

# Local Growers Boost No-Till Corn Methods

By Rich Hansen  
Ciba-Geigy Corporation

"I've no-tilled my corn for five years and have found that early planting, in mid-April, gives me better corn and fewer problems, especially with fall panicum," states Charles Nissley, Washington Boro. With 350 acres of his own corn last year and several years experience as a custom applicator treating weed problems in other fields, Nissley has seen the upsurge of fall panicum infestations.

"Fall panicum appears to be the most severe weed in the no-till corn system," says W. L. McClellan, Penn State agronomist. "It germinates in late April and early May and is almost impossible to control after it has formed seven or more leaves."

McClellan notes that heavy infestations occur when late plantings in fields with fall panicum seed supplies were followed by normal herbicide applications. He recommends AAtrex plus Lasso or AAtrex

plus Princep along with Paraquat.

Nissley tried the AAtrex-Lasso combination but found that plenty of rain was needed for activation, so he tried the AAtrex-Princep mixture two years ago. He now uses it on his own fields and on nearly all no-till corn he treats. Paraquat is used prior to AAtrex-Princep if weeds and grasses are present.

"With no-till you need a good stand and good grass control," emphasizes Frank Peiffer, grower-applicator at Pequea. "Also, you have to watch the lime content of the soil because low pH runs hand in hand with poor grass control."

A Penn State graduate, Peiffer moved through seasons of other treatments for panicum control until he came to AAtrex-Princep.

This spring he'll use it for the third time as a preplant application.

"In 1972 I sprayed on April 17 and last year on April 10, five days before planting," he relates. "I had generally good results all season. The early application seems to get ahead of the panicum germination."

Peiffer says that six years ago he was one of the early adopters of no-till in his township. Now much of the area is cropped that way because of the benefits of erosion control in hilly land. He's fashioned his own no-till planter and does custom work with it.

"Last year I planted 330 acres of corn with it," he

states. "In spite of the initial resistance, no-till has grown by leaps and bounds in this area. With the tight fuel and labor supplies, it is the only way to go."

Frank Lessiter, editor of No-Till Farmer magazine, agrees and points out that in one test a no-tillage system used nine-tenths of a gallon per acre as compared to 5.33 gallons for conventional tillage. And there's less labor involved.

Nissley and his son, Ken, farm 350 acres and operate their spraying business; Peiffer farms and does custom work alone.

Both are satisfied with corn yields. "I was prepared to take a yield loss the first year of no-till," says Peiffer, "but I had a substantial increase. I haven't suffered any decreases since. I plant Pioneer 3306 and 3368 and, with the help of Belt insecticide, had a better stand and no downed corn last year."

His fertilization program "runs all over the board". Some of his land got 240 lbs. of actual potash last season, plus 80 lbs. of phosphorous and 180 lbs. of N.

Fertilization is necessary to profitable corn production, but weeds must be controlled to keep them from stealing those nutrients. Agronomist McClellan has these hints for better weed control: identify your weed problems; select a herbicide program to solve the problem; and apply products at the recommended rate at the right time.



Frank Peiffer, Pequea, examines the corn trash left on his no-till field after picking. Peiffer says the trash helps

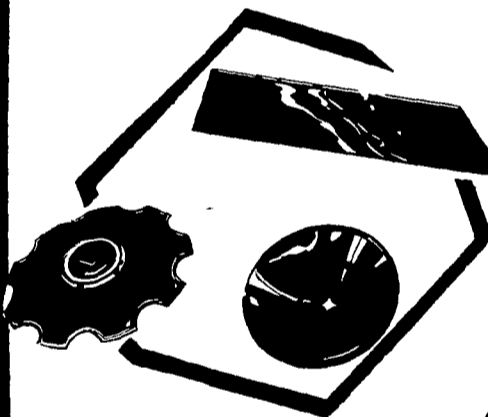
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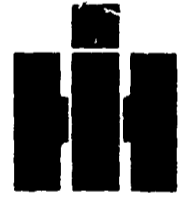
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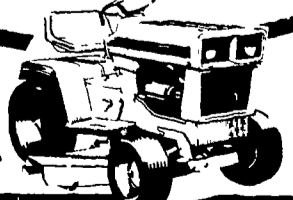
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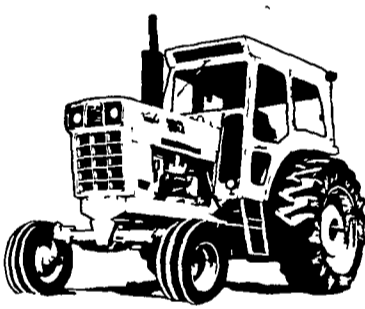
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