

FOREWARD

The steering committee of the *Southern Conservation Tillage Conference for Sustainable Agriculture* emphasized the need for a systems approach for optimum production and profit with the name change to the *Southern Conservation Tillage Systems Conference* held at Florence, SC. During the Florence conference, the steering committee identified the need to further broaden the conference scope to address all practices that conserve resources and producer “inputs”. The 2006 *Southern Conservation Systems Conference* implemented these name changes as well as substituting a moderated farmer panel in lieu of a keynote speaker.

These changes seem timely for this year’s *Southern Conservation Systems Conference* in relation to resource utilization. In testimony presented before U.S. Senate Committee on “Foreign Relations” June 7, Mr. Alan Greenspan identified the increasing price of oil as a result of global competition for resources that would increase unless alternative fuels such as fuel ethanol (from switch grass) were developed. Competition for resources can similarly alter crop production costs and, consequently, agricultural profitability. Not only is production agriculture competing for resources, but also to market worldwide the food and fiber produced throughout the United States. In this year’s theme, “*Improving conservation technologies to compete for global resources and markets*,” we highlight the connection between all types of conservation systems and the farmer’s bottom line profit. That is, conservation practices such as residue management not only can increase storage of precipitation as soil water and consequently the yield of dryland crops, but also decrease inputs such as water through directed irrigation application technologies.

This years Proceedings are found on the included CD. Those papers and abstracts report research results from projects devoted to characterizing soil properties in relation to tillage practices, evaluating water savings using improved irrigation technologies, comparison of various technologies for input savings and crop productivity, overviews of the beef and dairy cattle industry, and research efforts to adapt conservation tillage systems for use with integrated crop-livestock production.

We appreciate the privilege to host the 2006 *Southern Conservation Systems Conference*, and thank the authors, sponsors, and participants for their contributions.

2006 Organizing Committee

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