TRANSITIONING TO ORGANIC GRAIN PRODUCTION: CAN CONSERVATION TILLAGE PRACTICES BE EFFECTIVE?

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ABSTRACT

Organic grain production is increasing in North Carolina, where NC State University researchers are teaming to discover effective ways of managing organic crops, and helping growers transition into this relatively new sector of the agricultural economy. Unfortunately, many organic weed control practices rely heavily on tillage/cultivation. This presents problems for growers who have been partial to conservation tillage methods over the years. Conservation tillage has allowed these growers to keep their soil in place, preventing sandblasting, improve their drainage, and save the time, labor, fuel, and equipment required by tillage. Organic growers, teamed up with research and extension from NC State have been working to develop practices that enable conservation tillage to have its place in organic grain production.

This poster will highlight some of the issues faced by growers and researchers in eastern NC in light of their transition experience, as well as the results of the various tests and trials implemented by the NC transition team.