

# Wyoming County Soil & Water Conservation District



wcswcd@frontiernet.net



www.wcswcd.org Phone: 585-786-5070 Fax: 585-786-0381

November 2009

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## Congratulations to VanSlyke's Dairy Farm, LLC

Each year, Wyo. Co. SWCD recognizes a farm which has excelled in conserving our soil and water resources by installing Best Management Practices on their farm to prevent soil erosion and improve water quality. This year's "Conservation Farm of the Year" was awarded to Van Slyke's Dairy Farm, LLC of Pike, NY. The farm family members are: Gary & Virginia Van Slyke, Greg & Connie Van Slyke, Tammy Andrews & Ken Van Slyke.



Top Row: Gary VanSlyke, Greg VanSlyke, Jason Andrews  
Bottom Row: Connie VanSlyke, Tammy Andrews



The farm was established in 1832. The farm turned toward a focus on dairy farming with the 5th generation, Ken and Onalee Van Slyke. Greg & Gary, the 6th generation joined the farm in the early 1960's and the dairy has grown in cow numbers ever since. The 7th generation, Tammy Andrews and Ken Van Slyke are now transitioning into the leadership roles on the farm. Today, the farm consists of 1200 milking Holstein cows and 900 head of young stock raised by a custom heifer farm. The cropping operation totals approximately 2000 acres of owned and rented land. The two main crops grown are corn for silage and clear-seeded alfalfa for haylage.

All cropland is utilized for growing forages. High yielding crops allow for the sale of excess forages to neighboring farms.

The Van Slyke family has been very involved in many community organizations including: Church groups, Farm Bureau, Town Politics, Wyoming County Fair Board, Pike Fire Department and Rescue Squad. They have also received the Century Farm Award.

Van Slyke's Farm is located in the East Koy Creek Watershed which is a highly sensitive area. Implementation of conservation practices have been at the forefront of their progress.

Some of the practices include:

*Continued on Page 2*

## SWCD Calendar

- Nov. 25 - Thanksgiving Day - Office Closed
- Dec. 21 - SWCD Board Meeting
- Dec. 25 - Christmas Day - Office Closed
- Jan. 1 - New Year's Day - Office Closed
- Jan. 21 - WRCC/ RC&D Meeting

- Strip cropping for approximately 20 years
- Silage leachate collection system before it was popular or mandated
- Minimum tillage
- 15" corn rows with high residue for 15 years
- Cover cropping
- Ditching and tiling to manage surface and sub-surface water drainage
- Manure volume reduction practices to minimize our environmental impact
- Minimizing water used in milking parlor
- Cow nutrition geared toward reduced importing of nutrients
- Selling manure to neighboring crop farms
- Recycling manure for bedding
- Manure separation for more accurate and effective nutrient application, and more efficient pumping of liquid
- Covered lagoon for prevention of rainwater and snowmelt being added to the manure system
- Covered lagoon for methane destruction and odor control
- Maintaining good communication with our neighbors about our practices
- One of the first fully implemented CAFO plans

This year, signs were awarded to eight Wyoming County Farms: Mar-Dan Farm, Baker Brook Dairy, LLC, Seewaldt Bros., Bliss Cattle Co., Tarey-Rickard Farm, Eagleview Farms, East Koy Valley Farm and VanSlyke's Dairy Farm, LLC.



Right Top: Chip Pratt, NYS Ag and Markets, with Baker Brook Dairy, LLC.  
Right Middle: Chip Pratt, NYS Ag and Markets, with Seewaldt Bros.  
Right Bottom: Representative Dan Burling with Mar-Dan Farms.  
Left: Wyoming County Dairy Princess Stephanie Bush



### 2009 Annual Awards Banquet

Several Wyoming County farms were recognized for environmental achievements with AEM awards. The AEM Program is a voluntary state-wide program that is utilized by farmers to address water quality concerns from agricultural activities through a tiered approach. Farms must meet certain criteria to be eligible for a "Partnering to Protect our Environment" sign. The AEM Sign Recognition Program is made possible thanks to funds from the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets and the Soil & Water Conservation Committee.



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## *Agricultural Best Management Practices Completed*

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The Wyoming County SWCD is currently involved in six separate Agricultural Nonpoint Source Pollution Abatement & Control Program grants with the New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets. Through these projects, the District has provided technical and administrative assistance to several eligible farm operations to complete much needed water quality improvement BMP's in several high priority watersheds throughout the county. The District has also utilized the AEM and FL/LOWPA programs to provide assistance. The following are some of the projects that have been implemented during the past year.



**Strip-cropping system completed this spring at Table Rock Farms in the Genesee River Basin.**



**Silage Leachate Management System completed at Logwell Acres in the Genesee River Basin.**



**Concrete waste storage & waste transfer system completed at East Koy Valley Farms in the East Koy Creek Watershed.**



**Silage Leachate Management System completed at Davis Valley Farm in the Cattaraugus Creek Watershed.**



**Silage Leachate Management System completed at Seewaldt Bros. Dairy Farm in the Tonawanda Creek Watershed.**

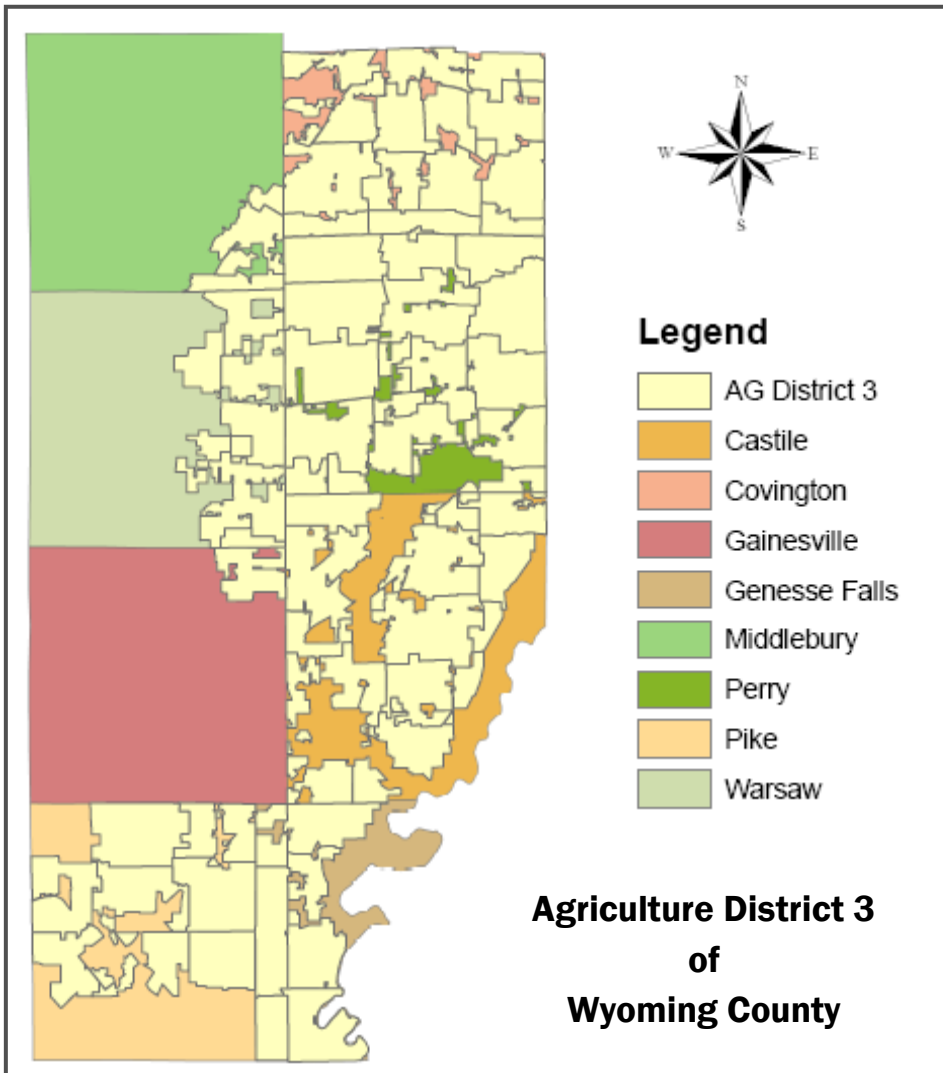
New York's Agricultural Districts Law (ADL) was enacted in 1971. The purpose of the law is to maintain lands in agriculture and ensure New York's position as an outstanding agricultural State. It seeks to create economic and regulatory incentives which encourage farmers to continue farming. A District must consist predominantly of viable agricultural land. The benefits and protections under the ADL, however, apply only to farm operations and land used in agricultural production. The ADL protects farm operations within an agricultural district with the right to farm the land with

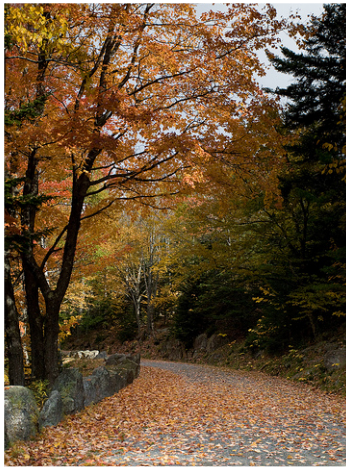
sound management practices.

Wyoming County Ag District #3 is currently being reviewed. This district includes parcels in the towns of Covington, Perry, Castile, Pike, Genesee Falls and portions of Gainesville, Warsaw and Middlebury. Each district is to be reviewed on an eight year cycle. The County has 5 Ag Districts. As of January 2009, there are 251 State certified agricultural districts in 53 counties. These districts capture over 8.5 million acres, including nearly 6.2 million farm acres on 23,057 farms. The primary responsibility for the creation, review and management of the

State's agricultural Districts lies with the county and their legislative bodies (Board of Supervisors).

A Public Meeting was held on September 22, 2009 at Camp Hough on Silver Lake. Reports from the Wyoming County Planning Board and the Farmland Protection Board are being prepared. A list of parcels to be included in the Ag District and maps showing these parcels are being completed. The reports are then submitted to the Wyoming County Board of Supervisors and they determine whether the district shall be continued, terminated or modified. Their recommendation is then forwarded to the Commissioner of New York State Department of Ag & Markets for re-certification.





Fall is a time for harvesting, vegetable canning, and leaf raking. More and more you will notice large pumpkin shaped bags on the side of the road stuffed with fallen leaves. For most, raking and bagging leaves is a daunting task that comes with

living in the great state of New York. Have you ever stopped to think what a waste it is to throw away all those leaves? It sounds crazy, but leaves are a surprisingly excellent source of nutrients for lawns and gardens. Here are some ideas to reduce raking time and have a healthier lawn and garden!

### **Mulch Your Leaves**

If you have some leaves in your yard, but not enough to spend a day raking, simply get out your lawn mower. Mow the leaves into mulch and let it remain on your lawn. The small leaf pieces will filter down in between the grass blades and decompose replenishing vital nutrients needed for a lush lawn. This technique doesn't work so well with massive amounts of leaf litter, but if you are trying to postpone the raking process this is a great technique to use.

### **Garden Fertilizer?**

This tip is for the gardening enthusiast. If you're readying your garden for winter, why not add in some "natural soil conditioners". Leaf litter is a great way to boost the nutrients in the garden. Simply place a layer of leaves on your garden approximately 3-6 inches thick and till it

into the soil. This will help to rip up and mulch the leaves which will allow them to break down easier. Over the winter the leaves will decompose and in the spring time, when its time to plant, your garden will be ready to go! Also, try placing leaves around trees and bushes as mulch to help insulate roots over the cold winter months.

### **Just Plain Old Compost**

If you've already raked your leaves don't stuff them into the pumpkin bags, why not compost them? Compost piles are easy enough to make if you don't already have one. There are several different styles of compost bins, just choose one that works for you. Once you have a bin or pile, simply add your leaves and let the rest take care of itself. Eventually, the leaves will decompose and will serve as nutrient boosters for your vegetables or flowers.

These tips are sure to help reduce the hours spent raking lawns and bagging leaves. Not only will you save time, but you're are reducing waste and taking advantage of one of nature's natural fertilizers. Check out these websites for more information!



- Backyard Gardener  
<http://www.backyardgardener.com/compost/index.html>
- Penn State-Solution Source  
[http://solutions.psu.edu/Horticulture\\_Gardening\\_Landscaping\\_342.htm](http://solutions.psu.edu/Horticulture_Gardening_Landscaping_342.htm)
- Cornell University-Dealing With Leaves  
<http://www.hort.cornell.edu/gardening/homegardening/sceneeafd.html>



## Stream Restoration Project



Rock grade control structure completed on the Wiscoy Creek.

Environmental Conservation Region 9 Bureau of Fisheries have collaborated in the completion of a stream channel restoration project on the Wiscoy Creek in the Town of Pike. This project involved restoring the Wiscoy Creek to its original channel after the stream had changed its course into a former overflow channel and caused severe damage to adjacent cropland.

### Special Thanks to:

Van Slyke's Dairy Farm, LLC  
Springdale Farm  
Thomas Ayers  
Town of Pike Highway Department  
Wyoming County Highway Department  
WNY Chapter of Trout Unlimited  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
NYSDEC Region 9 Bureau of Fisheries  
NYS DOT  
FL/LOWPA

The Wyoming County Soil & Water Conservation District, U.S Fish & Wildlife Service and New York State Department of

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# Stream Restoration Project



Rock rip-rap channel block to divert stream flow back to its original channel.



Live willow stakes established for bank stabilization along the project area.



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Bethany Klein, Water Quality Technician

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Grange Representative	Richard Youngers

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Engineering Technician	Timothy Terry

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