

Western SD No-Till Council holds Crop Tour

BROOKINGS, S.D. - On July 16, 2015 the Western South Dakota No-Till Council organized an education crop tour on farms along the Belle Fourche River near Nisland.

Participants viewed integration and applications of "no-till" and "soil health" practices in varying classes of farmland with a wide variety of crops found on the six farms/ranches which hosted attendees.

The formation of this group was the result of a soil health clinic sponsored by SDSU Extension and the United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in January 2013.

Following the soil health clinic, producers in the area

requested more informational meetings regarding all aspects of no till farming and the NRCS's Soil Health Initiative. SDSU Extension and NRCS has partnered with area agricultural businesses to sponsor presentations from technical experts, identified resources to support implementation of practices and organized trips to Dakota Lake Research Farm.

"Throughout the past two years farmers have shared their experiences, both successes and failures, discussing the reasons for both. These discussions led to a desire to see on-the-ground activities that farmers are finding successful as they integrate the promoted principles and practices," said Dave Ollila, SDSU Extension

Sheep Field Specialist.

Tour details

The July 16 tour included the following farms and presentations:

Hogen Farms: Farmer, Tyler Hogen discussed the impacts of soil fertility and soil structure on winter wheat yields in fields that have 5-25 years of no-till farming applied.

Tom Lewis Farm: Farmer, Stan Lewis discussed the challenges of leaving enough crop residue to protect the soil on moderately coarse soils, while cattle grazed residue throughout the winter.

Stan Lewis Farm: Farmer, Stan Lewis shared his experiences using cover crops and successfully rotating from alfalfa to no till corn.

Mel Pittman Farm:



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Farmer, Mel Pittman demonstrated a cover crop seeding unit and showed the seeding equipment's coverage in a corn field as well as his plans to strip graze the field.

Riley Kammerer Ranch: Rancher, Riley Kammerer

provided samples of soil with restrictive "plow pan" layers and his efforts to use no till farming practices, cover crops and grazing to improve the soil's health.

Foos Ranch: Rancher, Bryce Foos explained the efforts and reasons for returning cropland back to pasture.

Jason Miller-NRCS Agronomist, Kent Cooley, NRCS Soil Scientist and Anitha Chirumamilla, SDSU Extension Entomology Field Specialist also shared recommendations and answered attendee questions.

The charter bus and noon meal was sponsored by Belle Fourche River Watershed Partnership. Rolls and refreshments were sponsored by CBH Cooperative.

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On July 16, 2015 the Western South Dakota No-Till Council organized an education crop tour on farms along the Belle Fourche River near Nisland. Pictured here, a tour of Tom Lewis Farm looking at no-tilled soybeans.



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