

NORTHEAST SARE
2000 FARMER/GROWER FINAL REPORT
Project # FNE01-378

Project Title: 8th Annual Groff Farm Field Day

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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 8th 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 this year was to build a stronger coalition of participants for this years Field Day on July 25, 2001, which would broaden impact and solidify the sustainability of this event for the future.** These participants included: Lancaster Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), Lancaster County Conservation District (LCCD), Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), United State Department of Agriculture/Agriculture Research Service (USDA/ARS), Penn State University (PSU), University of Maryland, Pennsylvania Association of Sustainable Agriculture (PASA), World Bank and Solanco Young Farmers Association. We counted 475 people in attendance.

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 table/chair and generator rental, paid for backhoe excavation of the soil pit and some speaker expenses, 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.

Overview and report of the Project

The weather was on the hot side but 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. We were able to do all the activities that were planned. As we have experienced over the years of hosting this field day, the soil pit was one of the main attractions. People learn a lot when they see what is underground and have a resource person that is able to describe the Soil Food Web. Equipment demos also held a high level of interest as well. It gave farmers a chance to see different pieces of equipment working side-by-side in real conditions. New this year was a demo of a remote controlled helicopter that had a video camera attached in order to scout the crops. It was a real crowd pleaser but still needs to be evaluated some more to be made practical. Penn State University had several exhibits. The most popular exhibit was the soil pit that had the theme, "Exploring the Soil Food Web". Paul O'Connell, formerly an economic advisor with the World Bank, talked about Sustainability case studies forms around the world. Don Reicosky, Soil Scientist with the USDA/ARS had an informative PowerPoint presentation on the subject of Carbon Sequestration and how it affects the Sustainability of Farmers. Andrew Sharply, USDA/ARS Pasture Systems and Watershed Management demonstrated the ARS Rainfall Simulator to compare bare soil vs. covered soil runoff. Ed Herrmann, Solanco Young Farmers, helped with the fiber crop exhibit and fielded questions about the fiber crop plot. Also new this year was a segment on Small Scale Organic No-Till and equipment by Ken Hargesheimer, Minifarms Network, Lubbock TX. This generated interest to about 50 organic growers. Other activities that were a part of the field day are listed on the "Schedule for Cedar Meadow Farm Field Day."

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.

Schedule For Cedar Meadow Farm Field Day July 25, 2001 - 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Most exhibits and demonstration equipment will be available to see all day as well as the opportunity to talk one on one with the experts. Below are the specific times for the presentations.

- 10:00 **Visit Exhibits-** (Exhibitor Tent)
Soil Pit - Shawn Lucas, Grad Student, University of Maryland- (Soil Pit Tent)
Soil Food Web - Mark Goodson, PSU Extension- (Soil Food Web Tent)
- 10:30 **Carbon Sequestration and the Effect Tillage has on Soil Organic Matter-** *Don Reicosky- USDA/ARS, Morris MN* (Carbon Tent)
Remote Controlled Helicopter Demonstration- *Bolar Heli Systems* (Technology Tent)
Rainfall Simulator Demonstration and Phosphorus Discussion – Andrew Sharpley- *USDA/ARS*
**Fiber Crops –Ed Herrmann, PSU (Fiber Crop Plot)
Small Scale Organic No-Till and equipment - Ken Hargesheimer, Minifarms Network, Lubbock TX
(Steve's Tent)**
- 10:30 – 11:30 **Children Stream Walk –** Register and meet at the Worm Tunnel -Bus will transport to the stream. (Number limited) *Repeated again from 1:00 to 2:00 PM*
- 11:00 **Welcome & Introduction of Speakers and Guests-** *Steve Groff, Cedar Meadow Farm* (Exhibitor Tent)
David Holm, Program Manager, Northeast SARE; Thomas Baldrige, President, Lancaster Chamber of Commerce & Industry; Donald Robinson, District Manager, Lancaster County Conservation District; Robert Steele, Dean of College of Agriculture Science, Penn State University
- 11:30 **Deep Tillage Demonstration - Joel Myers, PA NRCS Agronomist** (Behind Soil Pits)
No-Till Corn planter Demonstration (Behind Soil Pits)
- 11:45 **Backhoe excavation of deep tilled area** (Behind Soil Pits)
- 12:00 **GPS/ATV Demonstration, Brubaker Consulting, PSU Extension, Local Farmers Steve Lehman and Jeff Frey** (Technology Tent)
Infrared Imagery, Glen Mohler, Lancaster County GIS Department (Technology Tent)
Real Time Soil Moisture Monitoring, Ioan Paltineanu, Paltin Int. (Front of Exhibit Tent)
Soil Pit - Shawn Lucas, Grad Student, University of Maryland- (Soil Pit Tent)
Soil Food Web - Mark Goodson, PSU Extension- (Soil Food Web Tent)
Sweet Corn IPM- Gerald Groff, PSU Extension Summer Intern (other side of Fiber Crop Plot)
Planter Clinic- Binkley & Hurst Bros. (Behind Soil Pits)
- 12:00 – 12:30 **Children's equipment/field tour - Don McNutt, LCCD -Meet at the Worm Tunnel.**
A short walking tour explaining the equipment and crops at the children's level
- 12:30 **Rolling Cover Crops- Dana Ashford, Cover Crop Researcher, Auburn AL** (Steve's Tent)
Rolling Stalk Chopper Demonstration – Steve Groff (Behind Steve's Tent)
No-Till Vegetable Transplanting Demonstration– Steve Groff (Behind Steve's Tent)
- 1:15 **Sustainable Agriculture from Around the World - Paul O'Connell, World Bank -** (Steve's Tent)
- 1:00 - 2:00 **Children Stream Walk –** Register and meet at the Worm Tunnel -Bus will transport to the stream. (Number limited)
- 1:30 **Carbon Sequestration and the Effect Tillage has on Soil Organic Matter-** *Don Reicosky- USDA/ARS, Morris MN* (Carbon Tent)
Remote Controlled Helicopter Demonstration (Technology Tent)
Rainfall Simulator Demonstration and Phosphorus Discussion – Andrew Sharpley- *USDA/ARS*
Small Scale Organic No-Till and Equipment - Ken Hargesheimer, Minifarms Network, Lubbock, TX
(Steve's Tent)
- 1:45 – 3:00 **No-Till Pumpkins, other Vegetables and Agronomic Crops - Steve Groff,** (Steve's Tent)

Map of Field Day Demonstrations & Tents on Back

Sweet Corn

Restrooms

Pasture

Sweet Corn IPM

Fiber Crop Plot

Technology
Tent

Soil
Food
Web
Tent

Deep Till
Demo Area
and backhoe excavation

Soil
Pit
Tent

Sweet Corn

Sweet Corn

Tomatoes

Carbon
Tent

Steve's
Tent

Vegetable Demo Area

Parking

Exhibitors Tent

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Worm
Tunnel

Rainfall
Simulator