

No/low-till Practices as a Water Conservation Tool on Small-scale Farms East of the Cascades

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PROJECT DESIGN

- Five small-scale mixed vegetable & flower farms, East of the Cascades
- Farmers paid for time
- Case study approach: Farmer chose crop and bed prep details
- No-till / low-till / tilled defined by farmer
- Water tension sensors & weather stations provided
- 3 sensor depths each bed, varied based on crop
- Video demonstrations





Fibonacci Farm



Sungrounded Farm



Sakari Farm





Sweet Union Farm



Nella Mae's Farm



CHALLENGES

- *Variability of conditions on each farm
- *Variability of conditions across farms
- *Systemic water policy issues



SUCSESSES

- *increased intentionality and awareness of irrigation needs
- *plan to use tensiometers in the future
- *no-till beds clearly held moisture better on two farms
- *building a regionally-specific community of practice amongst farmers



FINAL THOUGHTS

- * no till more feasible with single season crops
- * beginning farmers need extra resources
- * producer behavior change
- * usefulness of simple, mobile tensiometer
- * opportunity for participatory research