



Farmers Improving Soil Health

NEWS YOU CAN USE ~ APRIL 28, 2017

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



Meet Your Board Members

Jim Hershey, *No-Till Alliance President*

Jim and wife, Shirley, along with their son, Marc, and his wife, Crystal, own and operate Hershey Farms LLC, a 600 acre grain and livestock farm in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. They market 1.7 million organic broiler chickens and 7,200 finish hogs annually.

Jim also operates a crop management business that provides service to local farmers for planting, harvesting, commodity sales, cover crop management, and more.

Jim has been practicing no-till management for more than 25 years and cover cropping for more than 15 years. For the past 4 years, Jim has raised multi-specie cover crops. "I have found them very beneficial to improving soil health, soil structure and have increased microbial activity," noted Jim.

This will be the fourth season Jim has planted green, both corn and soybeans. Last year, he installed Dawn ZRX cover crop rollers on his Case IH 1240 corn planter. He has found rolling cover helps preserves soil moisture, providing an excellent environment and food for microbes. This practice has also aided in the reduction of herbicide use.

Jim along with assistant crop manager, Brian Zimmerman has designed and built a Cover Crop Interseeder, which is now being commercially marketed. The need for this piece of equipment is due to the increasing demand by farmers and conservation districts to establish cover crops in standing corn, in areas of shorter growing seasons.

The Hershey's also own Harvest View Barn at Hershey Farms, a well-known wedding venue providing a beautiful country setting for that special day.

Alliance News

Outreach through Participation

The Alliance Board of Directors has recently begun to more formally track the participation of board members in events related to no-till, cover crops, soil health and related topics. Outreach is essential to the mission of the Alliance and presents a great opportunity to carry our message.

Between December 2016 and March 2017, board members either hosted or were invited to participate in 20 different events, reaching over 1,600 individual farmers or other stakeholders. Interestingly, this reach went beyond Pennsylvania as it included 3 other states and a Canadian province. This demonstrates the high regard

others have for the Alliance and the experience and knowledge we can bring to these discussions.

Upcoming Events

June 7

The **Chiques Creek Watershed Expo** will be held on June 7 from 6 – 8 p.m. at the Manheim Farm Show Complex. *(The PA No-Till Alliance will have an exhibitor's booth at the event.)*

June 29

A '**Farming for Success**' field day will be held on June 29 at the Southeast Agricultural Research & Extension Center (SEAREC) in Lancaster County. Stay tuned for further details in future newsletters.

July 27

Mark your calendars now for the Alliance's **Soil Health Field Day** on July 27 at Board member, Jeff Frey's farm near Willow Street in Lancaster County. Plans are presently taking shape for an interesting and informative program including a well-known keynote speaker and several farmer panels on timely topics. Watch for more information in future newsletters.

Ag Articles of Interest

Survey: Farm Show Strategic Planning Effort

With both feet firmly planted in a second century of the Farm Show, we see that segments of both consumers and agricultural producers are changing rapidly. How do we keep Farm Show relevant in changing times? How do we keep the Farm Show strong as we pass its leadership to coming generations? The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture invites you to visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MD9JGRF> and take the survey posted there. This is a secure site and, while responses in the aggregate will be discussed with the Farm Show Commission, your individual anonymity is assured. Please consider providing the Department of Agriculture with your wisdom and experience as the Farm Show Commission embarks on its Farm Show strategic planning process.

2017 Update on Advancements in Cereal Grains

While seed laws and regulations have not changed, breeding has. Advancements with scab tolerance, standability, yield, and disease resistance have been great. As a result, owners of various varieties - biotech companies - have sought to safeguard their research and investment by obtaining patents and PVPA protection on new variety releases to protect their intellectual property. For instance, on wheat and triticale varieties, approximately 70% are currently patented and 28% are PVPA protected (the remaining 2% are older lines that are limited and falling out of favor). Protecting their investment in this way will allow them to continue to bring you better varieties in the future.

Pay close attention to the tag on the seed you are planting so as not to inadvertently violate patent and PVPA laws. Violations can include:

- Purchasing a patented variety and producing the crop for more than one use
- Saving seed back for your own planting
- Offering seed for sale or trade
- Purchasing a PVPA variety and selling this grain as seed, trading, or offering this seed for sale to anyone else (you are allowed to save seed back for planting on your farm only)

The owner of the variety can seek huge damages for such actions.

How do you know if your seed is covered by patent or PVPA laws? This information can be found on the tag or your seed dealer can provide you with this information if you are unsure of what you planted. It's not too late: if you have a crop in the field that you were intending on saving for seed, alternative uses, such as grain or forage will eliminate the risk of being in violation. Don't risk being charged with the theft of intellectual property. The seed industry is very aware of the growing number of individuals selling "brown bag seed" and the number of investigations and violations are growing every year.

Cover Crops Work? Show Me!

All across the United States, farmers are increasingly using cover crops to suppress weeds, conserve soil and control pests and diseases. But agricultural educators know that savvy farmers are reluctant about risk and often want to see cover crops in action before making significant change. SARE's [Library of Cover Crop and Soil Health](#)

[Images](#) is now available to help educators show producers how cover crops can work on their farms.

The collection includes over 1,500 photos and illustrations organized into 10 galleries. A soil health gallery features high-resolution illustrations compiled in a set of 20 PowerPoint slides for use in presentations. The collection also includes five complete PowerPoint presentations that may be used by educators to illustrate the benefits of incorporating cover crops into cropping systems. These cover crop materials are provided for free to educators for use in non-commercial agriculture and conservation work, provided that proper attribution is used.

Find a wealth of educational resources on cover crops at www.sare.org/cover-crops.

Survey: Technical Assistance for Agricultural Conservation in the Chesapeake Bay

The Chesapeake Bay Funders Network (CBFN) and PennAg invite your participation in a Bay-wide survey titled "Technical Assistance for Agricultural Conservation in the Chesapeake Bay."

The purpose of the survey is to provide funders and their partners with a better understanding of the current and future needs across all sectors that provide technical assistance to producers for getting conservation delivered on the farm - including the private sector, conservation districts, non-governmental organizations, and state agencies. Your participation will ensure that the role of the private sector and its partners in helping farmers get conservation on the ground is captured and communicated to those who are working to help producers and others fund these activities.

Please visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TACHesBay> to take the survey.

If you have questions about the survey, please feel free to contact Jake Reilly, Director of the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation's Chesapeake Bay Program (and member of CBFN) at jake.reilly@nfwf.org or Kristen Saacke Blunk at kristen@headwaters-llc.org.

Nominations to the Pennsylvania Soybean Board and United Soybean Board

The Pennsylvania Soybean Board is currently accepting nominations of individuals who would be willing to serve on the Board of Directors of both the Pennsylvania Board as well as the United Soybean Board.

The 9 volunteer members of the Pennsylvania Soybean Board (PSB) are responsible for the collection and administration of the soybean checkoff program within the State. The authority given to PSB under the Federal Act and Order are specific to soybean education, promotion, communication and research. PSB is not affiliated with lobbying of any manner.

If you or an individual you know is interested in being considered to serve on the Board, please [complete a form](#) and submit all nominations to Jennifer Reed-Harry by close of business on **July 20, 2017**.

In addition to the opportunities of the Pennsylvania Soybean Board, there are opportunities to serve on the United Soybean Board. The United Soybean Board is comprised of 72 Farmer Leaders from across the United States. If you are interested in being nominated for the United Soybean Board, please contact the PSB office at (717) 651-5922 for additional information on this process.

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