



# STORIES OF PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING HEALTHY WATERS

## EPA Region 3 Water Protection Division

### Farm Projects Help Protect Major Drinking Water Source

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Three dairy farms are among the latest in Berks County, Pennsylvania to reduce pollution from their properties – part of a broader, long-term effort by the Schuylkill Action Network, or SAN, to target a key threat to drinking water supplies for more than 1.5 million people.

The Rice, Zimmerman and Martin farms have installed best management practices (BMPs) that include manure storage, stormwater management, barnyard controls and fencing – steps that benefit the farmers and contribute to cleaner water by keeping animals, their wastes and other pollutants out of streams.

EPA's Mid-Atlantic Water Protection Division has been closely involved in SAN activities since 2003 when EPA co-founded the SAN, a unique partnership of government agencies, non-profit groups and commercial interests – over 350 members strong – focused on cleaning up pollution affecting the Schuylkill River.

In dealing with farm pollution, the Division's Office of Drinking Water and Source Water Protection serves as a member of the SAN Agricultural Workgroup and advises on funding for specific projects. Activities are directed toward impaired streams with priority to headwater areas.

Agriculture is a main source of pollution in the watershed, affecting about a third of the streams in Berks County. Stormwater runoff, drainage from abandoned mines, and pathogens are other chief culprits.

In the 2014 time period alone, farms in the Schuylkill Watershed have installed nine manure storage facilities, added eight acres of riparian buffers, upgraded six barnyards to control stormwater pollution and created two animal crossings to prevent erosion. To date, more than 175 similar types of farm improvement projects have been completed at priority project sites in the watershed.

The Rice, Zimmerman and Martin farms received more than \$1.2 million for their work, primarily from two sources: \$903,180 from the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service's Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), and \$210,504 in matching funds from the Schuylkill River Restoration Fund through a grant to the Berks County Conservancy and Berks County Conservation District.

The Conservation District is also receiving EPA Clean Water Act Section 319 funds through the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection to assess the stream benefits of the BMPs installed at the three farms and others in the area. For more information, visit [SAN's Agricultural Projects page](#).



#### AT A GLANCE

- Three farms get more than \$1.2 million to protect streams – latest in series of Schuylkill Action Network (SAN) agricultural projects
- Schuylkill – source of drinking water for more than 1.5 million people
- EPA a key SAN partner since 2003

