

TALKING WITH YOUR LANDLORD:

STRIP-TILLAGE

There are many landowners looking for young, innovative farmers who are promoting a sound conservation ethic as they look at the future care of their land. Gaining conservation, communication and financial skills will help Emerging Farmers stand out in the community and create a competitive advantage for building relationships with future landlords. This publication series lays the initial roadmap to help develop those skills and provide resources for continued growth.

WHAT IS STRIP-TILL?

Strip-till is a soil conservation practice that tills a narrow strip of soil (6" to 12") to prepare the seed bed and remove crop residue, allowing the soil to warm and dry quickly in the spring. The rest of the field remains undisturbed, protecting the soil.

THE DOLLARS AND SENSE OF STRIP-TILL

Every pass across the field with a tillage tool costs money: labor, fuel, time and wear-and-tear on equipment. Strip-tillage requires investment in specialized equipment to maximize the benefits.



Strip-tillage can combine tasks, reducing the number of passes across the field and input costs.



Yield in strip-till systems versus tillage systems is comparable.



To try the **practice on a field before making the full investment** in the equipment, work with a custom strip-tiller in your area.

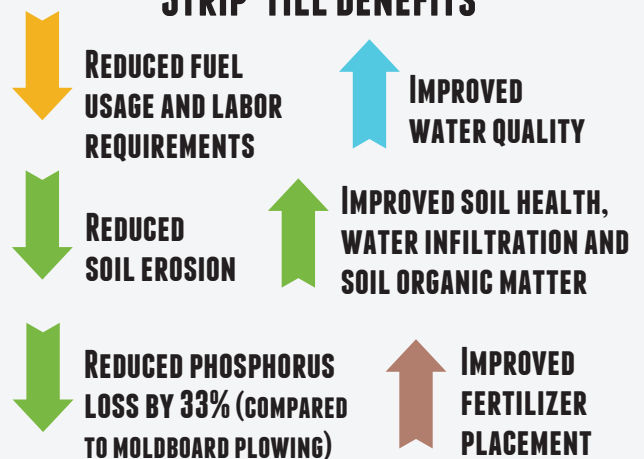


HOW IT WORKS

Strip-tillage can occur following harvest or in the spring. Using GPS technology, the planter is aligned with the tilled strip to provide good seed to soil contact. Fertilizer can also be applied in the strip, making nutrients readily available for young crops. This targeting, combined with variable rate technology, can reduce fertilizer expenses while boosting yields.

Strip-tillage can be used on poorly drained soils and moderately sloping land, where no-till may not be well suited. Strip-tillage cannot be used in place of no-till on highly erodible land. The tilled strips are prone to erosion even when placed on the contour.

STRIP-TILL BENEFITS



START SMALL

It is important to recognize that it takes time to learn new management techniques. Consider using the practice on a smaller portion of the land and increasing each year, to learn new management skills to incorporate other practices successfully. Working with your landlord to gather information about the practice and addressing any concerns early will help smooth the transition to the new practice and minimize conflicts.

Your local NRCS staff and Iowa State University Extension and Outreach field specialists are available to meet with you and your landlords to help answer questions, provide resources and technical assistance.



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