



Natural Resources Conservation Service
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Landowners Invited to Learn How to Save Soil, Water, Time and Money Conservation Tillage Workshop on Jan. 27

Farmers, ranchers and others interested in learning how conservation tillage will save the soil on their land, reduce money and time spent in the field with better yields are invited to attend the field day on Tues., Jan. 27, 2009, at the Immaculate Conception Parish Hall in McCook.

The USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Texas AgriLife Extension Service is sponsoring the one-day workshop that will include field demonstrations.

One of the speakers, Ernest Bippert Jr., is sold on conservation tillage after seeing the benefits of switching from conventional plowing to strip-till on their farms.

For Bippert who has been farming for 48 years in Kleberg County and is a board member of the Kleberg-Kenedy Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), the change was not easy. "I first made an appointment with my doctor to schedule surgery to have the 'plow gene' removed from my brain," joked Bippert, because he, as most farmers are, was raised that fields must be plowed and look clean for the next crop planting. "It took awhile for me not to wake up at night worrying if I had done the right thing, but now with the success I have had, I wouldn't do it any other way."

In fact, his commitment to conservation tillage, moisture management and technology has helped Bippert save soil, water, time and money on his 2,000-acre farm near Kingsville where he grows cotton, milo, wheat and black-eyed peas. That commitment also earned him the 2004 Southwest Farm Press High Cotton Award.

"After 35 years of farming with the same methods and wearing out tractors at the rate of 1,200 hours per year and seeing our highly erodible land washing and blowing away, I began searching for a better way to conserve our land in the 1990s," said Bippert. "There were many attempts in the 1990s to farm no-till but they all seemed to fail for one reason or another."

Bippert attended a growers meeting in 2001, where he learned about minimum till from a fellow farmer, Buck Braswell, who will also be speaking at this field day. Bippert visited Braswell's operation, and saw the successes and decided to use less tillage. After gradually refining his minimal till farming techniques from stale seedbeds to strip till and implementing the new technology in equipment, chemicals and seeds, Bippert knows first-hand the benefits of improved production, erosion control from wind and rain, weed control and the savings of time, money and equipment. He also knows in South Texas that drought is inevitable and by using conservation tillage, he has managed to produce crops when others around him have nothing to show for all their hard work and inputs.

Registration is 8-8:30 with the first session at 8:30. Lunch will be provided and three continuing education units (CEUs) will be offered to attendees.

(Over)

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To reach the Parish Hall, from US-281 turn west on FM-490 and travel approximately 16 miles. The hall will be near the intersection of FM-490 and old Farm Road 681/FM 2058 South.

Sponsors include Weaks Martin Implement Company, Inc., Mission; Capitol Farm Credit, Edinburg; Wilbur-Ellis Company, Edinburg; Helena Chemical Company, Donna; Pioneer Equipment Company RGV, Mission; Seiver Implement Company, Donna; Hidalgo Soil & Water Conservation District; Texas/Mexico Border Coalition CBO, Rio Bravo Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D), Agriliance, Edinburg; and Starr Soil & Water Conservation District.

For more information, call the USDA-NRCS office at (956) 383-3002, ext. 3.

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