

# CONSERVATION *Showcase*

## **KISH VIEW FARMS UPPER KISHACOQUILLAS NWQI, MIFFLIN COUNTY**

**By Mary Lloyd Smith  
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Kish View Farms is a partnership between brothers Keith and Kent Spicher. They operate a 400 plus head dairy operation and use a methane digester to dry and recycle excess manure for bedding. I had first been to their farm for the Mifflin County Farm Bureau Third Grade Tour in 2002, when they were milking 192 cows and they had been using an old dugout pond with clay sides and concrete bottom that was as deep as 10 feet.

They have continued to add dairy cows since then. As a result, the manure storage had to be emptied three or more times per year and became inadequate to accommodate the increased manure volume. Even with the digester became no longer suitable for the increased number of cows.

In the winter, the Spichers were hauling manure to another farm that they own and operate, which also has a concrete manure tank, but was also not adequate for the increased amount of manure. Therefore, it was necessary to construct a structure that would hold six months of manure and milkhouse water, while also continuing to use the existing methane digester.

An underground outlet to carry milkhouse water, an access road, and a rock-lined waterway or outlet were also required to address resource concerns. The resulting round concrete waste storage facility is 16-feet deep by 163-feet in diameter, totaling 333,876 cubic feet in size. Due to the cost of this contract, approval had to be secured from the NRCS Chief, Jason Weller, at the NRCS National Headquarters in Washington, DC.

Before and after pictures show that this contract not only benefitted this dairy operation, but the impact on the Kishacoquillas Creek and Valley watershed.



Old Dugout Pond Manure Storage



New Waste Storage Facility





Pipe outletting surface water and Steam precipitate from the methane Digesting process, causing erosion in Pasture field.



Rock lined Waterway

