

# The National Catalyst

Volume XV, Issue 1, Spring 2005

## Greetings From Your President

By Sharon Ruggi, President, NARC&DC



Sharon Ruggi,  
President,  
National Association  
of RC&D Councils

**NEXT ISSUE:**  
Will Feature  
Council Success  
Stories and Pictures.  
Send articles and  
photos to  
dhunter@sso.org.

As I write this article, we are all reacting to the stunning news that the President's budget has slashed our RC&D budget in half and also has arbitrarily decided that any Council over 20 years old will no longer receive Federal support. Perhaps most surprising is the fact that Council members across the United States took part in a program review this past year by participating in the "listening sessions" and yet this decision was made before the results of the review had been compiled and sent to Congress.

However, after the initial shock, I have come to realize that we have a tremendous opportunity this year—an opportunity to showcase all that we do to make a difference in our communities. We have just conducted our 6th annual Leadership Forum, and this one saw our largest attendance ever! Over 250 Council members came, and everyone arrived armed with Council data to prove to Congress that this is an invaluable program. This was the greatest show of commitment and dedication that I have ever witnessed.

I feel that we are off to a great start in taking our case to Congress. In the coming weeks, it will be extremely important that you continue to contact your Legislators. Remind them that you wrote a letter, and ask if they have written the letter of support to the House Ag. Appropriations Subcommittee. In addition, it will be critical that you watch the RC&D website, [www.rcdnet.org](http://www.rcdnet.org), so that you

will know the perfect time to make contact before the budget hearings begin. And—don't forget to pay a visit to your Congressmen and Senators when they are home!!!

This is a time that brings into focus the importance of the State and Regional Associations. State Presidents are contacting Council Presidents and formulating a statewide strategy. The Regional Presidents have been conducting teleconferences in order to keep everyone informed and to answer your questions. I have been invited to join a few of those teleconferences, and I have found them to be extremely affective.

We have another area where we can be proactive. One of the main reasons cited for the cut in our budget was our lack of long-term measurable performance goals. This is an area that we, as a National Association, are going to have to address in the future. I encourage you to think about this; and, if you have ideas, please let the National Office know. As you have all heard

me say, we have the greatest staff of any not-for-profit organization. I know that you all rely upon the materials produced at the office and call upon them for their expertise and guidance. Be sure to let Bobbi, Andy, Donna and Monica know how much we appreciate the fact that they go "above and beyond".

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*"Promote Your  
RC&D's  
Accomplishments"*

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## NARC&DC Hall of Fame Established in 2005

The National Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils has established a HALL OF FAME to honor people who have been important to the success of the program. The leadership and dedication to the principles and ideas of the RC&D Program have left a legacy for others to follow. This award was given in

### A Special Thank You

The National Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils would like to offer a special "Thank You" to the organizations that supported the 2005 Leadership Forum:

**Caterpillar**

**Pioneer**

**The Farm Service Agency**

The support from these organizations helped to make training opportunities available to our council members.



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# The Washington Report

By Roberta Jeanquart, Executive Director, NARC&DC

The federal appropriations process will be especially critical to RC&D this year. Congress has

recently passed a budget resolution which will require tough choices to be made on funding programs. But I want to remind all of you of the words of former Speaker Tip O'Neill, "All politics is local."

What does this mean for RC&D?

Members of Congress fight for programs they know are working in the communities. They fight for programs that they know their constituents support. And they fight for programs that show a good return on the federal investment.

The national association can support your efforts, but the case has to be made locally. Write letters, invite congressional staff and Members of Congress to your council events, and engage the media. Everyone wants to be a member of a winning team. We need to make a special effort this year to not only have every council member write letters but also supporters of RC&D and those who have benefited from RC&D's good work.

Great examples of local efforts are pouring in from around the country. A council in Tennessee had a petition signed by hundreds of people who support the council and its work. A council President in Virginia wrote a piece about the value of RC&D to their community and had it published in their local paper. Michigan has designated a legislative chair who distributes information to all council members in the state on legislative activities and then keeps the national office informed of areas where we have supporters in Congress or where we need to do a little more work. And regional Presidents are holding teleconferences with the councils in their regions. All these efforts will help us as we move forward.

Please let the national office know how we can support your efforts – if you want a special letter written we can help. If you think a staffer needs a visit, we can do that as well. We're here to support your efforts.

Where does the process go from here? Members of Congress are home in their states and districts March 20 through April 4. When Congress returns, the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees will hold hearings on the President's budget and witnesses from the federal agencies will be called to testify. The subcommittees will begin writing and acting on their bills beginning in May, with a vote of the full House of Representatives on their agriculture appropriations bill taking place in June. The senate acts on their bill in July.

Be sure to keep us informed of your activities and send us copies of your letters. We will follow-up here to make sure your voices are being heard. And we will keep you informed through our legislative updates.

## NARC&DC signs MOU with Three Partners

In March of 2005 the National Association of RC&D Councils ("NARC&DC") signed three important Memorandums of Understanding ("MOU"). The Memorandums of Understanding were signed with the National Association of Counties ("NACo"), the National Network of Forest Practitioners ("NNFP"), and the Sirolli Institute. These MOU's provide a framework for cooperation, at the national level, to encourage the exchange of education and information between the National organizations through their respective delivery and outreach mechanisms. The agreements came about through the National Association of RC&D Councils efforts to expand its partnership roots with other like-minded organizations.

The NACo represents each County in the United States and is responsive to the tasks that are facing each and every County across the United States. NACo is responsible for helping Counties deal with: federal and state governments, demands for additional services from citizens, and limited tax resources. In addition, NACo is working on issues facing homeland security, conservation, forestry, energy, and community and economic development.



From left to right: Reggie Skains, Mary Seccombe, Sharon Ruggi and Joe Cantu, Presidents of the National Association of RC&D Councils

*"Federal appropriations are critical this year."*

## NARC&DC Signs MOU

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The NNFP is an alliance of rural individuals working on the ground to build a forest economy that is ecologically sound and socially just. The NNFP is a clearinghouse for information and technical assistance, and a place for people to meet, learn, and make their voices heard. The NNFP is committed to helping people solve problems, experiment with new approaches, work with unconventional partners, and compete in the marketplace.

The Sirolli Institute is a global education and training organization of experienced professionals with the mission of introducing Enterprise Facilitation to communities seeking to grow their economies from within. The purpose of this MOU is to assist Councils in the promotion of their economic and community revitalization. ■

## NACo Passes Interim Resolution on Behalf of the RC&D Program

On March 7, 2005, the National Association of Counties (“NACo”) passed an interim resolution on behalf of the RC&D Program. The resolution “urges Congress to fund the Resource Conservation and Development Program (RC&D) within the FY2006 Agriculture Appropriations bill at \$54 million.” The resolution came about through the efforts of Gary Freeman the current California RC&D State Association President and current NACo Board Member and Ms. Roberta Jeanquart, the NARC&DC’s current Executive Director. Mr. Freeman stated that “the RC&D’s and Counties can serve to enhance each others’ activities. Both County officials and RC&D members serve as community leaders with regard to the issues that effect the local community. Therefore it is only natural that each entity supports the other when faced with the severe budget cut we see today.” Ms. Jeanquart added that “the strengths of both organizations, working together for a common cause, can and will enable us to better the communities that we serve.” NACo’s Board of Directors unanimously adopted the interim policy resolution. The interim policy resolution will guide NACo’s advocacy work until the Annual Business meeting when the interim resolutions are put forward to NACo membership for final adoption. ■

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*“NACo  
Resolution  
urges Congress to  
fund RD&D at  
\$54 Million.”*

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## The NARC&DC Invites you to Join the Circle of Diamonds

The National Association of RC&D Councils, Circle of Diamonds Program is a unique program, in which Members have proven their exemplary public accountability to the people they serve. The Circle of Diamonds program is designed to highlight those Councils that have produced quality programs, within their local community, have achieved the specific benchmarks outlined in the application, and have become wise stewards of their nonprofit organization. This mark of excellence will assist Council’s in showcasing themselves to their local community, other Councils, and the Nation. In addition, this program was established as a proactive approach for councils to simply demonstrate that they were complying with the basic requirements of the RC&D statute, the council responsibilities outlined in the NRCS manual, and best nonprofit management practices.



*Congressman R. Alexander , LA, with Sharon Ruggi, President, National Association of RC&D Councils at the 2005 Leadership Forum*

and best nonprofit management practices.

This program was set up as a tiered program in which new criteria will be added every year, so that we can continue to improve the quality of our RC&D Councils. What better way to show congress that they should continue to wisely invest

dollars into our program! By having each and every Council become a member of the Circle of Diamonds, we will show Congress that we ARE good stewards of our program. We will also show Congress that we have internal controls to ensure that their investment is wise, sustainable, and brings forth great returns! The National Association of RC&D Councils truly believes that The

*Continued on Page 5*



*Mark Rey, Under Secretary for Natural Resources & Environment speaking to an overflowing room during the Leadership Forum in Washington DC in March*

## NARC&DC Offers Limited Time GrantStation Memberships to all RC&D Councils

The National Association of RC&D Councils, with the assistance of the Natural Resource Conservation Service, has teamed up with the folks at the GrantStation to offer your Council an unbelievable offer. From April 1, 2005 until September 30, 2005 each and every RC&D Council will be provided with FREE unlimited access to all the programs, services, and Grant Research tools the GrantStation has to offer.

In order to provide your Council with the ability to secure new grant dollars, each RC&D Council will have the following GrantStation online tools and resources:

- ◆ A searchable database of private grant makers (foundations, corporations, corporate foundations, associations, and religious funders) that are actively accepting proposals from a variety of organizations (searchable by

geographic location, types of support, and areas of interest);

- ◆ A searchable listings (word search) of Federal notices of funding availability, updated daily, which includes not only all Federal agencies, but all quasi federal agencies such as Center for Disease Control, National Science Foundation, National Endowment for the Humanities and for the Arts, etc.
- ◆ Live links to all State funding agencies (for each state);
- ◆ A weekly e-newsletter with upcoming grant deadlines delivered to every member's desk

top and weekly interviews with leading grant makers.

In addition to these funding research tools, the GrantStation will also offer tutorials on how to write compelling letters of inquiry, develop competitive full grant requests, and step-by-step instructions on grants management. Tracks to Success, posted on the GrantStation's home page each week, are an on-going series of tutorials focused on how to build an aggressive grant-seeking program. The GrantStation website also provides specific steps for establishing an aggressive grant seeking program within an organization, including tutorials on all the information needed to get started writing grants (mission statement, organizational structure, audited financial statements, etc.)

Finally, the folks at the GrantStation will offer your Council a one-on-one tour of the website to help them familiarize themselves with the site. Make sure you take part in the great offer! If you have any questions feel free to contact the National Association at (202) 434-4780.

## Hall of Fame

*Continued from Page 1*

recognition for the many years of service devoted to "Making Things Happen" within the RC&D Program across this great Nation. The 14 initial inductees were honored from all seven regions.

### 2005 NARC&DC Hall of Fame Inductees

- |                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>North Central Region</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thomas Roney</li> <li>• Richard Karsen</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Mid-Atlantic Region</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Donna Hunter</li> <li>• Peggy McNeil</li> </ul>     |
| <b>Southeast Region</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ron Page</li> <li>• Jeanette Jamieson</li> </ul>    |
| <b>Southwest Region</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reggie Skains</li> <li>• Joe Cantu</li> </ul>       |
| <b>New England Region</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dick Wood</li> <li>• Steve Driver</li> </ul>        |
| <b>Western Region</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mary Seccombe</li> <li>• Glenn Jobe</li> </ul>      |
| <b>Pac Rim Region</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pearlre Reed</li> <li>• Frances Patcheco</li> </ul> |



Current NARC&DC President, Sharon Ruggi presenting a "Hall of Fame" award to first NARC&DC President, Mary Seccombe

Leadership Forum breaks gave opportunities to network and compare ideas and projects



# NARC&DC Calls for Stories on Improving Life in Rural America!

The National Association of RC&D Council's Under-represented Task Force is calling for a compilation of stories that **show how the RC&D community improves life in Rural America.**

We are looking for stories from across the Nation, which show how the RC&D Community is "Making Things Happen" in their local areas. We are looking for stories that impact: HEALTH, ACCESS TO FOOD AND WATER, NATIVE AMERICAN ISSUES, JOB CREATION AND RETENTION, EDUCATION, HOUSING, TELECOMMUNICATION, and HEALTH. In addition, if you have attended one of our three Forums against poverty, we would love to hear how the Forum has assisted your Councils efforts in reducing persistent rural poverty!

The collected stories will be used to create a book, which will be available to all Councils that will highlight both the success and lessons learned from undertaking projects that impact persistent rural poverty. If your council has a success or a valuable lesson that it would like to impart to other Councils send your stories to the National Association of RC&D Councils by **April 30, 2005.**

Please make sure that your stories follow the format below:

- ◆ Name of Council:
- ◆ State:
- ◆ Name of Project:
- ◆ Brief Description of Project:
- ◆ Sources of Funding for Project:
- ◆ Benefits of Project:
- ◆ Contact Person for Project:
- ◆ Did your Councils Attend One of the Three Forums Against Poverty and if So How Did your attendance Assist/Benefit this Project.

The Under-represented Task Force of the National Association of RC&D Councils thanks you in advance for your assistance in compiling this information. Should you have any questions with regard to this, please do not hesitate to contact the National Association of RC&D Councils at (202) 434-4780 or [narcdc@rcdnet.org](mailto:narcdc@rcdnet.org).

## NARC&DC Launches Biomass Fact Sheets

The National Association of RC&D Councils, with the assistance of the Natural Resource Conserva-

tion Service, has been working on producing fact sheets which will help you and your fellow Council members utilize appropriate scale biomass technologies that can be applied in rural communities to protect soil and water resources and stimulate local economies. Thirteen general fact sheets and fourteen advanced fact sheets have been created. The fact sheets will be distributed to all RC&D Councils over the next few months.

You can look forward to receiving the following fact sheets:

- 1) An Overview of Biomass Utilization
- 2) An Overview of Biomass Definitions
- 3) A Biomass Internet Directory
- 4) An Overview of Bioproducts with a Matrix of Products
- 5) An Overview of Bioenergy Technologies with a Matrix of Technologies
- 6) An Overview of Biofuel Technologies with a Matrix of Technologies
- 7) An Overview of Application and Site Criteria
- 8) An Overview on Growing Your Local Economy with Biomass
- 9) RC&D Success Stories in Biomass Utilization
- 10) Key Farm Bill Energy Provisions
- 11) Advanced Information on Co-Generation and Various Applications such as Poultry Litter, Pyrolysis, Digestation, Syoichiometric Combustion, Gasification, and Genset Technologies



*Roberta Jeanquart, Executive Director, NARC&DC, and Andrew Gordon, Director of Programs, NARC&DC, attend evening reception during Leadership Forum*

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*“RC&D  
Program improves  
life in Rural  
America.”*

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In addition, in late May, the NARC&DC will be producing a Biomass Feasibility Model Tool for use by RC&D Councils Across the Nation. This Model will be available to all RC&D Councils to help facilitate the development of sustainable technologies, identify biomass energy applications, and the identification of various types of feedstock found in your community that can be used in energy production.

## Circle of Diamonds

*Continued From Page 3*

Circle of Diamonds program is a great way to proactively demonstrate the above. In fact, because the National Association of RC&D Councils feel this is so important, the Board of Directors unanimously agreed to waive the fee for tier one. This will ensure that every Council can become members of this great program!

# National Association of Resource Conservation & Development Councils 2005 Leadership Forum

Over 250 Leaders from RC&D Councils across the Nation attended the 6th annual NARC&DC Leadership Forum in Washington, DC held February 28-March 2, 2005. The NARC&DC Board of Directors expressed extreme concern as the RC&D leadership prepared to meet the current needs of their communities and the RC&D budget.

Areas addressed at the forum included Congressional Budget Priorities, Communicating with Legislators, Outreach Strategies to Broaden Council Membership, Training for RC&D Councils, and Opportunities with Other Federal Agencies.

Key speakers included: Mr. Robert Herbst, The Global Environmental & Technology Foundation and Mr. Mark Rey, Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment.

The Awards luncheon introduced the National Association of RC&D Council's Hall of Fame and 14 people from all seven regions were inducted. Annual Council Awards for 2004 were also presented.

Pictures from the forum are included in this issue.



## Arkansas RC&D Councils Present: Rural Fire Protection Program

- ◆ The Arkansas RC&D Rural Fire Protection Program was established by Act 865 of 1995 to improve the protection of life and property in rural Arkansas.
- ◆ \$1.1 million is appropriated each year through Arkansas Soil and Water Conservation Commission to improve fire department water supply and delivery.
- ◆ 773 Fire departments rated ISO class 7, 8, 9, or 10 are participating in the program. Additional Fire Departments are entering the program each year.
- ◆ Four areas of emphasis: Master Fire Plans, Grant Funds, Training and Education, and Technical Assistance.
- ◆ Plans of Improvement have been developed for each department to assist them in making changes in the fire department. Lowering Insurance Services Office (ISO) ratings is a major focus.
- ◆ Grant Funds are awarded to the fire departments to assist them in establishing Rural Water Supplies. Pressurized fire hydrants, dry hydrants,

tanker trucks, fire hose, communications equipment, and numerous other water supply appliances have been purchased with \$5.1 million in grant funds.

◆ Over five hundred fire department leaders have attended educational classes ranging from an evening class to a five-day seminar on improving ISO classifications. Training is offered free

to the fire departments.

- ◆ An educational video was developed to introduce fire departments to the concept of utilizing tanker operations to supply water at rural fires. Additional videos are planned.
- ◆ Technical assistance is provided to the fire departments to certify rural water supply points. ISO requires such certification before nontraditional supply points can be considered during an evaluation.
- ◆ Since 1996, 271 fire departments participating in the program have attained an improved ISO rating. The current insurance premium savings for the residents in these areas are estimated at \$34 million annually. While this savings is substantial, it is not the only benefit realized. Commercial insurance savings and the benefit of insurance premiums staying in the community have not been included. The greatest benefit is the increased ability to protect life and property with improved fire departments. For more information call 501-868-8483.

*“\$34 million saved  
in insurance  
premiums  
annually.”*



*The Honorable Jeanette Jamieson generates enthusiasm throughout the Leadership Forum*

### 2004 - NARC&DC's National Award Winners

**Council Member of the Year**  
Pete Waller

**Coordinator of the Year**  
R. Michael Roden

**Supporting Organization of the Year**  
Beginner Farmers of New Hampshire

**Council of the Year**  
Cherokee Hills RC&D Project, Inc.

**Outstanding Youth Involvement Award**  
Taylor County Junior Conservation Board

**Outstanding RC&D Program Assistant**  
Josh Hanford

# Regional Roundup

## Upcoming Events in the South East

By Susan Creasy, Office Manager

*Chestatee-Chattahoochee RC&D Council*

### Alabama

June 1-3: State Association mtg; Point Clear, AL

June 15-17: Your Town Alabama - Designing Its Future [www.yourtownalabama.org](http://www.yourtownalabama.org)

### Georgia

March 30-31: Farmland Preservation & sustainable Agriculture Expo; Bowden, GA

May 5-6: State Association Meeting; Dalton, GA

### Kentucky

July 19: Annual State Meeting; Louisville, KY (in conjunction with KACD)

Sep. 15 & 16: Mammoth Cave RC&D will have an Agroforestry Train the Trainers workshop

May 5, Aug. 4, Nov. 3: Mammoth Cave RC&D-Bowling Green, KY council meetings

### Mississippi

April 14: Annual State Meeting in Hattiesburg MS.

Speakers include Mark Keenum, Chief of Staff for Sen. Thad Cochran, and Bill Hawks, USDA Undersecretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs. For more information contact Martha Watts, MARCDC President at [mmwatts@hotmail.com](mailto:mmwatts@hotmail.com)

### North Carolina

Aug. 2-4: North Carolina RC&D State Association meeting; Blowing Rock, NC

### Tennessee

Aug. 4-5: Tennessee State Association meeting; Murfreesboro, TN

### Virginia

April 19: Financing Local PDR Programs; Verona, VA

April 27-28: Waste Solutions Forum (invitation only); Roanoke, VA

May 9, July 7: Council meetings for Shenandoah RC&D

May 18-20: State Association meeting; Petersburg, VA

## North Central Region

By Nedda Simon, President, NCRC&D

I would like to extend my personal and heartfelt gratitude for the large participation by our regional members at the Leadership Forum. All the members of our region understand the importance of the challenge before us. When older councils are threatened of being cut from the program, we can't assume that the next year, the rest will not go.

All of us must stay together and focus on Congress to help us save this program. I realize I am not telling you anything you all don't already know, but we must not become lax after our first letter writing campaign. Start to call the offices and visit Congressman while they are on leave in your area.

We can do this. Just look at the very mission on which we stand. Nothing has stopped us before from helping communities thrive, so how could anything get in our way now?

See you in Dubuque, Iowa, for our great North Central RC&D Annual meeting that Iowa has prepared for us. Sign up now so we can send the message to Washington that we are here to stay.

Our very best wishes to Jerry DeSchaine, Priesident of Michigan, and the Secretary of North Central Board of Directors. We are sending our thoughts to you, Jerry and hoping for a great recovery.

## Southwestern Report

*Debbie Moreland, Program Manager*

The Southwestern States RC&D Councils 2005 Regional Annual Meeting will be held on March 20 - 22, 2005 at the Peabody Hotel in Little Rock, Arkansas. The conference will host delegates from six states (Arkansas, Kansas,

Louisiana, Missouri, Oklahoma and Texas). The theme for the meeting will be "Meeting Tomorrow's Challenges Today". Thirty-two workshops will focus on a variety of topics such as: Philanthropic Support for RC&D Related Projects, Rural Fire Protection Program, Roles & Responsibilities of RC&D Council Members, Outreach / Youth Capacity, Funding for RC&D Councils, Fiscal Responsibilities, Saving Your Council When the Budget Axe Falls: Strategic PR for RC&D.

The meeting will include special speakers such as Gerald Willis, Special Asst. to the Chief and Sharon Ruggi, President, NARC&DC. Pearlie Reed, former Chief of NRCS (retired) will be inducted into the RC&D Hall of Fame.

The six states are involved in a variety of projects and programs geared to the economic development and the effective utilization and enhancement of our natural resources. The Executive Board has



*Bruce Kroetch, Treasurer, Western RC&D Association asking a question at the Leadership Forum*

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### Southwest Report

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been actively involved in ongoing legislation impacting RC&D Councils. The President, Leroy Dangeau and 1st Vice President, Jim Bailey have made numerous trips to Washington, DC to participate in conferences geared to improving the board's ability to address legislative challenges, etc. They have also visited several state annual meetings as requested. This council has developed a comprehensive database for its council membership which was our Achilles' heel. With improved communication we feel we can better mobilize our councils to address our legislative challenges.

### Mid-Atlantic RC&D Association

*By Howard Coffield, President, Mid-Atlantic RC&D Association*

**2005 Annual Conference:** The Mid-Atlantic RC&D Association will hold its 2005 Annual Conference & Business meeting September 21-23 at the Hotel Thayer, West Point, New York.

**PARCD Initiates Statewide Value Added Dairy RC&D Project:** This three phase project is intended to assist PA dairy farmers become aware of the economic potential of shifting their

operation from producing milk for a wholesale commodity market to become more involved in adding value to their milk at the farm and more involved in direct marketing to the consumers of dairy products.

The three phases of the project are:

1. Create awareness of the economic potential of value added dairy processing.
2. Assist PA farmers in determining the feasibility for their own operation to create interest in pursuing value added dairy opportunities.
3. Develop technical and financial resources to assist interested farmers to make the transition to expand their business into value added dairy markets.

The first phase of the project has been underway since fall of 2004 and involves a cooperative effort between the Pennsylvania Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils (PARCD), the nine RC&D Councils of PA, The PA Department of Agriculture, PA Association for Sustainable Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service, Project Grass Chapters, and Keystone Agricultural Innovation Center. The second phase of the project kicked off on February 3, 2005 with an eight hour detailed educational program called MAKE SOMETHING MORE WITH YOUR MILK. Work is beginning on the third phase of developing resources to assist producers.