



Farmers Improving Soil Health

NEWS YOU CAN USE ~ OCTOBER 31, 2017

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

Meet Your Board Members



Lucas Criswell, No-Till Alliance Board Member

My dad first started no-tilling in the mid 1980's and our operation has been full no-till since the early 90's. We now farm approximately 1500 acres of no-till corn, soybeans, rye, wheat, yellow grain peas and canola.

My individual no-till experience, in addition to our own farm, began after high school when I began to build my own business by custom drilling soybeans for other farmers with a Krause 13 inch drill, planting as much as 1200 acres per year. Today, in addition to our own farm, I run Criswell Ag Services, providing custom lime and fertilizer application for other local farmers and am a Precision Agleader dealer, providing precision ag services for other farmers.

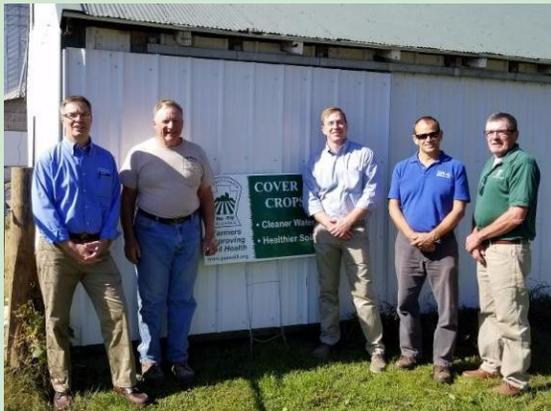
I enjoy the challenge of pushing the no-till envelope by such practices as planting corn into tall covers to maximize my carbon matter and photosynthesis impact, by growing two crops at once, harvesting and separating them to maximize production per acre. Because of my experience with ever evolving no-till techniques and practices, I have been invited to speak at the National No-Till Conference and other no-till events as far north as Guelph Ontario and south to Rocky Mount, VA. I enjoy these opportunities to share some success stories as well as the failures of my operation with other farmers. *(Photo credit: John Vogel, American Agriculturist)*

Alliance News

Alliance Members Eligible for Reduced Registration Fee at the National No-Till Conference

The Alliance Board of Directors has implemented an arrangement with the hosts of the NNTC whereby Alliance members can attend for a significantly reduced registration fee. Scheduled for January 9-12, 2018 in Louisville, KY the conference will center on the theme of "Building More Profitable No-Till Systems." The program includes nearly 40 top-notch no-tillers, agronomists, researchers and other no-till experts to deliver innovative ideas that can help you get the most out of your no-till farming systems. The 26th annual conference offers 13 general sessions, 24 no-till classrooms, and 80 no-till roundtable discussions.

Alliance members may receive the reduced rate of \$269 (a \$110 savings) if registered by November 30. Registrations may be submitted via <https://www.no-tillfarmer.com/panta> or by calling 262-432-0388 and indicating that you are a member of the PA No-Till Alliance. Payment is due at the time of registration.



(L-R) David Wise, Stroud Water Research Center; Jeff Frey, Alliance Board Member; Jake Reilly, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation; Lamonte Garber, Stroud Water Research Center; Jay Howes, PA No-Till Alliance

[Editor's Note: Lancaster Farming correspondent, Philip Gruber, wrote a nice article about the farmers implementing these conservation projects and the grant funding that has been awarded. [Read article.](#)]

NFWF Awards Grant to Stroud Water Research Center

On October 12, at the farm of Alliance board member Jeff Frey, Jake Reilly of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation was joined by PDA Secretary Redding, DEP Secretary McDonnell and representatives of DCNR and EPA to announce the awards of fifteen Pennsylvania projects to improve water quality. One such award to the Stroud Water Research Center (SWRC) from the Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund it jointly funds and administers with the EPA. Entitled *Partnering for Accelerated Agricultural Best Management Practices in South-Central Pennsylvania*, the project will allow Stroud Water Research Center to partner with major non-governmental organizations and the private agricultural services sector to deliver agricultural best management practices in south-central Pennsylvania.

This is a major development for the Alliance since the SWRC has become a significant partner to the Alliance and this grant will provide on-going funds to assist the Alliance in performing its education and outreach efforts. The Alliance is grateful for this opportunity provided by SWRC.

Alliance Members Participate in Mid-Atlantic Soil Health Conference

Several Alliance members played key roles in the Mid-Atlantic Soil Health Conference in Lancaster Co. on October 17 and 18. President Jim Hershey served on the planning committee for this training event attended by 150 NRCS staff and others from at least 3 states in the mid-Atlantic region. By all accounts board member Lisa Blazure's presentation on The Importance of *Soil Health Principles* was a highlight for many. In addition board member Steve Groff spoke on the topic of *Cover Crops for Conditions in the Mid-Atlantic* and board member Jeff Frey hosted the group on his farm to hear about the multi-faceted conservation program on his farm.

The role of the Alliance was undoubtedly well received as subsequent to the event there have been inquiries about a group of New Jersey farmers attending our December *Healthy Soils: Building a Strong Foundation* program and the availability of speakers for New York no-till and cover crop programs.

Upcoming Events

December 7 - Healthy Soils: Building a Strong Foundation Meeting

Watch your mailbox for your invitation and registration form for this exciting meeting at Shady Maple Smorgasbord. Featuring presentations by Mr. Gail Fuller of Emporia Kansas, and timely farmer-led panel discussions on topics of interest, this should be a "can't miss" event for all those interested in no-till, cover crop, and soil health building practices.

Ag Articles of Interest

Attorney General's Office Submits Annual Report on Act 38, ACRE

In October, the Pennsylvania Attorney General's office submitted their twelfth annual report to the General Assembly pursuant to section 318 of Act 38 of 2005 (ACRE). As stated in the report, "The Agriculture, Communities and Rural Environment ("ACRE") statute helps balance the dynamic nature of Commonwealth agricultural operations, while at the same time furthering the Legislature's explicit goal of promoting agriculture." [Read more.](#)

DEP Accepting Feedback on Enhancing Public Engagement

In order to enhance public engagement, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) announced its proposed improvements to three policy documents, and is seeking comments on the proposed updates. The policies focus on development and review of regulations, interaction with Advisory Committees, and development and publication of technical guidance.

Originally developed in the 1990s, these policies provide an overview of how DEP implements the Commonwealth's regulatory review process, the function of its advisory committees, boards and councils, and DEP's Technical Guidance Document development process, respectively. [Read more.](#)

DEP will accept comments on all three policies from October 14 through December 13. To view the draft policies and submit comments electronically using DEP's eComment system, visit www.ahs.dep.pa.gov/eComment.

Written comments on the draft policies should be sent to Abbey Cadden, Technical Guidance Coordinator, Department of Environmental Protection, Office of Policy, Rachel Carson State Office Building, P.O. Box 2063, Harrisburg, PA 17105-2063.

DEP to Cover Cost of Agricultural Plans for Clean Water

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) will reimburse farmers in Pennsylvania's part of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed for the cost of preparing hundreds of agricultural plans for clean water. The program is part of a commitment that Governor Wolf, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced in 2016 to make state and federal funding available to improve water quality in Pennsylvania's 43 counties in the Bay watershed for local benefit and, ultimately, all partner states in the watershed.

To prepare their plans, many farmers enlist technical experts, whose services generally cost from \$500 to \$1,500 per plan, depending on the size of the farm. Farmers can now be reimbursed for plans developed after January 1, 2017. Consultants are coordinating the reimbursement program, conducting extensive outreach to farmers, and supplying potential options for farmers who are seeking technical experts.

The deadline to register to participate in the program is April 1, 2018, and plans must be submitted to the appropriate consultant by May 30. Visit the [PA DEP website](#) for the complete release.

Nuffield Farming Scholars Program

The [Nuffield International Farming Scholars program](#) is a global program for men and women in agriculture who are interested in exploring the industry in other countries, finding new best practices, and growing themselves and their agricultural knowledge. Nuffield Scholars are active agriculturalists (farmers, ranchers or those involved in the agribusiness or related sectors) who are curious about the industry and looking to grow as individuals and as producers/professionals. It's an experiential program, so participants travel up to 15 weeks during the span of about 18 months, and pull together a final report on their travels and a study topic of their choice.

The program is new to the United States, but has a 70 year history and is active in 8 countries around the world. Pennsylvania has hosted Nuffield Scholars on many occasions, and was the site of the 2010 Nuffield Contemporary Scholars Conference, marking the first time that a major Nuffield event took place in the U.S.

Applications to be a 2018 Nuffield Scholar are open now at www.nuffieldinternational.org. This is a great program for those interested in what the global agriculture arena looks like, and those who want to take a chance on a life-changing experience!

Thank You Alliance Sponsors

Each year, a number of sponsors step-up to partner with the Alliance in fulfilling our mission to promote the successful application of no-till through shared ideas, experiences, education, and new technology. Without their invaluable support, the Alliance would not be able to have the success it enjoys. So once again, thank you to our 2017 sponsors:

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