



Farmers Improving Soil Health

NEWS YOU CAN USE ~ August 30, 2017

A monthly collection of recent news, upcoming events, and articles of interest



Meet Your Board Members

Steve Groff, *No-Till Alliance Board Member*

Steve Groff and his family, farm 265 acres of cash grain and hay crops, as well as pumpkins and heirloom tomatoes in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

Back in 1982, the Groff's began no-tilling as a method to control soil erosion. The practice worked so well that the farm has been 100% no-till since 1995. For the past 22 years, his Cedar Meadow Farm has conducted thousands of cover crop research trials, out of which he developed the well-known Tillage Radish.

All Cedar Meadow pumpkins are no-tilled into a rolled cover crop. Their tomatoes are grown in high tunnels, but Steve is currently working on a no-till/cover crop program for that aspect of the farm as well.

Steve recently founded Cover Crop Coaching, a business that “trains the trainers” how to talk to farmers about effective cover crop use. He also recently launched *Cover Crop Innovators*, a subscription based membership group where Steve hosts a weekly live webinar and moderates a Facebook discussion group.

He is also a contributing columnist for the American Agriculturalist magazine and the Lancaster Farming newspaper, writing articles on the use of cover crops.

Alliance News



Annual Soil Health Field Day

Future View Farm, owned by Jeff and Sue Frey, was the site of the PA No-Till Alliance 2017 Soil Health Field Day on July 27. Attended by nearly 250 individuals with an interest in no-till and cover crop practices, it was deemed a huge success by all involved. As one attendee summed it up to Alliance staff, "It was one of the best and most informative field days on any topic that I have ever attended."

Informative farm panels on a variety of relevant topics, facilitated by board member Steve Groff, proved popular as did the soil pit and display of farmer-owned planters. Insights from keynote speaker Steve Berger of Iowa were of particular interest to many as he showcased his 2,200 acre corn/soybean/swine operation and discussed the challenges of proper nutrient management and manure application in a no-till/cover crop operation.

Watch for more pictures in a future edition of *No-Till Nuggets*, the Alliance's print newsletter.

Alliance Recognized for Support of REAP

Near the end of the field day attendees were joined by Pennsylvania Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding, and State Conservation Commission Executive Secretary Karl Brown.

Both thanked the Alliance for their support on the 10th anniversary of the valuable REAP tax credit program, and presented President Hershey with a wooden plaque commemorating this milestone.

Alliance Annual Meeting

Immediately following the field day Alliance President Jim Hershey conducted a brief annual meeting. Board members Leroy Bupp, Lisa Blazure, Ryan Graham, and Bill Cannon were re-elected to three terms on the board.



Also, Karl Brown and Joel Semke from the State Conservation Commission related to members present that they would like to engage the Alliance in a discussion of how to best incorporate cover crops into the REAP program. It was agreed to pursue this topic in depth at the August board meeting. Alliance members should look forward to hearing more about this in future newsletters - stay tuned!

Planting Green Guide Available Upon Request

With increased interest in planting green and many PA No-Till Alliance members sharing their experiences with this practice, the Alliance has developed a *Planting Green Guide*, which was released at the annual Field Day in July. The guide joins the popular *No-Till Tips* and *Cover Crop Tips* as valuable resources for farmers adopting these important soil health practices. If you missed grabbing a copy of the *Planting Green Guide*, *No-Till Tips*, and/or *Cover Crop Tips* at the field day, simply contact Jay Howes at 717-651-5920 or jhowes@pennag.com for your copy.

September 28

Join us on Thursday, September 28 for a **Soil Health Workshop** at the farm of PA No-Till Alliance board member, Bill Cannon (Easthill Farm, 4766 Lamor Road, Hermitage). The event is sponsored by the Mercer Conservation District, NRCS, and the Alliance. Along with Bill, PANTA members Ryan Graham and Lucas Criswell will be part of the program.

December 7

Mark your calendars now for an all-day **Soil Health and Water Quality Program**. We are excited to welcome Mr. Gail Fuller from Emporia, Kansas as keynote speaker for the event. Gail farms 1700-1800 acres, plus 300 acres of custom work. On those acres, he no-tills 11 to 13 crops, most used being corn, grain sorghum, triticale, winter barley, soybeans, and winter wheat. Gail has used 60-70 different mixes of cover crops, utilizing sunflowers, radishes, turnips, and clovers most often. You won't want to miss this event! Join us on Thursday, December 7 from 8:45 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Shady Maple Banquet Center, East Earl, Pennsylvania.

Public Meetings to Discuss WOTUS

On Monday, August 28, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of the Army Corp of Engineers (USACE) announced they are conducting ten teleconferences/webinars to hear from stakeholders their recommendations to revise the definition of "Waters of the United States" (WOTUS) under the Clean Water Act (CWA). Nine of the teleconferences/webinars will be tailored to specific sectors. To learn more, [click here](#).

Exploring the Expansion of Animal Agriculture in Western Pennsylvania

Penn State Extension invites you to participate in one or more events to share your suggestions and ideas for enhancing animal agriculture in western Pennsylvania.

Meeting Dates and Locations

- **Indiana County** - Monday, Sept. 18, 6:30-8:30 at the Kovalchick Convention and Athletic Complex, in Indiana, PA.
- **Armstrong County** - Tuesday, Sept. 19, 6:30-8:30 at the Belmont Complex in Kittanning, PA.
- **Westmoreland County** - Wednesday, Sept. 20, 6:30-8:30 at the Roy Houston Conservation Education Center in Greensburg, PA.

There is no fee to participate. Light refreshments will be provided. Interested in attending? RSVP to Leanne

Griffith at lq5120@ag.psu.edu or call the Westmoreland County Extension office at 724-837-1402 by September 12. Open discussions and strategy development will be preceded by a brief review of the physical, economic and survey data that has been collected as part of this on-going project.

Sponsored by a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences and Penn State Extension is working to explore the opportunities and feasibility of expanding animal agriculture in western Pennsylvania.

Consortium Quarterly Update

Since the beginning of the year, there have been a number of significant legal developments in the agricultural sector. Many of these issues will continue to play out over the next year and will impact agriculture throughout the country. Notably, there were important developments involving the WOTUS Rule, dicamba registration, and checkoff programs.

In this light, the Agricultural and Food Law Consortium has compiled a review of some of these developments, with links for additional resources. Led by the National Agricultural Law Center (NALC), the Consortium is a four-university partnership designed to enhance and expand the development and delivery of authoritative, timely, and objective agricultural and food law research and information.

A copy of the First Quarter 2017 Update is available [here](#). (Source: *The National Agricultural Law Center*)

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