Attachment #10

Survey for Field Day evaluation:

Rodale Institute Annual Field Day July 18, 2008

Survey Summary of Findings

Methodology and response rate

The evaluation process for the Field Day at the Rodale Institute on July 18, 2008 was centered on a survey instrument that was administered on-site, at the end of the event. We administered the survey to a total of 93 participants and received back 63 valid surveys, for a response rate of 68%.

Demographics and background data

The respondents are predominantly male (60%), with a median age falling in the '40-60 years' group.

The occupational distribution shows that over 56% -- 35 individuals -- report full- or part-time farming as their primary occupation. About 11% of survey respondents are educators and 34% report holding other occupations.

The survey results show that the majority of respondents (almost 70%) learned at least one sustainable agriculture practice at this field day.

Key findings

Responses to specific questions are presented in the document following this summary. Please see the enclosed tables, figures, and individual question tabulations for more detail.

Please note: Missing data is not included in the analysis and the percentages are valid, i.e. based on the actual number of responses for each question (unless indicated otherwise), they are not calculated as proportion of the total number of respondents.

Results from the survey are positive, encouraging and show interest and involvement on the part of the participants. We first asked respondents to rate the quality of presentation and usefulness of information for each individual presentation at the field day. Results clearly show variation in assessment across presentations, with some getting as high as 54% of "Excellent" ratings for quality while others getting a more modest 32% of the highest mark. Generally, evaluations of the quality of presenations are somewhat higher than assessments of the usefulness of information with between 25% and 47% of responses giving an "Excellent" mark for usefulness. Furthermore, notable differences

emerge in the opinions between farmers and non-farmers – with farmers giving somewhat higher marks than non-farmers (See Table 1 and Table 2).

The variation of responses along the two dimenstions -- quality vs. usefulness and across occupations is of particualr interest to our future work as we design events to best meet the educational and training needs of our audience. Results are suggestive that targeted events – with presentations and activities tailor-made for specific occupational groups -- may be of interest especially to farmers who show interest in more practical, hands-on approaches.

In addition to an overall assessment of respondents' satisfaction with the presentations, we asked a series of questions about the effect of attending the field day with respect to their professional needs and the impact of this educational opportunity on their attitutes, perceptions, and motivations (see Table 3).

Results show that the field day has successfully accomplished its objective to educate a broad audience and to increase their awareness and understanding of organic and sustainable techniques. The majority of respondents agree or strongly agree with all statements assessing the range of atttitudinal dimensions and suggest that the field day has motivated people to learn more about the topics presented and to expand their work in sustainable/organic agriculture. Over 87% of participants responded that they will consider incorporating cover crops into their practices as of result of information received at this field day.

Notably, differences in opinions between farmers and non-farmers are very pronounced across almost all attitudinal dimensions, especially when only the most discriminating "Strongly agree" response category is analyzed. Of particluar interest here are items that specifically address the applicability and utility of the knowledge outreached at the field day. For example, while 29% of farmers strongly agree that the field days content and activities increased their confidence in the effectiveness of organic no-till practices, only 9% of the non-farmers do. In a similar fashion, 41% of farmers strongly agree that the field day increased their motivation to try organic practices on their farm, while only 12% of the responding non-farmers share this opinion. None of the 63 respondents had a strong disagreement with any one of the four statements formulated to measure their perceptions and motivations.

In assessing the impact of the field day in advancing knowledge, it is impressive to find that a sizeable 70% (44 respondents) indicate that they learned a new sustainable practice at the field day. What is even more impressive is that 68% (43 respondents) indicate that they will definitely make a change in their practice in the next 2 years as a results of attending the field day. Finaly, 100% of respondents made suggestions for future topics and/or activities for our educational events. Combined, these findings clearly show interest, potential for measurable impact in the adoption of new techniques, and the need for more information and training in the future.

The narrative responses contain a wealth of information about interest in specific topics or techniques that the team can use in designing future events. The most powerful message from the narrative respsonses is the importance of the integration of various techniques and the significance of a systems apporach for successful organic farming. Respondents clearly make these linkages in their interpretations, assessments, and reactions to the material presented (see responses to questions 3, 4, 5 and 6).

Survey Data Tabulation

1) Please rate each activity you attended at the field day on a scale from:
1= "Poor" to 5= "Excellent"

Table 1: Quality of Presentation

Topic	1 (Poor)	2	3	4	5 (Excellent)	Number responding All respondents	% Excellent All respondents	% Excellent Farmers	% Excellent Non-farmers
Expressive Weed Management and the Mechanics of Mulch	0	0	5	24	34	63	54	29	25
No-Till Vegetables for Small Farms	0	1	6	28	25	60	42	25	17
Utilization of Cover Crops in Organic No-Till Corn	0	2	10	22	27	61	44	38	16
Jigsaw Learning Activity	0	3	23	15	19	60	32	18	14

* Note: Individual responses for total sample shown only.

Table 2: Usefulness of Presentation

Topic	1 (Poor)	2	3	4	5 (Excellent)	Number responding All respondents	% Excellent All respondents	% Excellent Farmers	% Excellent Non-farmers
Expressive Weed			12	19	28	59	47	30	17

Management and the Mechanics of Mulch									
No-Till Vegetables for Small Farms		1	8	23	28	60	47	28	19
Utilization of Cover Crops in Organic No-Till Corn	1	4	8	20	26	56	44	29	15
Jigsaw Learning Activity	2	3	20	18	14	57	25	18	7

* Note: Individual responses for total sample shown only.

2) Please indicate your agreement with the following statements about the workshop by circling your answer:
(1=Strongly Agree; 2=Agree; 3=Neither Agree nor Disagree; 4=Disagree; 5=Strongly Disagree)

Table 3: Field Day Content and Activities

Topic	1 (Strongly Agree)	2	3	4	5 (Strongly Disagree)	Number responding All respondents	% Excellent All respondents	% Excellent Farmers	% Excellent Non-farmers
Helped me better understand the techniques presented	27	31	3	1		62	44	29	15
Has increased my awareness of organic no-till practices	31	24	6			61	51	31	20
Has	22	1	17			58	38	29	9

increased my confidence in the effectiveness of organic no-till practices		9							
Has increased my motivation to try organic no-till on my farm/add to my program	31	16	10	1		58	53	41	12

* Note: Individual responses for total sample shown only.

Survey Participant Responses

****

What is your occupation?

- Farmer - 35
- Educator - 7
- Other - 18

Gender F-14 M-38

Age

- <20yrs - 4
- 20-40yrs - 20
- 40-60yrs - 26
- >60yrs - 4

1. Did you learn any new sustainable agriculture practices at today's field day?
Yes - 44
No - 4
Please explain

YES COMMENTS

Use of cover crop
Deer deterrents
Benefits of cover crop vs. conventional tillage in corn (moisture stress)
Organic no till - 9
Planter and drill configurations
Non-farmer/general advice
Vegetable transplanting
Cover crop varieties - 6
More details on large scales
Info on weed mgmt
Vetch cover crop - 3
Rye cover crop for pumpkins
Use of roller, vetch and biomass
Use of crop (rye) as mulch material
Timing of cover crop rolling for kill
Transplanting Austrian peas
More wags? To mulch
Level of research here
How timing in plantings and harvesting cover affects results
Rolling—cultivating in thick cover
Create cover crop alley zones
Cover crop legume mgmt
No till veggies
Equipment - 2
Crop roller - 3
Corn crops
Plantings for beneficial insects to stay on site and help manage pests
Specific crops
Planting simultaneously
Newspaper-grass mulch
Manage c:n ratio in cc

NO COMMENTS
Most ideas previously aware of but continue to experiment
I have heard of almost everything that was discussed

2. Would you consider incorporating cover crops into your farm practices as a result of this field day?
Yes - 55 No - 0

3. Do you intend to make any other changes in your farming operation or educational programs during the next 2 years as a result of your participation in today's field day?
Yes - 43 No - 2
If yes, what specific ideas or techniques do you plan to use

I hope to start a farm and use organic no till
Will try more no till - 8
Garden better manage winter cover
Cover crop corn - 2
No till in vegetables
Rotational no till
Roll down no till
Vetch cover crops
Certified organic
Continued research of cover crops and mechanical control techniques
Vetch for corn
Strip trials of cover crops, rolling, no till drill experiment
Promote no till vegetables even more
More wags? To mulch
Better equipment - planter
Hairy vetch or clover
Cover crops
Roll/crimp cc for no till pumpkin
Incorporate covers in building soil
More and different cover crops
Corn no till "org"
Promote the use of vetch
Crop rotation/corn varieties
Funding from NRCS
Greater use of no till and roll down
Horses or mules
Rye vetch mixtures, roller
Modify planter
Crop roller
Equipment changes
Crop roller
More biodiversity
No till and cover crops
Use cover crops on potatoes
Tell others of human hormonal and surfactant in Roundup
Possibly no till potatoes

4. What information or assistance would you need to help you incorporate ideas and techniques from today's event into your farming system or educational programs?

Smaller class size with instructor
How to do small scale (5ac) organic no till
More educational programs/demos

When to plant cover crops, what types, etc.
Synthesis of data and discovery of Jigsaw break at groups
Specific guidance - email consultant
Reports and gave planting dates, rates, etc. - maybe its in the packet?
More need more info on specific cover crops, timing and equipment design.
Contact with Rodale Institute
Ideas or leads on used farm equipment
Clear info on website
Research specific to the area I live in
How to be practical and economical
Very informative, a bit long
More no till vegetables
Data on specific rotations/corn varieties
New equipment, $1000 to prep and plant no till all in one
Possibly online classes
We need our farm to be approved for land preservation
Sound arguments to promote it to our country's farmers
Summary of results of experiments on the hill
More about specific crops and in what combination
What kind of cover crops
Rates, timing of no till system
More information on vineyard and fruit production systems with cover crops

5. General comments on the overall event:

Excellent!

Thank you for providing so much water.

Great. Good info, good people, good time.

Nice job on a very hot day. I might have moved a session inside because of the heat.

Very informative and worthwhile

Great events - loved the watermelon

Thanks to Rodale/sponsors for event

Excellent! Thank you!

A hot day, a lot of standing but great overall

The weather was too hot, needed more shade areas we could have used the carts for that

Good

Good to network with others

Great information—good presentation. Small group aspect of Jigsaw was helpful. The coming back together was not.

Good. Great people.

Thank you. Well organized. I came to meet and talk to Dr More?

Very nice event. Well organized. I appreciate the demonstration of equipment and the clear layout of experiments so they are visually significant.

Too long and repetitive and hot. Suggest having tents in shade so people would have some reprieve from sun.

Very good as usual. A little too long 3:30 better.

Glad I came!

I attended as a sit in to get a general overall of what goes on. I was extremely pleased to have had the pleasure of a well put together well executed program.

When it's TOO hot outside, hold presentation in the barn during the heat of the day.

Good information

Off site trial site city/town names used but for out of state people not aware of location better to say NW PA or SE PA. Researcher names used but people no identified in crowd—no hands up etc.

Well done, need more water available, other beverages with lunch (Gatorade)

Ran too long - almost 1 hour longer than state in literature

I appreciate that Rodale is looking into these techniques and leading the way in bringing the results to the community.

Very interesting. Very informative, well organized, very good presentations.

Very good.

I'm just getting started. More basic information would be helpful.

Good to learn what work is being done. Glad to see both manure and legume cropping systems.

Great program.

Great event. Thank you for doing the work you do. It is all about the soil. You are teaching farmers to be doctors of the soil.

Very good presentation

Heat was tough but the best Rodale field days I have attended.

Great information

All workers very informative and knowledgeable. Didn't hesitate on answers. Thanks for all. And water.

Great session - everything was well timed and managed.

Very helpful to see people working on this all other some?

1st and 3rd presentations/tour stops could have used handouts/plot maps to describe treatments

Wonderful day. I'm move motivated to find property soon and get back into at least some small scale farming.

Very informative. Hot!

Good to have demo of roller/planters

Well organized and planned. I enjoyed seeing the farm again and being updated on what's going on.

Generally good though I thought it was more about vegetable production.

6. Please suggest future topics and/or activities:

Farming 101 for beginners, hands on planting

Keep working on organic no till

How to increase carbon, biology and overall soil health

Getting young farmers into a position to start their own small operations

Policy summary of research - talking points to advocate funding/policy support

Compost and soil fertility

Talk more about market garden and small scale farming

How to start/run a CSA, market garden operations

More field days - well worth the drive

Possibly small intensive bed vegetable gardening

Do the jigsaw field to stimulate interaction and questions for the field day /get to know your audience.

Small fruits/berries small grain cereals

High residue cultivator

Microgreens production, funding sources for equipment

Display plots of potential cover crops

Wanted more info regarding veggie farming

Cover crops in plastic mulch systems

Fostering self sustainable agro forestry

I would like more technique ideas on produce farming or gardening. Procedures from start to finish.

How conventional farmers could implement organic methods without going completely organic

Organic PH adjustments

More vegetable planting techniques using covers and rotations

How to make it practical and economical to the small farmer

To many to list

Basic getting started courses a lot of people want to but have zero farming experience

More vegetable work

Bring in a facilitator professional to teach staff how to lead groups. I would be willing to show you. Susan Thompson

Keep the discussion at the end

More research on hairy vetch cover crops

More on raised bed small site agriculture

Info on no till, vegetables like green beans, tomatoes, etc.

Input from farmers using the no till system