



No-Till Nuggets

Pennsylvania No-Till Alliance

DECEMBER 2008

Check out our new look!

Welcome to the newly resurrected newsletter of the Pennsylvania No-Till Alliance (PANTA)! It's been a while since our last newsletter was published and many things have changed within the Alliance's structure. Earlier this year, the administrative operations shifted from its headquarters in State College to Harrisburg under the new direction of John Barley and Dr. MeeCee Baker of *Versant Strategies* (formerly Wolff Strategies). Debbie Chappell, the Executive Assistant for Versant Strategies, also provides administrative support in Harrisburg for the Alliance.

Dr. Baker joined Versant Strategies after serving for five years as the coordinator of agricultural education with the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA), a position to which she was appointed by Gov. Rendell. Among her accomplishments at the department was the creation of a comprehensive agricultural education website offering curriculum and lesson plans for classroom teachers which provides an average of 10,000 document downloads a month for educators. She also actively farms with her husband in Juniata County, has been an assistant professor at Pennsylvania State University and still maintains an active adjunct professorship at North Carolina State University.



John Barley and Dr. MeeCee Baker, PhD of Versant Strategies.

On the technical end of operations, Joel Myers, serves as the Technical Coordinator offering hands-on no-till assistance, visiting no-till operations to provide advice when requested, conducting seminars on no-till planting tips and lending his expertise for the "Ask the Expert" column on the website at www.PaNoTill.com. ♦

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Greetings from your Alliance Technical Coordinator

It has been my pleasure to be selected as the technical coordinator as of July 1, 2008. Promoting continuous no-till cropping systems has been a primary interest of mine for many years. Working with many successful no-till farmers has been one of the most rewarding parts of my career with USDA. May I also add that many of these successful no-tillers, who have learned no-tilling on their own, have

done so with the use of manure. This to me is ironic in that today, many producers tend to feel that if they have manure they cannot use a continuous no-till system.

As no-till technology continues to expand, my commitment to promote continuous no-till cropping systems as the best way to farm profitably, efficiently and to provide the highest level of protection to our natural resources

Greetings continued on page 2

OUR VISION

"Using no-till systems to improve our soil 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."

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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grows even stronger. As most of you are aware, we never know *everything* about no-till farming. I look back at how the technology and knowledge has grown in the past 20 years and cannot even guess what lies ahead for us in the future. We all need to continue to expand our knowledge to make effective systems even more effective in the future.

During the past year the topic of cover crops has been the one most commonly included in discussions among no-till farmers. Cover cropping is an essential component of no-till and if there is one key to making no-till systems become more effective, especially with the use of manure, it is the use of cover crops. The protection of our soil with crop residues and biomass from cover crops is so important for the physical aspects of soil quality, but providing food for all the critters in the soil is even more important.

In my new position I am available to help in any way possible to advance the art of no-till crop production throughout Pennsylvania. Some examples would include:

- helping local producers and agency folks develop local no-till strategies
- speaking to agricultural and non-agricultural groups
- working with the professional crop scouts and other crop advisors
- working with those in agribusinesses that sell products such as equipment, seed, plant nutrients and lime and pesticides.
- assisting local and regional groups to plan no-till meetings, field days and other activities
- representing the no-till alliance at meetings and other activities and events

In closing, I would encourage you to take advantage of our web site. If you are not into websites and email, I bet

someone younger in your family is and that might be a way to expose our younger generation to no-till farming and provide you an opportunity to explore our web site. I welcome communication with individuals on how better to promote no-till and to answer questions that you may have. I carry my cell phone nearly all the time and also check emails very frequently. I will be attending as many no-till winter meetings as I can and will be attending the national no-till meeting at Indianapolis this January. I look forward to seeing or talking with you in the future.

- Joel Myers, technical coordinator

Appointed on July 1, 2008, Joel Myers is currently the technical coordinator for the PA No-Till Alliance. He previously worked as a certified crop advisor within the ASA, for the Soil Conservation Service and for the Natural Resources Conservation Service where he held the position of state agronomist for 18 years. Upon retiring in November, 2006, Joel continued to work part-time by providing current updates in agronomy technology to the Natural Resources Conservation Service, conservation district employees, area producers, and others who need his expertise.

Joel has BS and MS degrees in Agronomy from Penn State University. He and his brother operate a 75-acre farm in Centre County for the PA No-Till Alliance. This farm has been in continuous no-till operation for over 20 years. ♦

THANK YOU

to Hooper, Inc. for providing bus transportation to the National No-Tillage Conference, and to Binkley & Hurst Inc. for its registration subsidy!

UPCOMING EVENTS

DECEMBER 9, 2008

No-till Crop Production: Tips and Strategies for Your Farm

A *FREE* informal question and answer workshop sponsored by the Lancaster Cooperative Extension will be held at the Lancaster Farm and Home Center in Room 110, the multi-purpose room, from 9 a.m. to noon. For more information, contact Jeff Graybill at jsg18@psu.edu or contact the Extension office at (717) 394-6851.

JANUARY 14 – 17, 2009

17th Annual National No-Tillage Conference at the Westin, Indianapolis, Indiana

This conference features presentations by 46 no-tillers, consultants, agronomists and researchers who will share the best techniques and tips to help you increase your efficiency and profitability. The theme "Charging Ahead With No-Till" boasts eight general sessions consisting of more than 20 presentation, 15 no-till classrooms and 60 no-till round-table discussion groups. Pesticide recertification and Certified Crop Advisor credits are also available. The registration fee for this four-day event is \$247, *BUT* PA No-Till Alliance members (if you're reading this, you are one!) are eligible for the discounted registration fee of \$177! *Simply indicate on your registration form that you are a PA No-Till Alliance member.* Don't miss this great opportunity to harvest a crop of useful information for next year's planting season! Enclosed is a registration form that can be filled out and mailed in or faxed to (262) 782-1252. Online registration is accessible at www.notillconference.com or you can register toll free at (866) 839-8455.

FREE! Bus transportation provided courtesy of Hooper, Inc. is available to the National No-Tillage Conference departing at 1 a.m. on January 14th from Lancaster's Farm & Home Center for the first 50 people who register for bus transportation with the PA No-Till Alliance office by sending in the enclosed bus registration form or by contacting us at www.PaNoTill.com. A second boarding stop will be made at the car pool lot at the intersection of I-70 & I-79 in Washington, PA with arrival in Indianapolis at approx. 1:30 p.m. on the Jan. 14. The return trip leaves Indianapolis at noon (approx.) on Jan. 17. Check our website for more details or call the Alliance office at (717) 635-2320. Deadline to register for bus transportation through the Alliance is Jan. 10.

JANUARY 27, 2009

Tri-State Conservation Tillage Conference – West Middlesex Radisson (Rt. 18 at I-80) featuring Brazilian "Super" Farmer Franke Dijkstra & PA's own Permanent Cover Cropping systems Farmer Steve Groff

Franke Dijkstra – Say "YES!" to No-till & Steve Groff – How & Why I use Cover Crops & No-till plus numerous other presentations, a farmer panel and a vendor show. Registration: 8 a.m. Program 9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. Pre-registration discount \$25, includes lunch, handouts; \$30 day-of-event. For more information: Ed Petrus, (724) 662-3740, ext. 101 or edward.petrus@pa.usda.gov, or www.PaNoTill.com.

JANUARY 28, 2009

Southwest Tillage Conference – Greensburg – Giannilli's II (Route 30) featuring Brazilian "Super" Farmer Franke Dijkstra & PA's own Permanent Cover Cropping systems Farmer Steve Groff

Registration 9 a.m. Pre-registration \$30, after deadline \$40. For more information: Dan Griffith at (724) 837-5271 ext 103, or Kevin Fry at (724) 548-3447.

JANUARY 30, 2009

Special No-till Seminar featuring Franke Dijkstra at Penn State University, ASI Building.

For more information, contact Dr. Sjoerd Duiker at swd10@psu.edu or www.PaNoTill.com.

FEBRUARY 17-18, 2009

Professional Crop Producers Meeting

Jointly sponsored by the PA No-Till Alliance, PA Corn Growers, PA Forage and Grassland Council and Soybean Producers at PennStater Conference Center. Contact Dr. Marvin Hall at mhh2@psu.edu or (814) 863-1019, or contact the PA No-Till Alliance for more information.

Contact the PA No-Till Alliance for additional statewide meetings
or check out our website at www.PaNoTill.com.



The Pennsylvania No-Till Alliance board members gather at Ag Progress Days.



Happy Holidays from the PA No-Till Alliance
and Wishing You a Prosperous 2009 No-Till Planting Season!

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