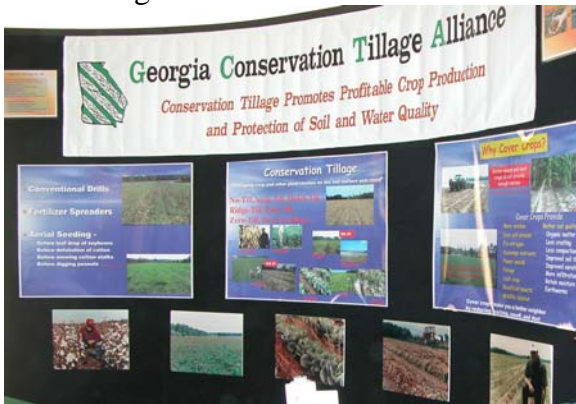




Georgia Conservation Tillage Alliance

December 2005 Newsletter

12 Years and Still Growing--The Georgia Conservation Tillage Alliance has had another successful year in conducting activities that promote greater understanding and adoption of conservation systems on farms in Georgia. Our 12th Annual Meeting was held during February in conjunction with the 5th Conservation Tillage School at the State Fair Grounds in Perry, GA. Several members of GCTA played key roles in the meeting through presentations and moderating sessions.



The conference was dedicated to Jimmy Dean who retired from NRCS in January 2005. Mr. John Hassell, Executive Director of the Conservation Technology Information Center presented the keynote address "A Time for Change" which encouraged practitioners of conservation tillage to be vocal about the benefits of conservation practices. A large number of producers were on hand to hear the many presentations and see the field demonstrations of conservation tillage equipment.



Advocate of Conservation Tillage Retires After Long Career -- After more than 30 years of service with the Natural Resources Conservation Service Mr. James 'Jimmy' Dean retired as the State Agronomist January 1, 2005. Everyone in GCTA appreciates the tireless effort Jimmy put forth over the many years promoting conservation tillage in the state. He was a key player in the founding of GCTA and helped sustain the organization over the past twelve years. Along with GCTA, Jimmy played a role in developing the Conservation Tillage Schools, the Team Conservation and its involvement at the SunBelt Agricultural Exposition. Jimmy is credited with introducing Georgia farmers to the concepts of improving soil quality, earthworms, and soil carbon in soils with adoption of conservation systems. Jimmy's greatest legacy though is his willingness to help producers learn more about their land and how to become better stewards of the resources they manage. We will miss Jimmy's contributions to our organization and wish him all the best in the coming years.

Congratulations to the Georgia Conservation Tillage Alliance for receiving a National Merit Award at the 2005 Soil and Water Conservation Society Annual Conference in Rochester NY!

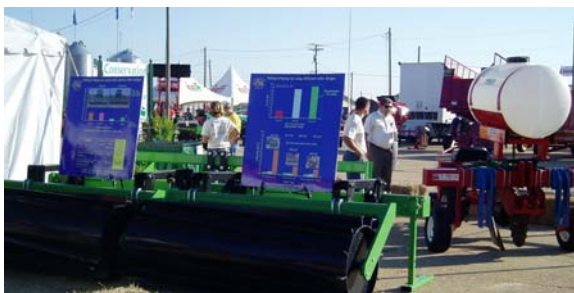
Team Conservation Promotes Conservation Tillage at 2005 SunBelt Agricultural Exposition



Thanks to GCTA and members of Team Conservation producers in the southeast now know more about how to implement conservation tillage systems for improved economics and environmental consequences.



GCTA President Lamar Black and other GCTA members presented information about getting started in conservation tillage during the three days under the tent at the SunBelt Ag Expo in Moultrie.



A display of conservation-tillage equipment included a roller, no-till vegetable transplanter, sub-soilers, and planting equipment. Fact sheets were available that described economical methods to modify common farm implements for high-residue planting and sub-soiling.

NRCS members from Alabama and Georgia presented information about USDA programs that promote conservation practices. And gave out gummy bears to visitors willing to take them.



Producers learned how conservation tillage helps with water management on irrigated land from Julia Gaskin and Gary Hawkins from the University Georgia. Jason Bergtold from ARS at Auburn showed producers how the economics of conservation and conventional tillage systems compare for different crops and areas in Alabama and Georgia.

Visitors got an up-close look at the biology of the root zone with a mini-rhizotron, a camera that showed roots, root nodules, and organisms in soil. A hands-on microscope station allowed visitors to look at soil samples to observe soil structure and organisms. This exhibit was set up by Julia Gaskin and Kirk Iversen, from Auburn University. Another exhibit from the ARS scientists at Auburn presented information on using cover crops in conservation systems. A soil quality poster described how conservation tillage improves soil quality, crop yields and benefits the environment. Dory Franklin, ARS Watkinsville, tested visitors' awareness of how

to put the most carbon into the soil. The challenge game was developed with input from several members of Team Conservation and proved educational for both younger and older visitors to the Team Conservation Tent.

Team Conservation plans to return to the SunBelt Expo next year and is looking for new ideas for presentations. If you know something that would make a good educational exhibit tell a GCTA board member. Team Conservation is a combined effort of Auburn University, Georgia Conservation Tillage Alliance, Alabama & Georgia chapters of the Soil & Water Conservation Society, University of Georgia, USDA–Agricultural Research Service’s National Soil Dynamics Lab, Auburn AL & J. Phil Campbell Sr. Natural Resource Conservation Center, Watkinsville GA, and USDA–Natural Resources Conservation Service state offices in Alabama and Georgia.

27th Southern Conservation Tillage Systems Conference Highlights New Research

The 2005 Southern Conservation Tillage Systems Conference was held in Florence SC at Clemson University’s Pee Dee Research and Education Center June 28 & 29. The key note presentation on “Where Has All the Passion Gone?” by John Hassell of the Conservation Tillage Information Center, Purdue, IN began the conference with a rousing start. Oral and poster presentations covered a range of topics including nutrient and pest management, cover crops, mixed grazing and cropping systems, and economics. The field tour included information on improving soils with conservation tillage, using site specific techniques to manage soil fertility, and breeding to improve nematode tolerance of soybeans. The annual meeting was hosted by Clemson University and the USDA Agricultural Research Laboratory at Florence. The next meeting in 2006 will be held in Amarillo, Texas. More information can be found at <http://agroecology.clemson.edu/conference.htm>.

Up Coming Events

GCTA Annual Meeting – The 13th GCTA meeting will be held in Tifton at the Tift County Ag Center March 1&2, 2006. Come and join us for an educational program on new developments in conservation tillage management. Contact Lamar Black at lblack35@burke.net for more information.

Upper Suwannee Conservation Tillage Alliance Meeting December 13, 2005
12 Noon - Waterloo Community House
Roundtable Discussion - What worked or what didn’t work in 2005. Lunch will be served!!!!
Contact Don Register 229-382-7523 or donreg916@bellsouth.net for more information.

6th Annual Conservation Tillage Systems School February 7 and 8, 2006 in Tifton at the Rural Development Center. Contact Luther Jones at luther.jones@ga.usda.gov or (912) 367-7679 if you have questions about the school or want to attend.

GA Organics 9th Annual Conference & Trade Show – February 10 – 11, 2006 to be held at the Charlie Elliot Wildlife Center, Mansfield GA. For more information see www.georgiaorganics.org

Southern Sustainable Ag Working Group
Southern SAWG's 15th annual Practical Tools and Solutions for Sustaining Family Farms Conference January 19-22, 2006 Hyatt Regency Hotel Louisville, KY
www.ssawg.org for more information.

2006 Southeast Regional Fruit & Vegetable Conference
Savannah, GA January 5-8, 2006
www.gfyga.org for more information

Conservation Tillage Alliances

- Georgia Conservation Tillage Alliance, Inc.
- Coffee County Cons. Tillage Alliance, Inc.
- East Central Georgia Conservation Tillage Alliance
- Mid State Conservation Tillage Alliance
- Southeast Georgia Conservation Tillage Alliance
- Upper Suwannee Conservation Tillage Alliance
- Worth County Conservation Tillage Alliance

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	Robert Thompson	Kathleen
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Georgia Conservation Tillage Alliance Inc.
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Athens, Georgia, 30606-3101

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Activities of GCTA depend on member’s dues. Your mailing label includes the year that your membership expires. To continue to support the association, please mail your check for \$15 to:

Jim Donaldson,
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Metter GA 30439

Thanks for your support.

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