



Farmers Improving Soil Health

# NO-TILL NUGGETS

Pennsylvania No-Till Alliance  
June 2025

## A Message from PA No-Till President:

The PA No-Till Alliance will be celebrating 20 years of farmers improving soil health with two exciting soil health field days on July 22<sup>nd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> in Butler and Lancaster counties.



The July 22<sup>nd</sup> field day will be at the Ryan Graham Farm, Butler and will be preceded by an informal “Meeting of the Minds” dinner the evening before. Then on July 24<sup>th</sup> we will be at my home farm in Elizabethtown and will likewise have a dinner the evening prior. These will be events you won’t want to miss and, as your president, I urge all members to plan to attend.

Blake Vince, an internationally known advocate for increasing yields and efficiencies by building soil and an engaging, entertaining speaker will be the keynote speaker at both. The balance of the program each day will include a combination of farmer panels, equipment on display and demonstrated, informative presentations and demonstrations – a true field day.

As an added bonus, each member in attendance will receive a commemorative 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary wall clock and a soil thermometer!

See full details and registration information on page 3 — I hope to see you all there!

Best Regards,  
*Jim*  
Jim Hershey

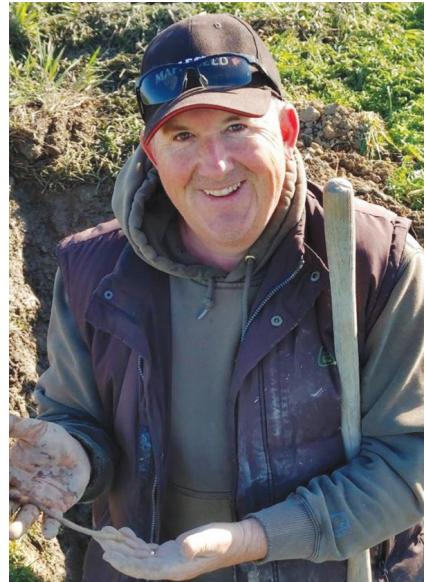
## Keynote Speaker Blake Vince – An “Agent of Change”

The Alliance is thrilled to feature Blake Vince of Ontario Canada as keynote speaker at our summer field days. Blake is a fifth-generation farmer from Merlin, Ontario, Canada who has been described as “an agent for change” in how farmers manage soil health. Working with his father Elwin, they produce commercial corn, soybeans and winter wheat and cover crop for seed on approximately 1,200 acres. In addition, they have recently added grazing livestock to their farm operation.

His family has been using no-till farming methods since 1983 when Blake was only 11 years-old. As he says, “I am very fortunate to have been taught, from a young age, the merits of no-till farming. My claim to fame as a 50-plus year-old farmer is that I have never used a moldboard plough.”

He states that ultimately his motive, like any farmer is first and foremost to remain financially viable. However, all too often he believes the focus is on solely on yield. In his case, he considers all factors – machinery costs, fuel costs, extra input costs, etc. Therefore, he focuses not on physical yield, but rather on net financial yield, on making a profit.

The Vince’s objective is to leave the soil he manages in bet-



Blake Vince will be the Summer Field Day Keynote Speaker.

ter condition for future generations. “This is true, regardless if our farm will be owned by my children or someone else’s children. I am of the opinion that soil is not an infinite resource,” Blake says.

Thus, his consistent message is that no-till combined with cover crops regenerates soil health by nurturing the organisms that live in the soil’s biosphere. He focuses on using soil biology to drive yields to the next level and believes that it is important to truly understand that soil is not inert, that it’s not just a medium in which we place seeds or plants into. It is a collection of living breathing organisms performing vital functions.

# Slugs!....Again!

By Heidi Reed, Penn State Extension

Cool, damp weather has brought slugs out of hiding and back onto our radar.

Last year was one for the record books in terms of slugs and the damage they cause. The mild winter allowed populations to spike. The cool, wet spring meant a longer than usual window for slugs to feed on crops.

Knowing these are the conditions that slugs prefer, many took solace in this year's harsher winter. Additionally, the drought we had been experiencing since October had everyone breathing a sigh of relief for early planted corn and soybeans — there were no slugs in sight, albeit it was a bit dry for crops. The last three weeks of rain and recent stretch of cool temperatures have brought the slugs out of the wood-work.

Penn State Extension research indicates that managing slugs requires an integrated pest management, or IPM, approach. There is not a "silver bullet" to solve the slug problem, and we should start thinking about slug management well before the spring planting season.

**Here are five management options, each with selected pros and cons.**

- **Row Cleaners and Starter Fertilizer**

University of Maryland data show Ammonium nitrate in-furrow at 9 lb/A or banded over the row at plant at 22 lb/A significantly reduced slug feeding compared to no starter or 2x2 placement. Pros: temporary slug control; gives plants a fast start. Con: input costs.

- **Wait to Plant Until Optimum Soil Temp and Moisture**

Pro: low-input slug control. Cons: risks of missing good weather window and yield loss if too delayed. This helps

VINCE, from page 1

His experience has given him the confidence to incorporate new practices on his farm, with confidence that they will work. By way of example he says, "I was the guy here in our operation that brought in these big diverse multi-species cover crops and at first it was met with some apprehension. When we started no-till, the concept at that time was brown and down and now we are planting into these big diverse green cover crops."

The Alliance is certain that Blake Vince's message will resonate with field day attendees and is looking forward to hearing what he has to offer.

plants pop out of the ground more quickly with the added benefit of preventing the dreaded "slug highway," or open seed trench.

- **Slug Baits (Molluscicides)**

Includes products like Ferroxx, Sluggo and Deadline. Always apply according to the label. Active ingredients are water soluble, so ineffective if applied too early. Pro: effective slug control when deployed correctly. Cons: input cost; cannot be used for prevention.

- **Spray N-Solutions**

University of Maryland data show 10 Gal/A urea + 10 Gal/A water sprayed at night decreased slug numbers on plants. Effectiveness may improve if done three nights in a row. Pro: temporary slug control as a contact pesticide. Cons: input costs (fertilizer, fuel, time) and must be sprayed at night when slugs are active.

None of these options will be 100% effective, but the goal of IPM is reduction of the pest below an economically damaging level, not total eradication. A combination of long-term and preventative tactics will hopefully reduce the amount of rescue treatments (baits or N-solution) that are needed.

How do you know when it makes sense to employ a rescue treatment? You can monitor slugs on your own farm with homemade refuge traps — feed bags, bricks and shingle strips work well. Check traps early in the morning before temperatures warm. If you average one to two slugs per trap and there is severe slug feeding damage (25% at this time in the season for soybeans) or dying seedlings, a slug bait is justified.

*Heidi Reed is a Penn State Extension agronomy educator in York County.*

# Thank You!

*A special thank you to these 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Field Day sponsors*

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# Your Support is Appreciated!

# PA No-till Alliance Summer Soil Health Field Days

**Tuesday, July 22 –**

Ryan Graham Farm  
229 Unionville Rd., Butler, PA

**Thursday, July 24 –**

Hershey Farms  
338 Sunnyburn Rd., Elizabethtown, PA

## “Meeting of the Minds Dinner”

- 6 p.m. at the farm each evening before the Field Day
- Featuring Keynote Speaker Blake Vince, Internationally known No-Till and Cover Crop Expert

### PANTA Summer Soil Health Field Day

July 22, 2025 – Ryan Graham Farm, Butler County

#### Schedule of Events

8:00 – 8:45 a.m.: Registration and View Exhibits  
8:45 – 9:00 a.m.: Welcome and Opening Remarks  
9:00 – 10:00 a.m.: My Canadian No-Till Journey – Blake Vince, Keynote Speaker  
10:00 – 11:00 a.m.: Deer & Wildlife Management – Local Farmers & Game Commission  
11:00 – 12:00 p.m.: Break-Out Sessions

- Equipment Demo – Planting Green – Roller Crimper
- Break into Two Rotating Stations
  - Cover Crop Plots with Kings AgriSeeds
  - Soil Pit and Water Infiltration Demonstration

  
12:00 – 1:00 p.m.: Lunch and View Exhibits  
1:00 – 1:30 p.m.: Sponsor Comments – PDA and SCC comments  
1:30 – 2:30 p.m.: Slug Control – John Tooker and Farmer Panel – (pesticide credits available)  
2:30 – 3:00 p.m.: How to Manage Soil Health on Your Farm – Horsch Equipment  
3:00 – 4:00 p.m.: Cows, Crops, & Community - Blake Vince, part 2  
4:00 p.m.: Closing Comments

### PANTA Summer Soil Health Field Day

July 24, 2025 – Jim Hershey Farm, Lancaster County

#### Schedule of Events

8:00 – 8:45 a.m.: Registration and View Exhibits  
8:45 – 9:00 a.m.: Welcome and Opening Remarks – Jim Hershey  
9:00 – 10:00 a.m.: My Canadian No-Till Journey – Blake Vince, Keynote Speaker  
10:00 – 10:30 a.m.: Making the Most of On-Farm Research  
10:30 – 12:00 p.m.: Break-Out Sessions

- AgriTeer and Horsch Equipment Demo
- Three Rotating Stations
  - Cover Crop Plots — Kings AgriSeeds
  - Soil Pit and Water Infiltration Demonstration

  
12:00 – 1:00 p.m.: Lunch and View Exhibits  
1:00 – 1:20 p.m.: Sponsor Comments  
1:20 – 2:00 p.m.: Ag Secretary Russell Redding comments on 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
2:00 – 2:45 p.m.: Cows, Crops, & Community — Blake Vince, Part 2  
2:45 – 3:15 p.m.: Herbicide Effectiveness When Planting Green – John Wallace, PSU  
(Pesticide Credits Available)  
3:15 – 4:00 p.m.: Farmer Panel Discussion – How to Manage Covers When Planting Green  
Closing remarks  
4:15 p.m.: PANTA Annual Meeting – All Members are Welcome

Register by scanning the QR codes  
or contact Jay Howes at  
jhowes@pennag.com or 717-574-4510.

**July 22**

**Ryan Graham Farm**  
229 Unionville Rd., Butler, PA



**July 24**

**Jim Hershey Farms**  
338 Sunnyburn Rd., Elizabethtown, PA



**Free to Members — \$20 for Non-Members and Non-Preregistered**

*Complimentary Commemorative Gift for each member – Pesticide Credits Available*



**Pennsylvania No-Till Alliance**  
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Harrisburg, PA 17112

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Thank you!*

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## See inside for information on Summer Field Days!

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229 Unionville Rd., Butler, PA

**Thursday, July 24 –**

Hershey Farms  
338 Sunnyburn Rd., Elizabethtown, PA

## 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.”*