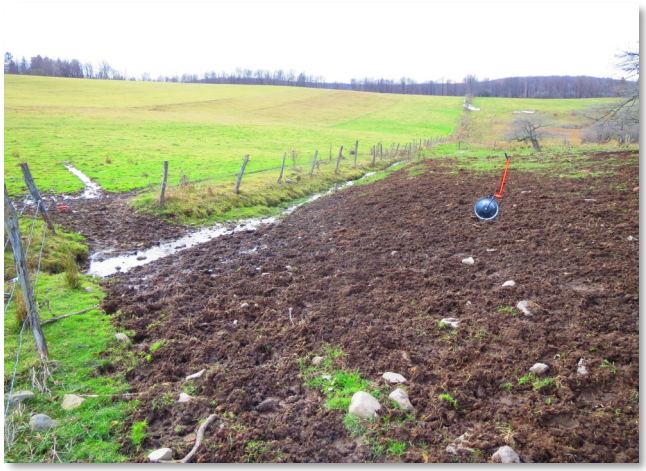


Liner Installation

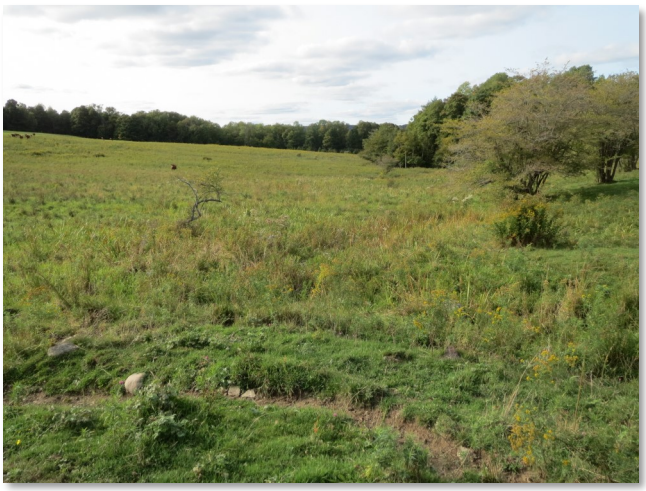
Madison County SWCD Pasture Enhancements

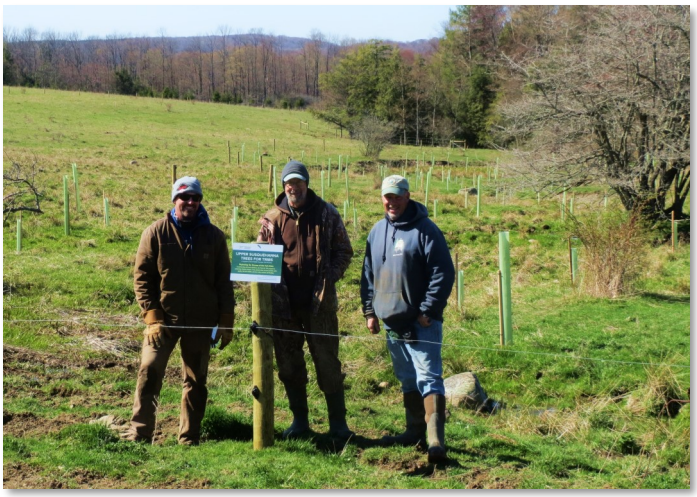
Buffers

Before



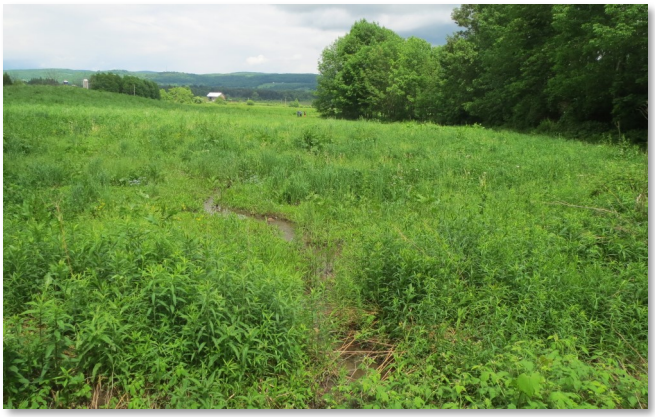
After





Rock Line Diversion

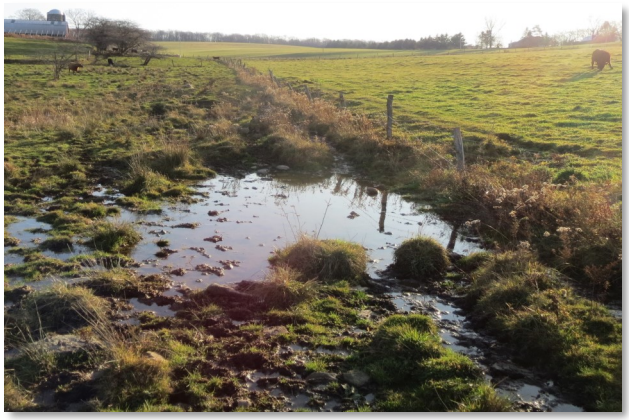
Before

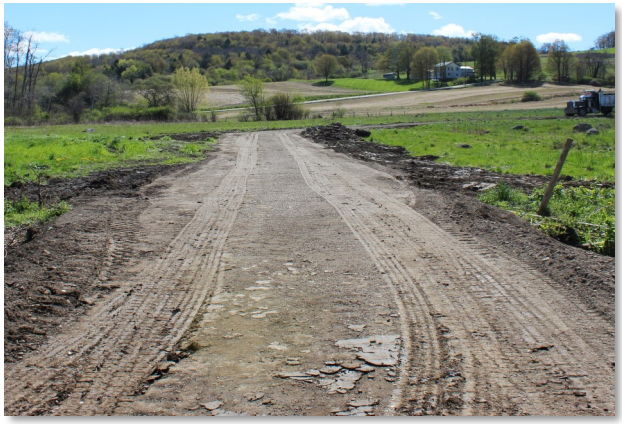


After

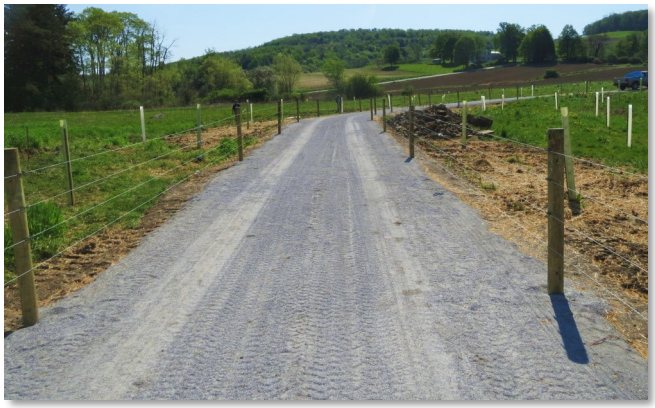
Laneways

Before

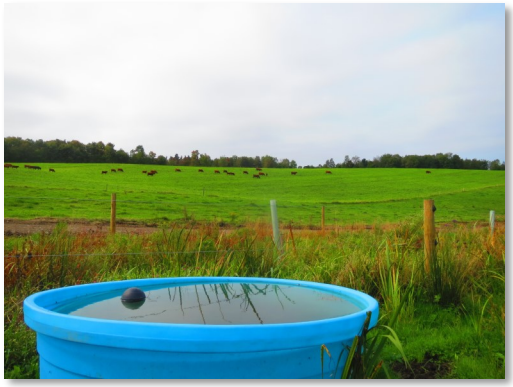




After



Water Systems



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Statewide Grazing Regrowth and Monitoring Pilot Project a Success

Madison County Grazing Specialist Troy Bishopp and Dairy Specialist Betsy Hicks from Cornell Cooperative Extension's South-Central New York Dairy & Field Crops Team, initiated a first of its kind, weekly NY statewide grazing regrowth and monitoring pilot project for the 2021 grazing season. The purpose of the weekly activity and practical data measured was to help graziers fine tune their grazing skills and improve pasture output by learning how weather conditions (rainfall, temperature) and growth rates interact with management decisions (residue height, rest) for a more successful grazing season.

Troy, Betsy, and a team of farmer participants shared their observations, photos, graphs, stories, and timely decisions worth considering given the seasonal pasture growth rates around the state. The project was also featured nationally in the GRAZE magazine. For a look at how the season fared and to read the weekly pasture pontifications visit: https://thegrasswhisperer.com/2021-nys-pasture-regrowth-monitoring-project/

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