

NO-TILL NUGGETS

Pennsylvania No-Till Alliance
September 2023

A Busy Summer for the No-Till Alliance

With some new additions to our traditional summer events summer of 2023 proved to be very busy for No-Till Alliance members.

JUNE

The busy summer for the Alliance began with participating in the Oregon Dairy Family Farm Days on June 13-15 in Lancaster County. An event designed to educate the public about farming and other aspects of agriculture, the Alliance used the rainfall simulator and the no-tilled raised vegetable beds to show the public how soil health principles could be applied to their home gardens. Jim Hershey, Jeff Frey, Leroy Bupp, Andy Flinchbaugh, Dave McLaughlin and Lisa Blazure all participated.

JULY

Summer Field Days

In July, the Alliance hosted our two Summer Soil Health Field Days at the Chris Pilgrim Farm in Mercer County and Penn England Farms in Blair County. Keynote speaker Monte Bottens challenged attendees with his story of sustainably maximizing the return from every acre through the standard approach of no-till and use of cover crops, combined with a diversity of crops and rotations. Recently added poultry and livestock enterprises have proved to be very useful new elements of his program.

Cover crop plots coordinated by Kings Agri Seeds at each event demonstrated the advantages of different seed mixes, depending on the results a grower might be trying to achieve. Precision equipment discussions, farmer panels and the rainfall simulator were also included at both locations.

At Penn England Farm, a soil pit dug across the dividing line between alfalfa and corn fields proved especially interesting to many of those present, including Secretary of Agriculture Russell Redding.

AUGUST

Ag Progress Days

August began with AG Progress Days and continued with participation in several other events as well. At Ag Progress Days on August 8-10 the Alliance assisted Penn State Extension with a planting green demonstration each day. Judging by the number who attended these demonstrations and the discussion which took

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Bill Chain and Dave McLaughlin Use the Rainfall Simulator to Demonstrate Rainfall Infiltration vs. Runoff



Keynote Speaker Monte Bottens



Precision Planter at the Chris Pilgrim Field Day



Busy Summer (continued)

place it is clear that interest in this practice continues to grow.

Among many visitors at the Alliance tent and display were Kelly Shenk, US-EPA Agricultural Advisor for the Mid-Atlantic Region and her associate, Rod Snyder, Senior Advisor for Agriculture to the Secretary of US-EPA. Kelly Shenk has become a strong proponent of the work of the Alliance and has spoken at our events previously.

Stroud Water Research Center Field Day

On August 17th Jim Hershey, president of the Alliance, hosted a field day at his farm promoted, by Stroud Water Research Center and Rosetree Consulting. About 40 farmers, primarily from the Delaware River watershed area attended a program designed to introduce the whole-farm conservation approach, nitrogen reduction tools and cost-share or other funding opportunities.

A wagon tour of the farm to view various conservation practices installed (including a riparian buffer) and a drone cover crop seeding demonstration were other highlights of the day.

Farming For the Future

Also on August 17th the Alliance assisted with a NRCS sponsored event in Northumberland County at the Jeff Pontious farm. A presentation on soil biology by associate Alliance board member Lisa Blazure was one of the highlights.

Farming For Success

Finally, on August 22, a panel of Alliance board members including Jim Hershey, Gordon England and Matt Ulmer speaking about the conservation practices on their farms was featured at the annual Penn State sponsored Farming For Success program at the southeast research farm.



Secretary Russell Redding takes a closer look at the soil pit with Lisa Blazure



David Hunsberger discusses the merit of different mixes of cover crops during the field day at the Pilgrim Farm

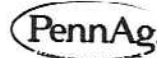


November 2-3, 2023 | 8AM to 4PM

Holiday Inn Harrisburg-Hershey

604 Station Road, Grantville, PA 17028

Hosted by



PennState
Extension

REGISTRATION FORM

Please return by October 24, 2023

Register online:

Go online to <https://cvent.me/YyRo7d> and provide all requested information. Credit card payment required. An email confirmation will be provided upon completion of registration. Keep this form for your reference.

Register via email/mail/fax:

Contact Jennifer Reed-Harry at PennAg (jrharry@pennag.com | 717-651-5920) for a registration form to submit.

PennAg Industries Service Corp.

Attn: Jennifer Reed-Harry

2215 Forest Hills Drive, Suite 39 | Harrisburg, PA 17112



David Hunsberger, Mifflin County Farmer to Serve as Alliance Director

The Alliance Welcomes a New Director

At the annual membership meeting at the end of the field day at Penn England Farms David Hunsberger was elected to a 3-year term on the Board of Directors. David farms in Mifflin County and is a strong advocate of cover crops. He's shown here discussing one of the species from the demonstration plot at the Chris Pilgrim Farm field day.

2023-2024 Pennsylvania Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) Program Application

The State Conservation Commission began accepting 2023-24 REAP Applications on August 7, 2023, on a first-come, first-served basis. The 2023-24 REAP Guidelines and Application can be found on the program's webpage: PA Department of Agriculture - REAP Program.

The Commission anticipates that the \$13 million allocation of 2023-24 REAP tax credits will be exhausted quicker than usual this round. We have already received over 150 eligible applications that were rolled-over from the previous round of the REAP program. We were unable to fund them last round because all FY 2022 REAP funding was allocated prior to receiving the application. Please keep on the lookout for updates regarding the REAP program as we move through Summer. The deadline for submitting 2023-24 REAP applications is October 31st, 2023.

Here's what's new to REAP for 2023-24:

1. An increased focus on soil health and multi-species cover crops. Applicants who

have received REAP tax credits in the past for single-species cover crop are eligible for multi-species cover crops only.

2. Cover crop planting drones are eligible for REAP tax credits – up to \$10,000.
3. Variable rate nutrient application plans (e.g. grid soil sampling, data inputs, etc.). Variable rate nutrient application equipment has been eligible for REAP since 2017.
4. Silvopasture
5. Equipment Precision Upgrade Kits

Virtual Session on State Grant Funding on September 13th

Planning an expansion? Would a turning lane into your business enhance public safety? Know a nonprofit needing financial help to complete a worthwhile project?

Plan to join this informative zoom session on Wednesday, September 13th from 11 am to noon and find out how to access state-based grant dollars through the Redevelopment Capital Assistance Program (RACP), Multimodal Transportation Fund, and Local Share Account along with other opportunities to bring financial support to boost your business.

Contact Jennifer at jrharry@pennag.com for the zoom link and session details.

Help Craft the PA State Plan on the Resilient Food System Program

Pennsylvania has entered a cooperative agreement with USDA to administer the

Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program. Through this program, nearly \$26 million in grant funding could be made available to build resilience across the food supply chain in the commonwealth.

These funds will support expanded capacity for the aggregation, processing, manufacturing, storing, transporting, wholesaling, and distribution of locally and regionally produced food products, including specialty crops, dairy, grains for consumption, aquaculture, and other food products, excluding meat and poultry.

The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture is seeking public comments to ensure that the Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program best meets the current needs of Pennsylvania's agricultural supply chain and addresses areas that can lead to a more resilient food system.

The priorities will be used to inform a state plan which will be submitted to USDA and will ultimately help guide prospective applicants to submit projects that address the most relevant issues affecting the industry.

More information on the Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program can be found at Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program | Agricultural Marketing Service (usda.gov).

The comment period will be open until September 1, 2023. Comments can be submitted to ra-agbusiness@pa.gov.

No-Till Farmer Free eGuides: A Valuable Resource

The No-Till Farmer magazine offers numerous free eGuides on their website at www.notillfarmer.com. Offered are valuable tips on numerous topics such as (among many others):

- How No-Till Improves Your Land Value
- 5 Pillars for No-Till Farming Effectively, Efficiently
- Focusing on Smarter, Sustainable Fertilizer Strategies
- No-Till Planting Green: Getting Started



Pennsylvania No-Till Alliance
2215 Forest Hills Dr, Suite 39
Harrisburg, PA 17112



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Harrisburg, PA 17107

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Support of Alliance activities by our annual sponsors is crucial to our ability to fulfill our mission and is much appreciated.

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SAVE THE DATES

PA NO-TILL ALLIANCE
WINTER SOIL HEALTH MEETINGS

JANUARY 23 & JANUARY 25
(LANCASTER Co.) (MERCER Co.)



Pennsylvania No-Till Alliance

Our Vision "Using no-till systems to improve our soil and water quality, productivity and profitability for future generations."
Our Mission "To promote the successful application of no-till through shared ideas, experiences, education and new technology."