



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

Saving a National Treasure

FACT SHEET

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AGRICULTURE: WE'RE HALF WAY THERE *Mountain Valley Farm*



Mike Bazzle holding a jar of his well water before Best Management Practices were installed.

BROADWAY, VA – Mike and Beth Bazzle own and operate Mountain Valley Farm, a beef cattle operation in Rockingham County, Va. But they had a big problem.

“Silt and runoff from heavy erosion areas were contaminating my well,” said Mike, holding up a nasty-looking sample of discolored ground water.

So the Bazzles teamed up with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) to make conservation programs work for their farm in the Smith Creek watershed of the Shenandoah Valley.

Bazzle installed stream fencing and planted vegetated filter strips along his stream banks, created livestock crossings, and put in additional troughs and cross-fencing to reduce polluted runoff from leaving his farm. He is now in the process of constructing confined feeding facilities for his livestock to further reduce pollution and to capture nutrients for later use on the farm.

Cory Guilliams, district conservationist for NRCS said, “We’ve got some really good programs to help farmers reduce pollution and improve the soil and water on farms, but there were some missing components Mr. Bazzle needed to make everything work for him. The Chesapeake Bay Foundation came through with some private funding to make it all fit together.”

“We could not have done all the projects to improve our water and our cattle grazing facilities had it not been for these programs,” said Mike, an independent sales representative for Vigortone Ag Products and Accelerated Genetics. “I can rest at night knowing we’ve got clean water to drink and the water leaving this farm is so much cleaner.”

Keeping livestock out of streams has proven herd health benefits. It is also a clear sign to downstream neighbors and other community members of your ethics and environmental stewardship.

Try these options to keep cattle healthy by keeping them out of streams:

- Off-stream watering systems
- Stream fencing
- Stream crossings
- Buffer strips
- Rotational Grazing

Both the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the state agricultural best management cost-share programs can help cover expenses for certain livestock stream exclusion projects that are built to specification.

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This is one in a series of articles about farmers in the Chesapeake Bay watershed who have implemented conservation practices to improve farm operations and water quality in nearby streams, demonstrating how agriculture has achieved half of the nutrient reductions necessary to clean up local streams and the Chesapeake Bay.

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