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Overall crop management

(Continued from Page F4)

that a five-year study of eight cropping systems shows comparable yields under all systems, as long as weeds were controlled. Nitrogen fixation, root development and emergence all looked good in the test plots.

Colvin says it's not so important whether you disk or chisel plow, but how much residue you leave. More ground cover provides better moisture conditions for germination and fewer crusting problems, improving emergence.

"Look at conditions rather than tillage tools. If your goal is 65 percent residue, it doesn't matter how you get it. But it matters a great deal - from a soil erosion standpoint - how much residue you leave," he stresses.

Swearingin agrees. "The name of the game to reduce erosion is residue," he says. "The more you bury with tillage, the less you have on top to protect the soil."

Erosion causes most damage in May through July - when crops establish their stands and have the least ground cover under most tillage situations. So, leaving stalks all winter - then burying most of it in preplant operations - carries little advantage for erosion control, says Colvin.

ISU experimental plots that received 5 inches of simulated rainfall in two hours showed soil covered with corn residue cut water runoff by 72 percent, soil

erosion by 90 percent and nutrient loss by 76 percent, compared to plots without residue cover.

Colvin has some suggestions concerning fertility. "In a corn/bean rotation, consider applying fertilizer for 1985 corn in this year's corn stubble - before you plant 1984 soybeans," he suggests. "This way, you could carry more corn residue into the following year." Fall-applied fertilizer doesn't necessarily require disking in, he adds.

Some growers rotate tillage practices and incorporate fertilizer once every few years. Others apply fertilizer while cultivating. New application technology may be another answer. Some growers are turning to rigs that knife in nitrogen, phosphorus and potash in one operation. They put fertilizer below the surface while only minimally disturbing soil and residue.

You can control weeds in reduced-till situations, the specialists note. In some reduced-tillage systems, a pass or two may be necessary to level soil, control weeds or apply/incorporate herbicide before planting, notes John Siemens, University of Illinois ag engineer.

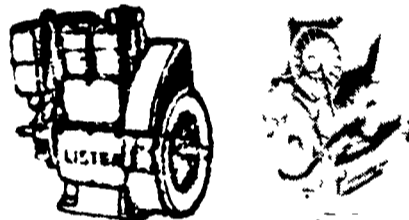
With no-till, pay special attention to herbicide selection, he adds. Applying contact or burn-down chemicals along with early planting tends to control weeds before they get too large.

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Sale Reports

A Complete Dispersal was held December 20 by Pete and Gerry Carey along Route 49, Harrison Valley, Potter County, Pa. The sale was well attended and many people from Lancaster County were present.

Approximately 70 acres of hunting ground with a trout stream was sold for \$250 an acre to a Lancaster Countian. The farm is also for sale.

The 135 head of registered and grade Holstein cattle averaged \$500 per head and this included the 18 started calves. The top cow sold for \$1850, the 2nd high for \$1200 and another for \$1100. Baby calves sold between \$350-\$450.

Other prices included: Int. 3388 tractor \$13,000, 12' disc \$1100, N.H. 770 chopper \$2425, Jerr Dan hyd. unloading wagon \$1550, and N.H. roll bar rake \$1125.

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