

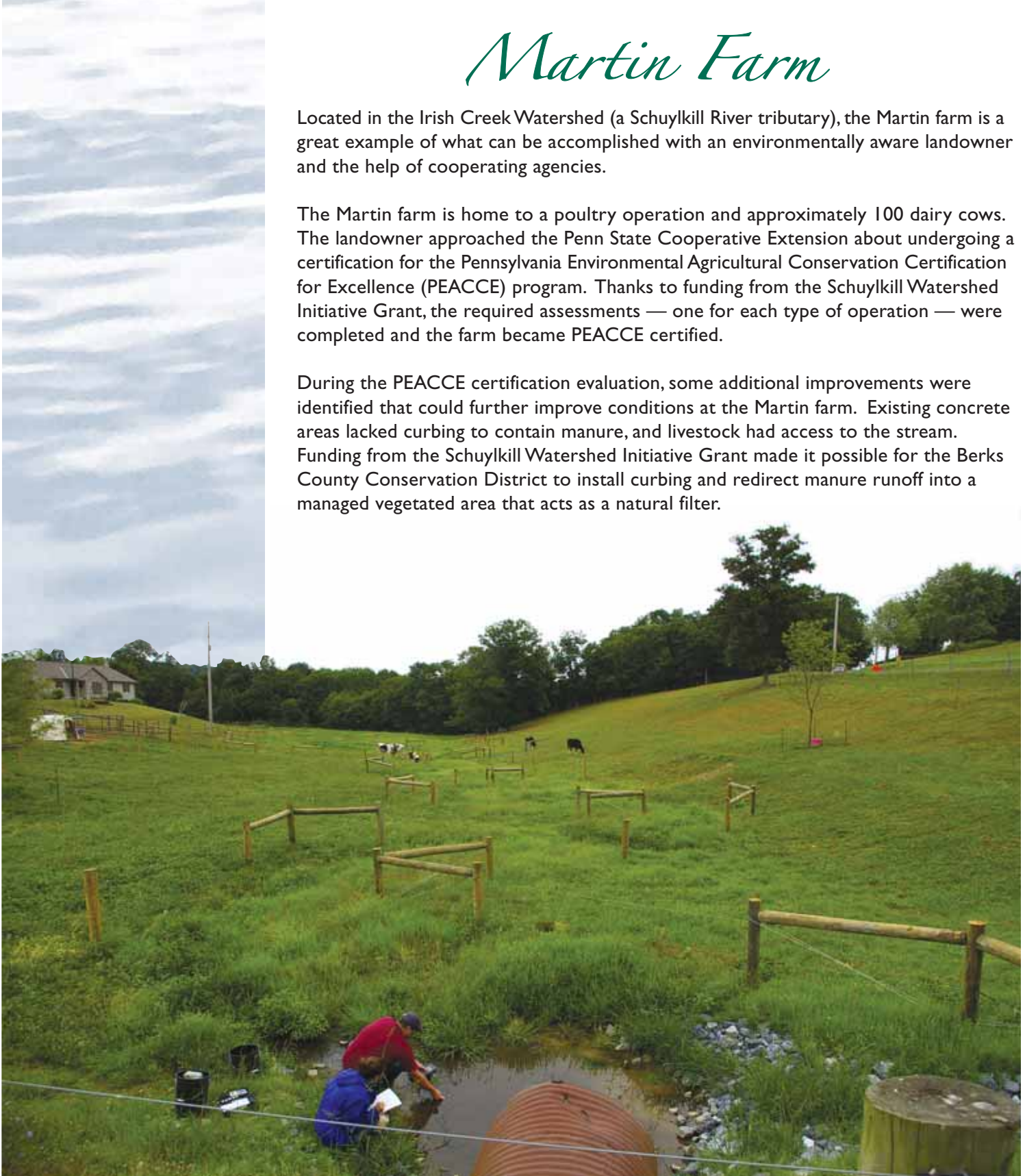
AGRICULTURE

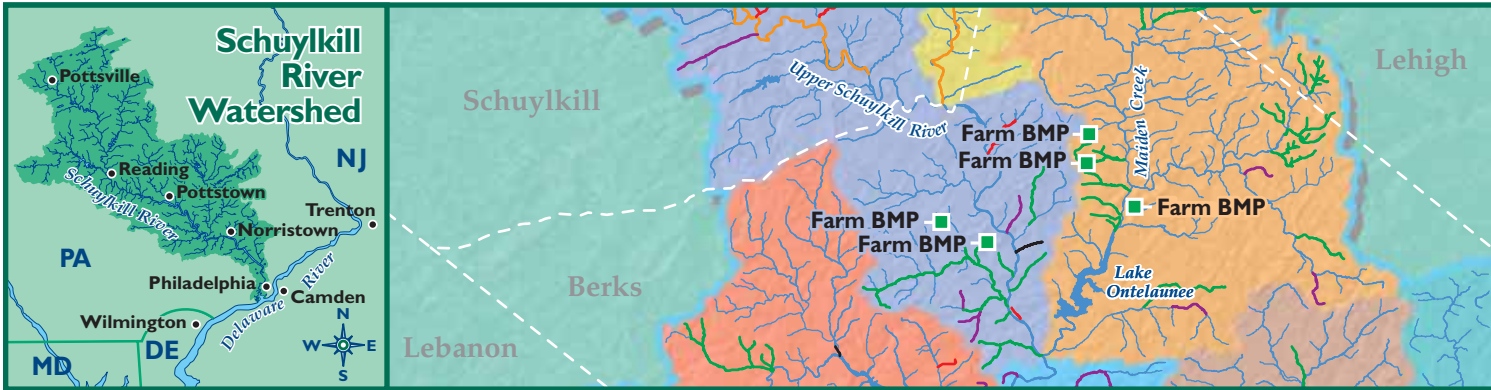
Martin Farm

Located in the Irish Creek Watershed (a Schuylkill River tributary), the Martin farm is a great example of what can be accomplished with an environmentally aware landowner and the help of cooperating agencies.

The Martin farm is home to a poultry operation and approximately 100 dairy cows. The landowner approached the Penn State Cooperative Extension about undergoing a certification for the Pennsylvania Environmental Agricultural Conservation Certification for Excellence (PEACCE) program. Thanks to funding from the Schuylkill Watershed Initiative Grant, the required assessments — one for each type of operation — were completed and the farm became PEACCE certified.

During the PEACCE certification evaluation, some additional improvements were identified that could further improve conditions at the Martin farm. Existing concrete areas lacked curbing to contain manure, and livestock had access to the stream. Funding from the Schuylkill Watershed Initiative Grant made it possible for the Berks County Conservation District to install curbing and redirect manure runoff into a managed vegetated area that acts as a natural filter.





High in nutrients and bacteria, manure in stormwater runoff contributes to excessive plant growth and algae blooms in the waterways, depleting the water of dissolved oxygen as the plants die. Fish and other aquatic creatures cannot survive if dissolved oxygen levels are too low. The presence of pathogens in source water may increase the cost of downstream drinking water treatment. Agriculture runoff can introduce cryptosporidium, which may persist through water treatment and cause illness among immuno-compromised individuals. To help ensure that he is doing everything possible to protect water resources, the landowner also installed livestock exclusionary fencing to keep the animals and their manure out of the creek.

The addition of curbing and fencing Best Management Practices takes this farm to a new level of environmental awareness and compliance, reducing agricultural impairment to both the Irish Creek and Schuylkill River watersheds.



The Schuylkill Watershed Initiative Grant is a targeted watershed grant awarded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for the completion of a suite of water quality improvement demonstration projects in the Schuylkill River Watershed. The Martin Farm project is one of more than 40 projects that received funding from this source, in addition to other funds and/or support. The grant is administered by the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary and the Philadelphia Water Department.