Making Conservation Tillage Conventional: Building a Future on 25 Years of Research

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Foreword

Conservation tillage systems were a relatively new technology in 1978, when representatives from six states presented 10 papers at the *First Annual Southeastern No-Till Systems Conference* in Griffin, Georgia. Since then, hundreds of papers have been presented at the annual Conferences, which have rotated among 12 southeastern states. This year, about 80 papers will be presented from 16 states and six nations.

This year's theme, *Making Conservation Tillage Conventional: Building a Future on 25 Years of Research*, recognizes the quarter-century of work by farmers, USDA-ARS and university scientists, extension specialists, USDA-NRCS conservationists, and crop consultants to develop farming methods that promote farm productivity and conserve and improve the vital soil and water resources for future generations.

The editors of the 1978 Proceedings (J.T. Touchton and D.G. Cummins) listed seven of the most common questions that needed to be answered:

1) What is the impact of no-tillage farming on the environment?
2) What types of mulches should be used and what are their values?
3) Is soil compaction a problem in these systems?
4) Is in-row subsoiling beneficial?
5) Are insects more of a problem than in conventional-tillage?
6) What is the impact of continuous no-tillage on weed populations?
7) What are the best methods of weed control?

Over the past 25 years we have learned much about these topics, but- judging by the papers in these Proceedings, they still remain important subjects for research.

We thank the authors, participants, sponsors, and all of the people who have contributed to these 25 Conferences.

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About SERA-IEG-20

The Southern Conservation Tillage Conference for Sustainable Agriculture (SCTCSA) is the main activity of the Southern Extension and Research Activity - Information Exchange Group 20 (SERA-IEG-20). It is sponsored by the Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors (SAAESD), and the Association of Southern Region Extension Directors (ASRED), as well as the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (CSREES), and the participating state universities and federal agencies.

The primary mission of the SCTCSA is to provide a medium for exchanging information about conservation tillage and related technology between and among researchers, extension personnel, NRCS personnel, crop consultants, agrochemical companies and farmers. The primary goal of most conservation tillage research is to develop improved technology to increase yields and/or profitability of agricultural crops and livestock while maintaining or improving the quality of soil and water resources available for agricultural, domestic and recreational uses. The overall objective of the SCTCSA is to expand the conservation tillage systems in the South for the purpose of controlling erosion and reducing environmental degradation.