



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

Saving a National Treasure

FACT SHEET

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AGRICULTURE: WE'RE HALF WAY THERE *Tom and Kaye Eavers, Morningside Farm*



Tom Eavers and his wife Kaye own and operate Morningside Farm.

“You won’t believe this, but ever since I put those waterers in I haven’t had a single case of pinkeye,” exclaimed Tom Eavers, beef cattle farmer in Mount Sidney, Va. He was referring to the freeze-proof livestock watering stations he installed after fencing his cows out of a wetland area and a stream.

Eavers and his wife, Kaye, own and operate Morningside Farm, a 120-acre beef cattle farm in the heart of the

Shenandoah Valley in Augusta County. They run a cow-calf business and a grass-finished beef operation on land in the Middle River watershed, a tributary of the South Fork of the Shenandoah River.

To get the watering projects done, they utilized the expertise of the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and funding from the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Improvement (CBWI) programs.

“We did it for the health of the cows and for our customers,” Eavers said. “It’s not good for business to see a bunch of cows up to their bellies in muck and mud, and it’s not good for the cows either. We no longer have pinkeye or foot problems since we fenced the cows out of the wet.”

He continued, “People today are more health conscious and care about the environment. I guarantee, when people see my cows and clean water and the farmer next door has cows knee deep in muck and water, they are going to buy their beef from me.”

Charlie Ivins, District Conservationist for the NRCS, worked with Mr. Eavers and called the projects “the perfect candidate for the CBWI program. These programs continue to become more flexible as we learn more about customer needs.”

The CBWI program also had funds to reseed the Eavers’ pastures with clover and add some cross fencing and an additional watering trough to enhance the existing rotational grazing system. He’s happy with the projects and everyone who helped get them installed.

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.

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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