



Farmers Improving Soil Health

NEWS YOU CAN USE ~ OCTOBER 3, 2017

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



Meet Your Board Members

Bill Cannon, *No-Till Alliance Board Member*

East Hill Farm, located in Hermitage, Mercer County, Pennsylvania is an operation much different than many others in the western Pennsylvania landscape. While there's starting to be a bit of interest from area farmers, no-till is still a puzzle to many. But not for Bill Cannon and his family.

It was the early 1990's and equipment around the Cannon farm was breaking, out-of-date, and inefficient. It was time for new equipment, or a change in the style of farming. After learning of the equipment, fuel, and labor cost savings of no-till from a farmer-friend in Ohio, Bill jumped on board with two feet. And after no-tilling for close to 20 years, Bill has seen tremendous positives from the switch.

Bill noted that even after receiving an inch of rain on the fields at this farm, he can walk across the land without getting mud on his boots. Due to his no-till practices, the soil is firmer and filtration is excellent. Also, since beginning to plant green, Bill has seen an increase in yields and increased ease for weed control.

Bill and wife, Nancy, farm 250 acres, where they currently grow soybeans, corn, and spelts. Expansion into the livestock arena with a small beef herd is in the thought process as well. Bill receives help on the farm from son, Don, and grandson, Sam.

Alliance News



Field Day at Bill Cannon's Farm

On Thursday, September 28 folks gathered for a **Soil Health Workshop** at the farm of PA No-Till Alliance board member, Bill Cannon, in Hermitage, Pennsylvania. The event was sponsored by the Mercer Conservation District, NRCS, and the Alliance. Along with Bill, PANTA members Ryan Graham and Lucas Criswell participated in the program. Pictured above is veteran no-tiller Lucas Criswell, shown presenting information as to why he planted in large cover, and why he's going to do it again.

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 joins the popular *No-Till Tips* and *Cover Crop Tips* as a valuable resource for farmers adopting these important soil health practices. If you would like a copy of the *Planting Green Guide*, *No-Till Tips*, and/or *Cover Crop Tips*, please contact Jay Howes at 717-651-5920 or jhowes@pennag.com.

Upcoming Events

October 13 - 4R Nutrient Stewardship Field Day

Please join us for a "Nutrient Stewardship" Field Day event hosted jointly by the PA 4R Alliance and GROWMARK FS. The event will be held at the Milton Hershey School Farm Headquarters (631 Crest Lane, Hershey, PA) on Friday, October 13.

The day will center on the 4R Nutrient Stewardship approach of nutrient application and management - Right Source (Product), Right Place, Right Time and Right Rate and will showcase the new and innovative field crop practices being implemented across the state in the areas of:

- Nutrient Stewardship / Nutrient Management
- Soil Health
- Protection of Water Quality

Topics and demonstrations will include:

- Cover crop influence on soil health measures
- Use of aerial imagery to aid in field management decisions
- Biologicals, biostimulants and other additives for plant food enhancement
- Management of in-field variability with variable rate fertility applications
- And more!

Interested in attending? RSVP to Jennifer Reed-Harry (717-651-5920 or jrharry@pennag.com) by Friday, October 6.

Questions? Feel free to reach out to Dean Collamer at 717-630-2202 or DCollamer@GrowmarkFS.com or Brooke Rosenbaum at 484-794-7465 or PA4RAlliance@gmail.com.

October 24-25 - Keystone Crops and Soils Conference

The 2017 Keystone Crops and Soils Conference will be held October 24-25 at the Holiday Inn Harrisburg-Hershey in Grantville. This continuing education focused conference brings together those engaged in agronomic and nutrient management consulting with the goal of providing the most up-to-date information affecting Pennsylvania's crop farmers. For more information contact Amy Bradford at abradford@pennag.com.

December 7 - Healthy Soils: Building a Strong Foundation

Please plan to join the Alliance at Shady Maple on Thursday, December 7 for a day packed with useful 'take home' information to help you build healthier soils on your farm. Keynote speaker, Mr. Gail Fuller, will share his experience with no-tilling nearly 2000 acres of 11-13 different crops and having used as many as 70 different cover crop mixes. Additional sessions will focus on topics including slug management in no-till and cover crop operations, new ways to build soil health, and no-till for a variety of different crops. Watch for information on pre-registration in the near future.

Ag Articles of Interest

Countdown to Census of Agriculture

In just a couple months, farmers and ranchers across the nation will start receiving the 2017 Census of Agriculture. Producers can mail in their completed census form, or respond online via the improved web questionnaire. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service has extensively revised the online questionnaire to make it more convenient for producers.

Response to the census of agriculture is required by law under Title 7 USC 2204(g) Public Law 105-113. The same law requires NASS to keep all information confidential, to use the data only for statistical purposes, and only in aggregate form to prevent disclosing the identity of any producer. The time required to complete the questionnaire is estimated at 50 minutes. In October, NASS will make a census preparation checklist available on the census website to help producers gather necessary information in advance.

Conducted once every five years, the census of agriculture is a complete count of all U.S. farms, ranches, and those who operate them; it is the only source of uniform, comprehensive, and impartial agriculture data for every state and county in the country.

For more information about the 2017 Census of Agriculture, visit www.agcensus.usda.gov or call (800) 727-9540.

Penn State Extension Launches New Website

Penn State Extension has recently launched a new, state-of-the-art website, designed to make it as easy and efficient as possible for folks to find information, education, or a connection to an expert, wherever they are. It's designed to allow the user to customize the experience: how they want to search, access, and consume education.

PSU Extension's educational products are now delivered in a variety of user friendly formats for diverse learning styles: news, articles, publications, learn now videos, how to video webinars, on-line courses, and traditional in-person workshops.

This system allows you to create an account where you can subscribe to receive only the information you want, save articles or other educational items to read later, have a record of upcoming events, monitor your progress on online courses, provide reviews of products, and more.

Interested in seeing the site in action? You can browse the new website by visiting <http://extension.psu.edu/>.

Chemical-less No-Till: A Realistic Goal?

Many people envision their farm becoming a chemical free or reduced chemical no-till system, but can't quite figure out what that looks like, including weed suppression, controlling the previous crop and getting all the inputs in the field. Spoiler alert — there is no easy answer about how to put continuous no-till without chemicals into practice. The most realistic solution is a compromise, where we use the conservation tools suited for an organic setting to limit tillage as much as possible, while reaping many of the rewards typically associated with no-till. [Read more.](#)

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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