

At no-till meeting Four family farmers talk no-tillage

BY JOYCE BUPP
Staff Correspondent
COCKEYSVILLE, Md. — Four family operations from three states shared their experiences in on-farm innovations during the afternoon session of the sixth annual Mid-Atlantic No-Till conference, held January 3 at Marriott's Hunt Valley Inn.

First at the podium were Nelly and Neal Springs of Springer's Valley View Farms, Mt. Vernon, Knox County, Ohio. The Springer family farms over 300 acres in a total no-till cropping program and were named last year's national no till family of the year.

Working with the county's soil conservation and Ortho Chevron Chemical Company, double-cropping a program of no-till corn, wheat, oats, soybeans, barley, rye, sunflowers, buckwheat and even pasture seeding and renovations. Yields have increased every year, the Springers attest in a slide and speaking presentation, with no erosion, weed or insect problems.

Machinery investment has also been sliced with only a tractor, 300-gallon field sprayer, no-till planter, and no-till grain drill needed for

the broad variety of crops. Eliminating the plow, disk, harrow, cultivators and cultipacker has also eliminated much time, labor and maintenance expense as well, says Springer.

One important part of the no-tillage program is the drainage and related conservation practices, including over 90,000 feet of sub-surface tile drainage and some two miles of grass and sod waterways.

John D. Koons, Waynesboro, Franklin County, Pennsylvania, shared his observations on no-till planting in heavy manure. Koons operates a 50-cow milking herd, with 400 acres in corn and hay and custom plants another 400 acres.

"The biggest advantage no-tillage has afforded us is the capability to add 300 acres of rented ground for corn production and the 400 acres of custom planting for added income, without substantially increasing our time and labor that we had planting our original 100 acres conventionally," said Koons, who's been planting the no-till way for eight years.

All-commercial spraying is used, mainly Paraquat,

Aatrex, Princep and Bladex, with 2-4 D when necessary.

Koons believes that the use of liquid manure and no-till go hand in hand, and handles 90 percent of the cattle waste as liquid application. Some fields, especially those at the home farm earmarked for

silage, may get two applications yearly, with a rye cover crop shown behind corn harvest. Key to attaining proper germination and high population stands using no-till on liquid

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One of Maryland's first on-farm alcohol fuel producers is state Senator and dairy farmer James Clark, Jr.



Franklin County dairyman, John Koons discussed the aspect of no-till cropping in heavy manure cover.



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