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## No-Till Pioneers Leave Legacy In Ag Production

WOOSTER, Ohio — “Glover, this looks terrible. They are going to fire you.”

That's the reaction Glover Triplett a now-retired Ohio State University weed scientist received from his wife when he first showed her no-till plots at the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center some 40 years ago.

“You have to understand that my wife grew up in the South and her father grew a small acreage of cotton, which he tilled frequently. He was a big fan of neat, straight rows,” said Triplett. Such was the mindset of farmers before the introduction of no-tillage in the U.S. the idea of planting crops with minimal soil disturbance.

Thankfully, for Ohio, the United States, and the rest of the world, for that matter, OARDC felt the need to keep Triplett and his research partner, soil physicist Dave VanDoren, on board to continue their work in no-till research. Today, the no-till plots at OARDC and Ohio State's northwestern and western research branches are considered to be the longest continuously maintained no-till plots in the world.

Many believe no-till was one production practice throughout U.S. history that revolutionized farming and

without the benefits of no-tillage, farming in such countries as South America and Asia would be difficult, if not impossible. And it's all thanks, in part, to the pioneering efforts of two Ohio State researchers who were told time and again that their ideas were ludicrous.

In honor of Triplett's and VanDoren's efforts, the no-till plots at the three research locations were dedicated to the retired professors at the Midwest Conservation Tillage Conference on June 20 at OARDC. The plots have been renamed the “Triplett-VanDoren No-Tillage Experimental Plots.” Signs will be posted at the location of each no-till plot with a date of establishment. In return, Triplett and VanDoren have established an endowment so that research, data collection and publications of Ohio State's no-till plots would never cease.

“You want to talk about thinking out of the box. These two individuals invented thinking out of the box,” said Bobby Moser, dean of the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences, as he addressed visitors at the dedication. Setting his eyes on Triplett and VanDoren, seated at the head of the crowd, Moser said, “It takes an innovative mind to think

this way. They got scientists to think differently about agriculture. It's a good day to honor those who have contributed greatly to agriculture and research.”

No-till has become one of the most widely accepted technologies in agriculture. Of the 300 million acres of grain crops planted in the U.S., more than 110 million are planted using conservation tillage techniques. In Ohio, no-tillage acreage has jumped from 6 percent in 1990 to 20 percent in 2002. That translates into 55 million acres of no-till fields with two-thirds of the soybean crop and 20 percent of the corn crop planted into no-till.

Ohio State's no-till plots, now maintained by OARDC natural resources professor Warren Dick, continue to reveal the myriad of benefits of continuous no-till farming — reduction in labor, reduction in machinery wear, increased organic matter, reduced soil erosion, better soil quality, improved air quality, increased wildlife habitats and a better method of maintaining moisture.

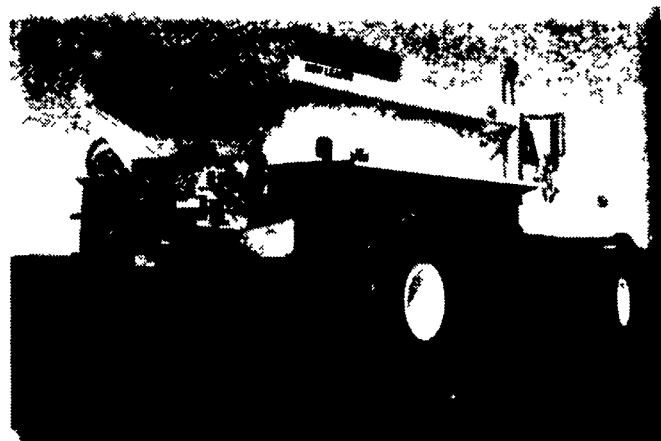
“For growers looking to convert fields back to cropland using conservation practices, no-tillage is the way to do it,” said Triplett. The OARDC no-till plots were once orchard grass sods that now consist of continuously grown corn.

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