

No-till Offers Promise for Organic Producers

Jeff Moyer, Research Farm Manager for the Rodale Institute in Kutztown, PA, was keynote speaker at the University of Minnesota's Organic Field Day, held July 11, 2007, at the Southwest Research and Outreach Center.

Moyer spoke to a packed house of farmers and researchers about Rodale's innovative roller/crimper system, which Moyer developed to incorporate cover crops without the use of tillage or herbicides.

Cover crops are planted in the fall, when they germinate and establish themselves. Growth continues in the spring. When the cover crop is in full bloom, the crop is rolled down using a front-mounted Rodale's roller/crimper.

A no-till planter is mounted on the rear of the tractor, so the following crop is planted during a single pass. Corn is planted after hairy vetch and soybeans are planted after winter rye. The crops need no tillage, rotary hoeing, or cultivation.

Moyer estimates that the system uses 70% less energy while conserving soil moisture, preventing erosion, building organic matter, and suppressing weeds. Rodale has been using the system and conducting on-farm research at a number of locations, and has found that crops planted into no-till fields produce good yields.



For more on the no-till system, visit <http://www.newfarm.org/depts/notill/index.shtml>