

IFO HOLDS FIRST ANNUAL ON-FARM RESEARCH COOPERATORS MEETING

As IFO continues to grow and more farmers voice an interest in conducting on-farm research, it is becoming apparent that we need more opportunities for information sharing. In addition, both Ohio State University Extension and Natural Resource Conservation Service agents have expressed an interest in collaborating with IFO members to do research on alternative, innovative production practices.

To kick off this process, IFO hosted its first On-Farm Research Cooperators Meeting on March 15, 1996. The goal of this meeting was to prepare new cooperators interested in setting up on-farm trials. We started by sharing examples of on-farm research IFO members have conducted in the past, including evaluation of cover crops for fertility management and weed control and use of the pre-side dress soil nitrate test to fine tune corn nitrogen management. The afternoon session was devoted to providing farmers and agents with the basic information needed to set up and conduct on-farm trials successfully. Phil Rzewnicki, an extension agent from Pennsylvania, facilitated this training. Phil worked extensively with the Practical Farmers of Iowa in identifying appropriate experimental designs for on-farm research. These designs accommodate farmer time and machinery constraints while providing the necessary replication and randomization needed to generate scientifically valid research results. All of the participants came to understand how farmers, on their own piece of land, can test alternative practices and have confidence in the results and at the same time contribute to agricultural research and extension for the benefits of all farmers.



Robin Taylor—Explaining the low overspray nozzle design

IFO On-Farm Research Trials for 1996:

RICH BENNETT, HENRY COUNTY:

Cover cropped and conventional corn-soybean systems: The sixth year of a long term comparison of productivity and profitability. Comparison of high magnesium and low magnesium lime: long term effects on soil tilth, productivity and profitability in cash grain production. (First year of a multiple year trial.)

Measuring nitrogen benefits of hairy vetch cover crop for corn production, and evaluation of a portable soil nitrate test kit. (Alan Sundermeier, Henry County Extension, is assisting Rich with this trial, which is being supported by a



Rich Bennett

Producer Grant to Rich from the USDA Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program.) Managing winter rye cover crops for weed control in soybeans: herbicide burn down vs. disk incorporation.

DAVID MEYER, PUTNAM COUNTY:

Effects of Promin, a commercial gypsum-based soil amendment, on soil tilth, production and profitability. (First year of a multiple year trial.)

JOHN CRABILL, HANCOCK COUNTY:

Building up soil calcium levels: multiple year effects on soil tilth, productivity and profitability in cash grain production. (First year)

CHRISTOPHER WERRONEN, LAKE COUNTY:

Comparison of a roto-spader to deep tillage for vegetable bed preparation. (This project is supported by a Producer Grant from the USDA Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program.)

TED AND MOLLY BARTLETT, GEAUGA COUNTY:

Non-chemical weed controls for broccoli production: comparing productivity and profitability of black plastic mulch and cover crop mulch. (Mardy Townsend, Geauga County Extension Vegetable Specialist, is assisting the Bartletts with this trial, with support from the O.S.U. Extension Vegetable Team. The same trial is being performed at the Stratford Ecological Center Demonstration Farm in Delaware County.)

Productivity and profitability of staked versus unstaked tomatoes with a winter rye/hairy vetch mulch.

BRUCE BERRY, WAYNE COUNTY:

Effect of rock phosphate on forage quality in pasture.

BEN & BRUCE BALTZY, HOLMES COUNTY:

Evaluation of the pre-sidedress soil nitrate test (PSNT) for corn N management. (Three rates will be compared: the PSNT rate, one higher rate and one lower rate.)

CHARLIE ESELGROTH, ROSS COUNTY:

Evaluation of the pre-side dress soil nitrate test, and a comparison of N fertilizer rates for corn following red clover hay in a 4-year rotation.

Managing hairy vetch cover crops for corn N fertility: herbicide burn down vs. disk incorporation. (This is a preliminary, unreplicated test before conducting a fully replicated and randomized trial.)

From Ed Z