

Sediment Reduction

In the Chesapeake Bay

Pennsylvania's Conservation Districts: Working with the Agricultural Community to Reduce Sediment Levels in the Chesapeake Bay

No-Till Implementation and Education in Snyder County

In 2005, the Snyder County Conservation District (SCCD) created a no-till incentive payment and educational program. One of the goals of the Snyder County Implementation Plan for the PA Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy calls for the addition of 2,000 no-till acres within the county, which they hoped to obtain with this incentive and educational program. The primary goal of the SCCD no-till incentive and educational program is to protect the county's water resources by reducing nutrient and sediment pollution.



No-Till Field Day Educational Event

According to the PA Agricultural Statistics Annual Summary (NASS -PA), there are 56,500 acres of harvested cropland in Snyder County. Recent tillage surveys have found that roughly 50% of major crops (corn, soybeans, etc.) are planted by no-

till. SCCD is hoping that a no-till incentives and educational program can assist in driving that percentage higher.

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) provided grant monies to the SCCD in years 2005 thru 2009. The SCCD also added some additional funds and the no-till incentives and education program was funded roughly \$20,000.

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No-Till Equipment Demo

PROJECT FACTS

Project:

No-till Implementation and Education in Snyder County

Anticipated Results:

Protect water resources by reducing nutrient and sediment pollution through conversion to no-till.

Watersheds:

- Penns Creek
- Middle Creek
- Mahantango Creek
- Lower Susquehanna River
- Tributaries to Juniata River

Acres Impacted: Over 1,315

Education Provided:

No-till Agricultural Workshops and Informational Meetings; No-till Field Days, including Horsedrawn Equipment Demos; Educational Displays; Conservation Articles; and, Farm Visits.



For more information on sediment reduction strategies, please contact your local conservation district (a directory is available at www.PACD.org).



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To participate in the no-till incentives program, operations must apply for the program and identify which fields he/she wants in the program. The SCCD technician ranks farm fields based on location within certain impaired watersheds, distances from streams, and no-till experience. Only new or proposed 2nd year no-till fields are eligible. The SCCD technician brings ranking results for approval to the CBP committee and entire SCCD Board of Directors.

Once eligibility has been determined, a contract is signed between the farm operator and SCCD. If corn silage is harvested on individual fields, the fields must have a cover crop planted by mid-October to remain eligible. Incentive payments ranged from \$10 to \$30/acre, with a maximum of 25 acres enrollment.

While incentive payment is supplied by SCCD, the commitment to continue no-tilling comes from the farm operator.

Since 2005, 32 different farmers applied for the no-till incentive program, while 24 other farmers have participated or are still participating in the no-till incentive program.

For 3 years, the SCCD paid incentive payments for 867.5 acres, which works out to a yearly average of 289.2 acres. During the same time, the SCCD verified that farmers no-till planted 1,315.3 acres, which works out to a yearly average of 438.4 acres.

The no-till plantings, under this program have occurred in the Penns, Middle, and Mahantango Creek watersheds, as well as the Lower Susquehanna River Watershed and tributaries to the Juniata River.

Educational components of the funding included no-till agricultural workshops, in the field, which included traditional and horse drawn equipment demonstrations; informal informational meetings, over breakfast or lunch; educational displays; conservation articles; and one on one farm visits.

**For further information specific to this project:
Snyder County Conservation District**

**10541 Route 522 • Middleburg, PA 17842
570-837-3000 • www.snydercounty.org**



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