



The Talbot Soil
Conservation District

January 2009



2008 COOPERATORS OF THE YEAR: THE SCHWARTEN FAMILY

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Just a Reminder:

The Talbot Soil Conservation District has moved into our new building along with the Farm Service Agency (FSA), Resource Conservation & Development (RC & D), and the University of Maryland Cooperative Extension. The new address is 28577 Mary's Court, Ste 3 Easton, MD.

Our Office is Closed On:

January 19th—Martin Luther King Jr. Day
February 16th—Presidents Day

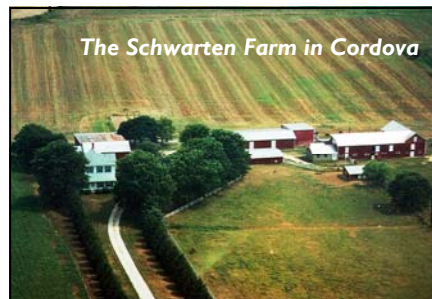
The Talbot Soil Conservation District is pleased to recognize Hans and Helen Schwarten as the 2008 Outstanding Conservation Farmers of the Year. The Schwarten's 78 acre Kittys Corner Farm is the picturesque farm with a neat white farmhouse, red barns, and a white fence at the intersection of Chapel and Kittys Corner Roads.

The farm was purchased in 1907 by Mr. Schwarten's father who was an immigrant from Germany. Hans Schwarten has run the farm since he was 15 when his father passed away and in 1956 he bought the farm from his mother and 6 siblings who were not interested in the farm. Over the years the farm has been home to dairy cows, beef cows, pigs, sheep, ponies, a horse, and chickens. Milk from the cows was originally used to make butter which was bartered in town for needed supplies. The sheep, the last of the large animals, left about 4 years ago and now only 3 chickens and the farm dog "Windy" remain.

The Schwartens have produced a variety of crops including corn, soybeans, barley, pumpkins and sweet corn. The 3-4 acres of sweet corn was hand picked for the fresh market with 75 dozen being delivered to Fluharty's Market everyday. Any extra corn was sold around Easton. Pumpkins were a cash crop as well as an

attraction for the many school children who visited the farm with their classes over the years.

Along with the crops and livestock Hans and Helen



Schwarten raised 3 daughters on Kittys Corner Farm. Linda lives in Easton and works for Hospice in Denton, Luann lives in Sparks, and Lois works for the Talbot County Roads Department and lives just down Chapel Road on the edge of the farm. Son-in-law Phil McDonald and grandson Phillip, loggers by trade, now do much of the farm work under the watchful eye of Mr. Schwarten. In his prime

Mr. Schwarten would be milking cows at 5:30 am, change his clothes to drive the school bus he operated for 32 years by 7, home again at 9 to do field work and in the bus again at 2. Dinner was at 4 followed by milking and working in the fields half the night. Hans Schwarten called himself "thrifty" while his girls used the terms "tight" and "cheap." Whatever it was there was work to be done, not much money to hire help, so the entire Schwarten family pitched in to get the work done. Even with a busy farm life the Schwartens found time to give back to their community. Both are very active in their church, Fairview Church of the Brethren. Mr. Schwarten served on the ASCS County Committee for over 30 years and Mrs. Schwarten is just now completing her third 3 year term on the FSA County Committee.

Conservation has always been a priority at Kittys Corner Farm with the original Cooperative Agreement signed in 1961 by Mr. Schwarten and District Supervisor Earl Hutchison. Hans Schwarten is probably the original Talbot County cover cropper. Long before there was a state cover crop cost share program Mr. Schwarten grew cover crops for winter forage and then plowed

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under what the cattle left in the spring. After the cows left Mr. Schwarten continued to plant cover crops to feed the soil. Neighbors would ask Mr. Schwarten why he was plowing under such nice looking wheat and barley. Some of the earlier Conservation District projects were drainage ditches constructed in 1978. Several rock lined outlets were added to the ditches in 1985 and 1987 and a sediment pond was built in 1988. In 2000 and 2002 eleven acres of filter

strips which prevent nutrients, sediments, and pesticides from entering the drainage ditches were planted through the CREP program.

In addition to the structural practices listed above, crops are rotated, a nutrient management plan is kept current and followed, and no-till is used when practical.

Again, the Talbot Soil Conservation District is pleased to recognize Hans and Helen Schwarten for a lifetime of conservation work well done. With everything the Schwartens have done in life they've done it because it was the right thing to do. It's nice to know that the Schwartens are still doing their part to care for their little corner of Talbot County.

2008 / 2009 COVER CROP UPDATES

With fall certification in the books, the Talbot Soil Conservation District is pleased to announce that Talbot County farmers certified 30,586.6 acres of cover crops. A increase of almost 19% more acres certified than last year. There were a total of 79 operators signed up for the program, with 65 applications for the Traditional program and 41 applications for the Commodity program.

If you are participating in the 2008/2009 Cover Crop program please remember that for the

traditional and commodity program that you cannot add any nutrients before March 1, 2009. However you can add potash and lime at anytime. Also, any acres that have been fall certified and harvested will be ineligible for any payments if acres are in the traditional program.

Within two weeks of the suppression of the Cover Crop, please certify with the Talbot SCD to determine the final cost-share payment.



TALBOT SCD HIRES NEW PLANNER, SCOTT NORDHOFF

The Talbot Soil Conservation District would like to welcome Scott Nordhoff as our new grant Conservation Planner. Scott joined the Talbot SCD in October.

Scott moved to the Eastern Shore with his wife Kathie from Indianapolis in December of 2002. Previously he has held a few positions in the civil engineering field, as a project administrator and designer/technician.

His background includes interior design architecture and bridge/road construction inspection as well as over 20 years of CADD experience.

Scott is very interested in conservation and is excited to be part of the Talbot Soil Conservation District.



Scott Nordhoff, Conservation Planner

LOCAL STUDENTS GEARING UP FOR THE REGIONAL ENVIROTHON

The Eastern Shore Regional Envirothon (ESRE) for 2008 will be held at the Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center on April 29, 2009.

Following the ESRE, the top teams from each county will compete at the Maryland Envirothon, which will be held at Mount St. Mary's University in Emmitsburg, Fredrick County, MD from June 16th through the 18th, 2009.

The top team from the Maryland Envirothon will be able to compete at the Canon Envirothon. The competition will be held at the University of North Carolina in Ashville, NC from August 2nd through Aug 8, 2009.

Good luck to all the teams!

OUT WITH THE OLD AND IN WITH THE NEW FARM BILL PROGRAMS

Conservation Program Funding available in 2008 includes an additional \$200 million for Environmental Quality Incentives Program to help farmers and ranchers nationwide to solve natural resource problems; \$150 million Wetlands Reserve Program; and \$7.5 million for Agricultural Management Assistance.

For fiscal year 2009, USDA will distribute \$1.8 billion in Conservation Reserve Program rental payments to participants across the country.

The Conservation Security Program expired Sept. 30, 2008 but funding will continue for existing contracts. A new CSP program is scheduled for 2009-2017. The Conservation Stewardship Program is to assist producers in implementing conservation activities applicable to their operation and rewarding stewardship on working lands.

Eligible producers must initially meet the stewardship threshold for one resource concern and be willing to achieve the threshold for at least one additional priority resource concern by the end of their five-year contract. Applicants must account for their stewardship activities covering their entire agricultural operation. Applications will be competitively ranked based on present

and proposed conservation activities, the number and extent of resource concerns addressed, and the cost effectiveness of the expected environmental benefits. The Secretary may enroll up to 12,769,000 acres each year from fiscal years 2009 through 2017 and must manage the program to achieve a national average cost that does not exceed \$18 per acre. A person or legal entity cannot receive CSP payments exceeding \$200,000 during any five-year period.

IMPORTANT NOTICE:

New eligibility paperwork will be required for new contracts in 2009. Please make sure you stop by the FSA office and update all your paperwork with them in order to be eligible for FY09 program participation. This includes individuals as well as entities.



This is a center pivot irrigation system that was upgraded from hard hose through the EQIP program.

Some changes in eligibility include new forms for members information (501A replaced by 901 form) and new adjusted gross income requirements.

NRCS LOOKING FOR LARGE STANDS OF WSG

The NRCS is currently looking for landowners who have thick stands of warm season grasses that might be interested in conducting trials to rejuvenate their stands. NRCS staff and the Plant Materials Center staff will work with the landowner to increase plant diversity and wildflowers through combinations of the mowing, disking and new seeding.

The landowner does not have to be participating in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) to be eligible. Funding will be provided by the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) or through other partner organizations. The renovations would start in late August or September and continue through early spring. If you have any questions or are interested in participating, please contact Teresa Kampmeyer.



Warm Season Grasses in early March

HAVE YOU UPDATED YOUR CONSERVATION PLAN FOR YOUR FARM LATELY?

Did you know that conservation plans are not mandatory unless all or part of the farm falls within the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area, or you are applying for or currently participate in an agricultural land preservation program, or participate in any state or Federal cost share programs.

So if you are interested in updating your conservation plan for your farm, please contact one of the conservation planners to set up an on-farm visit. The planner will need to walk the farm and take notes on current farming practices and any resource issues.



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NEWSLETTER FOR JANUARY, 2009

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