

NO-TILLAGE IN OUR FARMING OPERATION

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The Beauchamp-Alexander farm located in Breckinridge County, Kentucky is operated as a family farm. My father Russell Beauchamp is retired but still has an active interest in the operation. My brother-in-law, Ova Alexander, Jr. is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the farm. The farm consists of 977 acres with between 400-500 acres in hay and pasture. A large portion of the farm is rolling and unsuited for row crops. This is one reason why, since 1975, we have been committed to an all forage-livestock operation with the exception of producing approximately 25,000 lbs. tobacco annually.

No-till farming is generally considered to be for row crops, such as corn and soybeans. I would like to comment on how our "all-forage" program is also based on the no-till concept. Hay production is from 30 ac. alfalfa that was established no-till into existing orchardgrass sod using the chemical Paraquat to kill the grass. The alfalfa was then seeded with a no-till drill into the sod. This was done in spring with excellent results. Other hay and pasture is from the cool season grasses, fescue and orchardgrass, with clover being maintained in the stands using no-till seeding methods. Practices such as proper fertilization, control of competition from grasses and other practices recommended by the University are closely adhered to. We feel it is necessary to follow these principles for no-till establishment to be successful. In the fall of 1986, we intend to replace 30 ac. of KY 31 fescue with the Johnstone variety by killing the existing sod and then establishing the new stand by no-tilling the Johnstone into the killed sod.

Four no-till drills have been used by us with varying degrees of success. We chose the Moore Uni-Drill (now the G.T. Versa Drill) as the one we preferred. We like the close row spacing, the accuracy of depth control in addition to the accuracy of seed distribution.

We feel that our livestock program has benefit from maintaining legumes in our hay and pasture grasses. AS shown in Tables 1 and 2, both conception rates of the cows and weaning weight of the calves have increased. Our livestock program now consists of 200 cows, which we are planning to increase to 250, with their calves being backgrounded and sold in April at about 1 year old. At the present time, crossbreeding is practiced using Beefmaster bulls on predominantly Angus-Hereford cross cows. We are also developing a small purebred Beefmaster herd. We are doing this because of the tremendous interest in Beefmaster cross heifers for replacement females and the expressed interest in the desire for Beefmaster bulls, We feel that we can market our forages through a product that will sell at a premium over market price.

**Table 1. Beef Cow Pregnancy Rate
for Beauchamp-Alexander Farm.**

Year	Pregnancy Rate, %
1980	67
1982	74.6
1983	--
1984	89
1985	92 (169/184)

Table 2. Calf Weaning Data for Beauchamp-Alexander Farm.

Year	Head No.	Weaning Date	Avg. Actual Weaning Wt., lb.	Adj. 205-day Wt., lb.
1981	91	Nov. 9	417	--
1982	113	Nov. 11	411	--
1983	128	Oct. 10	357	--
1984	88	Oct. 30	446	432
1985	126	Oct. 30	508	470