



# Agriculture: We're Half Way There

## Jenny Driver and JMD Farms

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 the first 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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BARREN RIDGE, VA – “We could not have done it without these programs,” stated Jenny Driver of JMD Farms, a partnership operated by Jenny, parents Millard and Frieda Driver, and Michele Marston in Barren Ridge, Va.

She’s talking about the multiple programs they used to improve the water resources on their farm. They fenced 1.5 miles of stream banks to prevent their livestock from drinking polluted water and to keep them out of risky areas for birthing.



Jenny Driver (right) with her father Millard and their border collies at JMD Farms in Barren Ridge, Va.

“The benefits were exponential,” she said in a recent interview.

“We did what we could with poly tape and single strand electric wire, but we just didn’t have the money to install the watering facilities we needed for our livestock. These programs made it possible for us.”

They enrolled in Virginia’s CREP program in 2005 and later in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative. The programs helped with technical assistance in designing a livestock watering system with rotational grazing and funded the projects through cost shares and other incentive payments.

“That riparian zone is a super-healthy ecosystem now. The stream banks have healed, and we don’t worry about our livestock being in those wet areas. We sell all natural products, and what we’ve done with these programs helps complete our mission of providing healthy products on an environmentally healthy farm.”

This hundred-acre farm in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia raises all natural Angus beef, Suffolk lamb, free range chicken and eggs, pork, and fresh produce for local restaurants and farmer’s markets. They also sell their products through the internet via Staunton Fresh at: <http://www.stauntonfresh.com>.

You can learn more about JMD Farms at <http://www.newhopejmdfarm.com>.