



Farmers Improving Soil Health

NEWS YOU CAN USE ~ June 30, 2017

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



Meet Your Board Members

Leroy Bupp, *No-Till Alliance Board Member*

I began farming in 1963, on my paternal grandfather's farm, the spring of my senior year in high school, purchasing it from him on a sales agreement.

In 1974, I began using some no-till on comparison plantings, and went to complete no-till in 1976. About 1990, I began cover-cropping, after seeing that practice in use on another farm. My main reason then for going to cover-cropping was that I knew the crop cover carried a lot of the weight created by hauling the manure spreader across the fields and would help to avoid compaction problems. There was not so much of an awareness then of the importance of soil health, but the cover cropping began to improve our soil and its organic matter content.

I have been "planting green" for 20 years. Due to the need for me to be in the barn with our dairy cows, an employee primarily ran the planter and I did the spraying. Because of milking, I generally ran behind in the spraying, and realized that the cover was growing well. It showed me the benefits of planting green.

The organic matter in our soils has risen considerably with the use of no-till, and crops have benefitted from the greater absorption and retention of moisture. Increased soil organic matter and improved water retention have taught me the real value of using no-till practices.

Several years ago, I attended a meeting where Ray Archeletta did a demonstration showing the comparison of soil between no-till and conventional-planted fields. I obtained a sample of soil from a neighbor, who does not practice no-till, and compared samples of his conventional planted soil and my no-till soil. The difference so impressed me that I later took the demonstration to a Young Farmers and FFA class!

Through attendance at soil meetings and field days, I continue to learn about soil health and have added to my demonstration to share that information at field days and winter soil meetings. I continue to be very impressed with the significant differences in healthy soil and the benefits it gives, while at the same time improving the quality of water leaving the fields and the subsequent contribution that makes to the clean-up of the Chesapeake Bay.

Our dairy herd was dispersed two years ago, but we continue to farm the land in no-till practices. Our crop program this year includes 420 acres of corn, 230 of beans and 50 of wheat, in what my family calls "a giant worm farm," after years of no-till cropping and soil improvement practices.

Alliance News

Outreach Effort: Mini-Field Days

The Alliance is interested in having one or two "mini-field day" type events in conjunction with Stroud Water Resources Center this summer or early fall in eastern Lebanon or Berks Co. If you would be interested in hosting or helping to coordinate such an event, or know someone who might, please contact Jay Howes at jhowes@pennag.com.

Planting Green Guide

The Alliance has developed a 'Planting Green Guide' that will be released at the Summer Field Day on July 27. It joins the popular 'No-Till Tips' and 'Cover Crop Tips' as valuable resources for farmers adopting these important soil health practices.

Upcoming Events

July 27

You won't want to miss the Alliance's always popular and informative **Soil Health Field Day**, to be held on July 27 at Board member, Jeff Frey's farm near Willow Street in Lancaster County. This *can't-miss-event* for no-till and cover crop advocates will feature an interesting and informative program including well-known keynote speaker Steve Berger, and several farmer panels on timely topics.

- **Meeting of the Minds event the evening before**
- **Soil Health Demonstration**
- **Engaging Panel Discussions**
 1. Practical Experience / Lessons Learned when Planting Green
 2. How to Grow Your Own Cover Crop Seed
 3. Why Water Quality Matters
 4. Summer / Alternative Forage Options

FREE cover crop seed to be given away! Exhibition of various farmer-owned no-till planters on display at the farm! **If pre-registered by July 21, both the Meeting of the Minds and the Field Day are FREE.** Pre-register via email (jhowes@pennag.com), calling 717-651-5920, or mailing the form found on the [brochure](#). If not pre-registered, cost to attend each event is \$10, collected at the event.

August 15-17

Ag Progress Days features the latest technology and research exhibits, educational programs, and guided tours. Sponsored by Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences, the event is held at the *Russell E. Larson Agricultural Research Center at Rock Springs*, nine miles southwest of State College, PA. It is one of only three agricultural exhibitions in the country sponsored by a major University. Exhibits showcase the latest in Penn State research, as well as information on best management practices and changing regulations in the agricultural industry. Come visit the No-Till Alliance at booth CEA-01!

December 7

Mark your calendars now for an all-day **Soil Health and Water Quality Program** that will build on a similar successful event in 2016. Event to be held at Shady Maple Banquet Center, East Earl, Pennsylvania.

Ag Articles of Interest

Watch for Potassium Deficiencies, by Doug Beegle

As the crops are finally getting going, potassium (K) deficiency is showing up in some fields. Potassium deficiency symptoms occur on the edges of the lower leaves on most plants. In corn and soybeans, the symptoms start as yellowing on the edges of the lower leaves. Eventually the edges of the leaves will turn brown and the whole leaf may die. In alfalfa, the symptoms start as small spots on the edges of the leaves, which eventually grow together and end up as yellow and finally brown leaf edges. As the deficiency becomes more severe, the symptoms will progress higher up the plant. [Read entire article.](#)

Study to Determine Pest Management Effects

An entomologist in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences has received a grant from the U.S. Department

of Agriculture to study and compare how various pest-management regimes affect the health of soils. John Tooker, associate professor of entomology, will lead the project, which is titled “Exploring Soil Health and Pest Management Trade Offs to Maximize Crop Productivity.” [Read entire article.](#)

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