

York to feature no-till demo plots

YORK — "York County farmers will have the opportunity to visit several no-till demonstration plots this summer," according to Linda Houseal of the York County Conservation District. "Three plots were recently planted on local farms and included three no-till switchgrass seedings into existing pasture and one no-till rape seeding into a lightly disced pasture."

The demonstration plots are being cosponsored by the Penn State Cooperative Extension Service, the York County Conservation District and the Soil Conservation Service.

"The project is a joint effort between York County's agricultural agencies to illustrate to farmers that the no-till method is successful right here in York County," said Conservation District Chairman, Keith Eisenhart. "The demonstration plots are also located in the District's special conservation project area, which encompasses the South and East Branches of the Codorus Creek Watershed."

The projects include a two-acre switchgrass plot and one-acre rape plot on the Donald Flinchbaugh farm, R25, York; a five-acre switchgrass plot on the Richard Reveley farm, R1, Glen Rock, and; and five-acre switchgrass plot on the Richard Townsend farm, R1, Brodbeck.

Extension Agronomist Bill Steenwyk emphasized, "Although there are quite a few farmers in York County who are using no-till for corn and soybeans, there is much to be done with no-till drilling of small grains, alfalfa, and grasses."

"Our demonstration is unique in that we are no-tilling two relatively

new forages to York County - Blackwell Switchgrass and Rangi Rape. Switchgrass is a warm-season grass that can extend summer pasture for beef producers in particular. Rape is an annual forage that can be utilized for pasture 75-90 days from seeding. Rape is high in dry matter digestibility, its leaves contain 18-25% crude protein, and it can be used for late summer or fall grazing. Research shows that rape can be utilized on dairy operations very well."

"No-till has many advantages," said Lee Bentz, Soil Conservationist for the Soil Conservation Service.

"We want to demonstrate to farmers that pastureland can be successfully reseeded without disturbing the soil, through the use of no-till. Soil loss can be greatly reduced with no-till, especially on the steep hillsides which are typical in York County."

Bentz was quick to add that, "No-till is not a miracle cure for soil erosion. Some fields will need additional conservation measures to adequately protect the soil resources of the farm, but no-till helps a lot. Especially this spring when the farmer doesn't have cooperative weather... the farmer can get planting done in half the time it would take to plow, disc, and plant. No-till lets you get on the field a little earlier and get the crop planted in one step."

The agricultural agencies plan to hold several twilight meetings later in the summer to display the results of the demonstration plots to county farmers. Farmers interested in more information on no-till or soil conservation planning can contact the York County Conservation District at 755-0406.



Penn State tillage specialist, Lynn Hoffman, left, discusses no-till method of seeding warm season grasses with Bill Steenwyk, York County Extension agronomist; Lee Bentz, soil conservationist; and farm foreman T. Herbst at the Richard Reveley farm near Glen Rock.

Potato stocks down

HARRISBURG — Total stocks of potatoes stored in Pennsylvania on May 1 were 515,000 hundredweight (cwt.), 26 percent less than a year ago, according to the Pennsylvania Crop Reporting Service. Of this amount, 140,000 cwt. was stored in processors' facilities, representing 27 percent of the total stocks.

Stocks are defined as the quantity remaining in storage for all positions and uses, including seed, shrinkage and waste and

other losses that occur after the date of each report. Stocks may also include potatoes produced in other states. Sales of fall potatoes for all purposes generally account for about 90 percent of the total fall production. Shrinkage and loss and home use account for the remaining ten percent.

During the past ten years, 95 percent or more of the previous year's crop had been marketed by

May 1. Most of the potato stocks now reported by growers are seed potatoes for the 1984 crop.

May 1 potato stocks totaled an estimated 46.2 million cwt. for the 15 states in the stocks program. This is down 19 percent from a year ago and nine percent below the May 1982 stocks. The storage total accounted for 17 percent of fall potato production compared with 19 percent a year ago.

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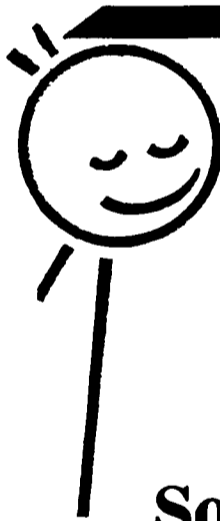
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