

Munnell Run Farm Is Keeping Up With the Times

Munnell Run Farm (located one mile north of Mercer on State Route 58 West) is a 163-acre working farm owned by the County of Mercer and managed as an agriculture and ecology education center by the Munnell Run Farm Foundation, Inc. The Mercer County Conservation District provides staff support for the Farm and relies upon volunteers whenever possible. Since there is no direct source of funding for educational programs, maintenance, or infrastructure improvements, operating support is dependent on grants, donations, fund-raisers, and program fees.

Educational programs at Munnell Run Farm feature outdoor, hands-on activities for all ages. All activities take advantage of the various areas of the Farm including Munnell Run (the stream for which the farm is named), wetlands, woodlands, compost and garden areas, and agricultural fields—all of which demonstrate Best Management Practices (BMPs) that protect soil and water quality.

In recent years, Munnell Run Farm has placed an increasing focus on demonstrating the use of alternative energies. A solar-powered watering system was installed in 1995 to provide off-stream drinking water for the livestock. In 2006, under a Pennsylvania Energy Harvest Grant, a ten-kilowatt wind turbine was erected to help generate electricity for the Farm. Generation results are being documented and the practicality of using small-scale wind power in this area is being studied. Plans are underway to fuel the Farm's diesel tractor with locally-produced biodiesel fuel made from used cooking oil.

The times are changing and so is Munnell Run Farm. There's never been a better time to "think globally and act locally" by working to create environmentally literate citizens who can make informed decisions about their own actions—which in one way or another—affect us all.