

NORTHEAST SARE

2000 FARMER/GROWER FINAL REPORT

Project # FNE00-338

Project Title: 2000 Farming for the Future Field Day

Project Leader: Steve Groff

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Goals

Farmers are looking for ways to become more profitable, while at the same time conserving the natural resources they have at their disposal. Field Days have the unique distinction of allowing farmers and researchers to see for themselves how new cropping techniques and practices perform in a real farm setting. This project was involved with the 7th annual field day I've held at my farm to showcase what I've been doing to increase profits, save soil, and reduce pesticides through the use of cover crops, long term no-tillage, and diverse crop rotation. **The goal was to boost attendance, partner with the local Chamber of Commerce, and increase awareness of sustainable farming techniques.** I feel each of these goals was met. However, due to a steady rain all day, attendance was only slightly above the 1999 event.

Background

I am a full time farmer, with my father, of 175 acres of corn, alfalfa, soybeans, small grains, tomatoes, pumpkins and a few other vegetables on hilly land in southern Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. I am the 3rd generation to own this farm and have personally been farming it since 1982. The soils are mostly class 2 and 3, well drained, with 3%-12% slopes. I've developed the "Permanent Cover Cropping System". No-tillage, Cover crops, and effective crop rotations are the foundation of this farming system, which includes a unique emphasis on no-till transplanting of vegetables into killed mulches.

Collaborators

The Lancaster Chamber of Commerce & Industry was the principle collaborator. They contacted potential exhibitors and send out press releases before the event. They also designed the layout of the exhibitor tent and helped with the overall planing of event. They also printed the brochures and answered questions over the phone regarding the field day activities.

The Lancaster County Conservation District coordinated tents and generator rental, created the survey/ registration form, and helped setup the event area.

Pennsylvania Association of Sustainable Agriculture designed the brochure and flyer and advertised in their Newsletter.

Natural Resources Conservation Service helped coordinate the day's events and activities.

Penn State University had several exhibits.

Overview and report of the Project

In spite of a steady all day rain, I felt the field day was a success and met the expectations and goals. Many people said that it was very informative, educational, and worthwhile to attend even though the dreary weather prevailed. I was disappointed that we did not get to do the machinery demonstrations because of the wet fields. I heard several comments that because of the rain they saw the positive benefits of the sustainable farming techniques I use. Even though my fields got rather messy from parking over 200 cars it did not create serious ruts due to the great soil structure that has formed over the years from the Permanent cover Cropping System I use. The highlight of the event was having US Deputy Secretary of Agriculture, Richard Rominger as the keynote speaker. He shared how SARE and sustainable agriculture is making an impact and how he envisions USDA helping to advance sustainable agriculture techniques. Also in attendance and speaking was Penn State's Dean of Agriculture, Dr. Robert Steele. His comments reflected the importance of collaboration among educators, farmers, and researchers in further advancing sustainable agriculture. Other organizations that were in attendance are listed in the accompanying handouts. I was extremely grateful for the help that the Lancaster Chamber of Commerce gave. It took the event to a higher level of professionalism and quality.

I've since had numerous inquiries relating to the sustainable techniques I use and how they can apply them to their farms.

Enclosed are several news reports, brochures and results of the survey.

Schedule For Cedar Meadow Farm Field Day

- 10:00 **Visit Exhibits and Soil Pit - Dr. Ray Wiel-** Soil Scientist, University of Maryland
- 10:30 **Rainfall Simulator Demonstration – Andrew Sharpley- USDA – ARS** (Opposite soil pit)
Fiber Crop Discussion – Dr Brian Baldwin, Mississippi State University (Fiber crop plot)
GPS/ATV Demonstration, Brubaker Consulting (GPS Tent)
Infrared Imagery, Lancaster County GIS Department (GPS Tent)
Agriculture Software Demonstration, Nutrient Solutions in Agriculture (GPS Tent)
Use of BioSolids, Lancaster County Conservation District (NRCS Tent)
- 10:30 – 11:30 **Children Stream Walk – Register at the Worm Tunnel**
(number limited) *Repeated again from 1:00 to 2:00 PM*
- 11:00 **Equipment Demonstrations - Joel Myers, PA NRCS Agronomist**
Deep Tillage to Alleviate Soil Compaction – Landis Bros.- John Deere,
Binkley & Hurst Bros. - Sunflower, and Hooper, Inc - DMI
GPS Manure Spreader – Leon Ressler, USDA-ARS
Rolling Stalk Chopper – Steve Groff
No-Till Vegetable Transplanting – Steve Groff, RJ Equipment
No-Till Corn Planting- Binkley & Hurst Bros.
Aeroway- Future View Farm
- 12:00 - 12:15 **Overview of Soil Quality – Mike Hubbs, NRCS Soil Quality Institute, Auburn, AL**
General discussion in area where deep tillage was demonstrated and backhoe excavation
- 12:15 - 1:00 **Breakout sessions**
1. Soil Quality Test Kit Demonstration- *Mike Hubbs - near Soil Quality Tent*
 2. Alleviating Soil Compaction Using Appropriate Tillage – *Don Hoover- Soil Quality Tent*
 3. Using Crop Rotations and Cover Crops – *Dr Fred Magdoff - Soil Pit Tent*
 - increasing soil organic matter and improving soil quality
 - soil management and cover cropping strategies to avoid or alleviate compaction
 4. Sustainable Agriculture from Around the World - *Paul O'Connell, Resource Development, World Bank - exhibit tent.*
- 12:00 – 12:30 **Children's equipment/field tour - Meet at the Worm Tunnel**
• A short walking tour explaining the equipment and crops at the children's level
- 1:00 **Welcome & Introduction of guests**
Dr. Fred Magdoff, Coordinator USDA Northeast SARE Program
Steve Groff, Cedar Meadow Farm
Dr. Robert Steele, Dean of Agriculture, Penn State University
- 1:00 - 2:00 **Children Stream Walk – Register at the Worm Tunnel**
(number limited)
- 1:30 - 2:30 **Rainfall Simulator Demonstration – Andrew Sharpley, USDA – ARS** (Opposite soil pit)
Fiber Crop Discussion – Dr Brian Baldwin, Mississippi State University (Fiber Crop Plot)
GPS/ATV Demonstration, Brubaker Consulting (GPS Tent)
Infrared Imagery, Lancaster County GIS Department (GPS Tent)
Agriculture Software Demonstration, Nutrient Solutions in Agriculture (GPS Tent)
Manure Management for better Soil Quality, Joel Myers (NRCS Tent)
- 1:45 – 2:45 **Visit and meet with Steve Groff, in Soil Quality tent, to exchange information**

2000 Cedar Meadow Field Day Survey Results

Was today the first time you attended this annual event? YES 49 NO 13

(If Yes) How did you find out about this event?

| | | | | | |
|-----------|---|--------------|----|--------|----|
| internet | 5 | radio | 0 | other: | 29 |
| newspaper | 4 | flyer/poster | 11 | | |

What was the main reason that brought you here today?

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| 1. Manure/Regulations | 1 |
| 2. Soil management/Quality | 15 |
| 3. GPS/Infra-red Imagery | 1 |
| 4. Conservation/ No-till/cover crop | 17 |
| 5. Farming in General | 3 |
| 6. Cropping Systems | 4 |
| 7. Organic/Sustainable Farming | 4 |

Did you find the activity or information you were looking for and did it fulfill your expectations?

| | |
|---------|----|
| 1. No | 1 |
| 2. Some | 3 |
| 3. Yes | 37 |
| 4. Good | 1 |

What were the activities or displays that you enjoyed the most?

| | |
|--------------------------|----|
| 1. Soil Pit/Soil quality | 18 |
| 2. Stalk chopper | 4 |
| 3. All | 4 |
| 4. Equipment | 3 |
| 5. Displays | 3 |
| 6. No-till | 3 |
| 7. Fiber crops | 2 |
| 8. Roasted corn | 2 |
| 9. Informal discussions | 2 |
| 10. Socializing | 1 |
| 11. Biosolids display | 1 |
| 12. Live demos | 1 |
| 13. GIS | 1 |

Did you find activities or displays that could be improved? If so what were they?

| | |
|------------------|---|
| No | 2 |
| Improve weather | 3 |
| More interactive | 1 |

Do you have any suggestions to make this event better next year?

| | |
|-----------------------|----|
| Improve weather | 11 |
| Keep up the good work | 7 |
| More demos | 2 |
| Big Free meal | 1 |
| Pizza/beer | 1 |
| More fiber crop stuff | 1 |
| Sweet corn trials | 1 |
| Bigger tent | 1 |



SUITE 340
ONE CREDIT UNION PLACE
HARRISBURG, PA 17110-2993
ph: 717-237-2220 fax: 717-237-2238

To: Steve Groff

October 2, 2000

From: Joel Myers, NRCS State Agronomist and Technical Advisor for Steve Groff SARE Project

Steve, I would like to compliment you on another excellent field day which was held last July. In spite of the inclement weather, the event went very well. In fact the ability of your soil to infiltrate water was tested as well as the resilience of your soil from the ruts and potential compaction will be something to look at for future years.

As technical advisor, I would like to compliment you and your planning group on meeting and exceeding the goals set forth for this event. The soil pits that we used were extremely helpful in showing people what your total system is all about and really what soil quality is all about. The exhibits and special speakers and programs all come together to achieve a very high level of awareness of what agriculture and sustainability really mean in production agriculture.

I consider it a privilege to be affiliated with your operation and to be able to be a part of your field day activities. As we continue to move into the 2000's I look forward to continuing this affiliation, both professionally and personally.

Sincerely,

Joel C. Myers

Events, Exhibits & Demonstrations

LEARNING STATIONS

- ★ 4 foot deep soil pit, demonstrating what happens underground, to observe earth worm channels and plant roots
- ★ USDA, Agricultural Research Service will operate their rainfall simulator to determine if phosphorus leaves fields during heavy rainfalls
- ★ The Lancaster County Geographic Information Systems (GIS) department will be on hand to demonstrate its color infrared imagery (CIR), and will explain how this technology is used by farmers, researchers and the government.

BENEFICIAL INSECT DISPLAY BY PA IPM!

NEW THIS YEAR!

- Backhoe excavations immediately following deep tillage passages.
- A primary field trial of fiber and cover crops of kenaf, roselle & sunn hemp
- Sustainable Agriculture Around the World, people from other countries sharing their experiences

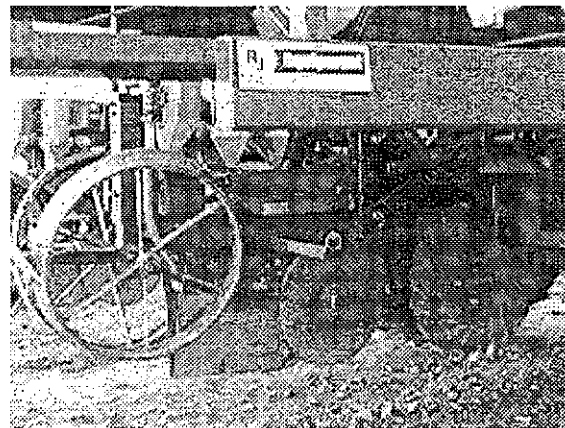
FOOD!

There will be plenty of food available for purchase. And fresh produce to buy.



FOR THE KIDS

Children won't want to miss an educational adventure with local naturalist Chotty Sprengle, as she takes them on a stream exploration. Kids can also crawl through an earthworm tunnel and assemble soil tubes to create a soil profile.



EQUIPMENT & DEMONSTRATIONS

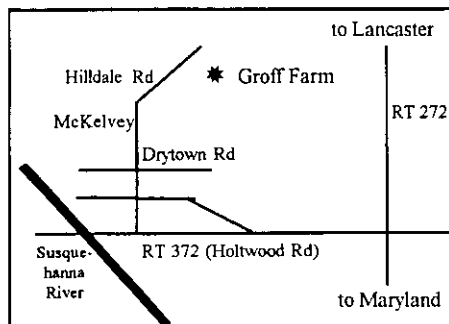
Buffalo Rolling Stalk Chopper
Homemade Roller for small scale farms
Worlds Smallest No-Till Planter
GPS equipped ATV
GPS Precision Manure Spreader
Infrared Imagery
Planting
Deep Tillage
New No-Till Vegetable Transplanter designed by Steve Groff and RJ Equipment

For more information on the 7th Annual Farm Field Day, please contact Brent Landis, the Lancaster Chamber's Ag Services Coordinator at (717)397-3531 or visit www.cedarmeadowfarm.com

EXHIBITORS

Advanced Agronomics
Agri-Basics
Bank of Lancaster Co
Binkley & Hurst Bros.
Bio-Solids Exhibit
Brubakers Consulting
Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Conklin
Dekalb/Monsanto
Donegal Trout Unlimited
Future View Farm
Gro-Mor Plant Food
Hershey Equipment Co., Inc.
Hoffman Seeds, Inc.
Hoover Inc.
Kids Conservation Activities
Lancaster Chamber
Lancaster Conservation District
Lancaster Farming
Lancaster Farmland Trust
Lancaster Safe Kids Coalition
Landis Brothers
Martin Limestone
Nolt's Produce Supplies
NRCS (Contour/soils maps)
Nutrient Solutions in Ag
Octoraro Watershed Association
Organic Approach
PA Assoc of Sewage Enforce.
PA DHIA
PASA
PA IPM Program
PA Septage Management Assoc.
Penn State Extension
Penn State Master Gardeners
PennAg Industries
Peoples Bank of Oxford
Pioneer Hi-Bred
RJ Equipment
Timac USA
USDA SARE Program
Waddell & Reed, Inc.

DIRECTIONS



From the intersection of 272 and 372 (south of Lancaster), take 372 (Holtwood Road) west 4.5 miles to Hilldale Road. Turn right. Travel 1.5 miles to the Groff Farm - on the right. Look for the sign.



Partial funding for this Field Day has been made possible through a grant from the Northeast Region of the USDA Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program.

Steve & Cheri Groff
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7TH ANNUAL FARM FIELD DAY AT CEDAR MEADOW FARM

July 26, 2000
10:00 AM to 3:00 PM
HOLTWOOD, PA
LANCASTER COUNTY

**More Mouths,
Less Land,
Greater
Expectations:
A Balanced
Approach**

SPONSORED BY:

CedarMeadowFarm

**The Lancaster Chamber of
Commerce & Industry**

**Lancaster Conservation
District**

**Pennsylvania Association
for Sustainable Agriculture**

USDA SARE Program

NATIONAL AG EXPERTS TO CONVERGE AT CEDAR MEADOW FARM

The Farm Field Day will focus on the latest, most innovative farming techniques that are proven to conserve soil while increasing productivity and sustainability. A host of national experts will be on hand to speak about and demonstrate these groundbreaking techniques.

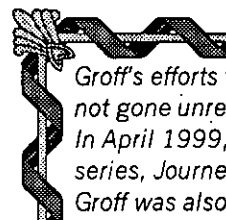
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Dr. Brian Baldwin, Fiber Crop Specialist, Mississippi State University
Mike Hubbs, Agronomist, NRCS Soil Quality Institute, Auburn, AL
Paul O'Connell, Resource Development, World Bank, Washington DC
Dr. Fred Magdoff, Northeast Regional SARE Coordinator
Dr. Andrew Sharply, National Phosphorous Study, ARS
Dr. Robert Steele, Dean of Agriculture for Penn State University
Dr. Ray Wiel, Soil Scientist, University of Maryland

and many others...



This field day is designed to be interactive- no long speeches! Attendees will have ample opportunity to ask the experts questions one on one.



Groff's efforts to implement environmentally-sound farming practices have not gone unrecognized as he continues to attract national media attention. In April 1999, Cedar Meadow Farm was featured in a three-part mini-series, *Journey to Planet Earth*, which was nationally broadcast on PBS. Groff was also selected as the 1999 National No-Till Innovator of the Year. The April, 2000 issue of *Successful Farming Magazine* featured a story on Cedar Meadow Farm.