**Mar Gar Farm**

Owner: Martha Masiello, Chester County

Mar Gar Farm, owned and operated by Martha Masiello of Chester County, is is a private facility, home to two percherons, which are housed on two acres of pasture. Martha became interested and involved in the Equine Stewardship On–Farm Project through attending Penn State’s Equine Environmental Stewardship Short Course.

**Best Management Practice (BMP) Identified:**

Increase desirable forage to meet horses' nutritional requirements, while minimizing weed populations and bare ground.

**BMP Reasoning:**

Pastures were void of sufficient vegetative cover, and lacked perennial plants to protect and cover soil year round. Introducing permanent vegetation would benefit horses' health and prevent sediment and nutrient runoff, which negatively affect water quality.

**Course of action:**

* **Date Reseeded:**
* **Equipment Used:**
* **Seed Mix:**
* **Soil Tested:** Yes
* **Fertilizer:** (Recommend 125 lb N -80 lb P-40 lb K)
* **Lime:** (Recommend 3000 lb per acre)
* **Other:**

**Results:**

|  | **Before Renovating Pasture** | **After Renovating Pasture** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Canopy Cover | 40% | 85% |
| Desirable Forage | 30% | 80% |
| Perennial Plant | 35% | 80% |

Prior to renovating, 60% of the pasture lacked vegetative growth. The remaining 40% was vegetation consisting of 10% weeds, and 30% desirable grasses. After reseeding, the overall condition of the pasture improved significantly.  Vegetation and desirable forage doubled, and weed populations decreased by half. Only 5% of the pasture’s vegetation consisted of weeds.

**Challenges:**

**On –Going Management and Additional BMPs:**

Continuing to improve pastures through:

* Practicing rotational grazing
* Turning horses out to gravel sacrifice area when weather conditions are unfit
* A bioswale, a vegetated channel, was installed to direct concentrated storm water away and around the sacrifice area and prevent further erosion problems. Clean water is then prevented from flowing directly through the sacrifice area and contaminating areas with sediment and nutrients.

[Pasture prior to renovating](http://extension.psu.edu/animals/equine/farm-partners/mar-gar-farm/pic%202.JPG/view)

[Rotational Grazing](http://extension.psu.edu/animals/equine/farm-partners/mar-gar-farm/pic%201.JPG/view)