



Winter Newsletter
January 2008

2008 GCTA Annual Meeting in Hawkinsville

Theme: The Role of Conservation Tillage in Bio-Energy Production

Make plans now to attend the Annual Meeting of the Georgia Conservation Tillage Alliance. Here you will gain the information and contacts needed to make good decisions in the field of bioenergy. Highlights of this year's program include presentations on: energy aspects of the farm bill and the energy bill, conservation tillage and bioenergy, economics of bioenergy, double cropping of biomass crops, and managing pigweed. After lunch and a short business meeting, the annual meeting will conclude with a field and farm tour in the Pulaski County area.

Hawkinsville is the site for the 2008 annual meeting. We will gather on Tuesday evening, February 26, at The Steakhouse Restaurant at 6pm

for registration, supper, and a presentation on "Developing an Ethanol Plant and Feedstock Requirements".

Wednesday morning at 8:00, registration continues at the brand new campus of Middle Georgia Technical College in Hawkinsville. The program begins at 8:30 with a morning session of presentations and continues in the afternoon with a field equipment demo.

See inside for more information.



Upcoming Events

February 26-27- GCTA Annual Meeting, Hawkinsville, GA See meeting insert for full details.

February 29-March 1- Georgia Organics Annual Conference, Dalton, GA. <http://www.georgiaorganics.org>

July 29-31-Tillage School/Southern Conservation Agricultural Systems combined conference, Tifton. See page 2 for details.

NOTE-The PowerPoint presentation "Mythbusters of Conservation Tillage" is available on the GCTA website: www.gcta-ga.org

Send event notices to

Joy Schomberg
joys@engr.uga.edu

The 2004 GCTA annual meeting featured a farmer discussion panel, pictured at left.

NATIONAL TILLAGE ALLIANCE UPDATE:

Conservation Agriculture Systems Alliance (CASA) Formed

GCTA and other similar groups operate in many parts of the world and work hard to promote no-till systems and other conservation practices that provide economic and environmental benefits. The organizations share similar missions, goals, and challenges. A growing number of these groups (including GCTA) are working to form a communication network that will strengthen not only individual efforts, but also the shared goal of increased conservation in agriculture.

Karen Scanlon, Executive Director of the Conservation Technology Information Center (CTIC) has been the driving force behind creating a North American conservation tillage network. Early in 2007 she initiated discussions with interested conservation tillage associations.

About twenty-five persons from all over the USA and Canada met at Callaway Gardens in Pine Mountain, Georgia in early December to begin formalizing the group. CTIC paid for our way and I was privileged to attend.

Conservation Agriculture Systems Alliance (CASA) was the name selected for the group and committees were formed to begin discussions on governance, goals and actions. The communication network will form connections among and between groups so that information, success stories, and lessons learned can be shared. Participating organizations and advisors will also respond to questions from others quickly and with honesty, participate regularly in dialogue, alert others to relevant opportunities & events, and provide social and moral support.

It was exciting to meet with the different groups. We hope the connections created will further no-till systems. For more information on CASA, go to the CTIC web site located at <http://ctic.purdue.edu/> and click on the tab titled "Learning Center".

For more information, contact James Dean, deanagro@bellsouth.net

TILLAGE SCHOOL UPDATE:

Annual Conservation Production Systems School Time Change

This summer Georgia has the opportunity to host the *30th Southern Conservation Agricultural Systems Conference* that rotates among southern states annually. Consequently, the *8th Annual Conservation Production Systems Training Conference*, normally held in February, is being combined with the Southern Conference to bring together producers, extension and NRCS personnel from Georgia and Conservation Systems researchers from the Southeast in a three-day meeting. The theme of the 2008 combined conference will be "*Conservation Tillage Systems in a Changing World*". The conference will provide practical information on precision agriculture technologies and information on new and developing technologies.

Make plans to attend this unique event in Tifton, Georgia on July 29-31, 2008. More information about the conference will be posted on the GCTA web site and the SCASC website <http://www.ag.auburn.edu/auxiliary/nsdl/scasc/index.html> as plans are finalized.

Organizers of the event include GCTA, The University of Georgia, the USDA Agricultural Research Service, Seven Rivers and Mid-south Georgia RC&D, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, South Georgia RDC, Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission and Southern SARE.

ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

GCTA ANNUAL MEETING: THE ROLE OF CONSERVATION TILLAGE IN BIO-ENERGY PRODUCTION

26-27 February 2008---Hawkinsville, GA

Come join us at our 15th Annual Meeting Feb. 26-27. GCTA was organized in 1993, with the first annual meeting in 1994 at Columbus. I was on the original planning committee along with other farmers and representatives from NRCS, Ga. Extension Service, Ag Industry, Georgia Farm Bureau, Georgia Dept. of Ag., Georgia Soil & Water Commission, USDA Agriculture Research Service, Georgia Dept. of Natural Resources, Risk Management Agency and others. GCTA developed a Soil Quality Card for use by farmers. We also helped get crop insurance for peanuts and cotton in conservation tillage. In 1990 there were 114,000 acres of cropland in conservation tillage in Georgia. As of 2004, the last census taken, there are 1.1 million acres. GCTA had a big influence on this increase. In 2005 GCTA received the Merit Award from the National Soil and Water Conservation Society. We have been actively promoting conservation tillage and will continue in the future.



Lamar Black, President

SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

Tuesday, 26 February The Steakhouse Restaurant, Hawkinsville

6:00pm Registration

Supper

Current Issues in Bioenergy

Wednesday, 27 February Middle Georgia Technical College/Hawkinsville Workforce Development Center

8:00am Registration continues

8:30am Program

Energy aspects of the Farm Bill and the Newly Signed Energy Bill

By Amanda Ziehl, UGA Department of Ag & Applied Economics

How conservation tillage and bioenergy coexist

By Gary Hawkins, Biological & Ag Engineering, UGA-Tifton and Tim Strickland, USDA-ARS Southeast Watershed Lab, Tifton

Economics of bioenergy

By Audrey Luke-Morgan, UGA Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development

Double cropping with biomass crops

By Randy Raper, USDA-ARS, National Soil Dynamics Lab, Auburn

Managing the ever growing pigweed problem

By Ronnie Barentine, Pulaski County Extension Agent and Andy Price, USDA-ARS National Soil Dynamics Lab, Auburn

Noon

Lunch

Business meeting

Afternoon

On-farm field demonstration of strip till rigs

Note: Topics & presenters subject to change

VENUES & TRAVEL

The Tuesday evening gathering will be at:

The Steakhouse Restaurant

341 Bypass
101 Buchan Avenue
Hawkinsville, GA
478- 892-3383

The Best Western Hotel (adjacent to the Steakhouse Restaurant)

Located on the US 341 Bypass
100 Buchan Drive
Hawkinsville, GA 31036
478-783-1300

Wednesday sessions will be held at the:

Hawkinsville Workforce Development Center

Middle Georgia Technical College

243 Warner Robins Highway (Hwy 247)
Hawkinsville, GA 31036
(478) 783-3017

From I-75 traveling south-Take exit 135, Marshallville/Perry. Turn left. Stay on Hwy 224 (becomes US 341S) toward Hawkinsville. Watch for the Pulaski County line. From county line, go 5.4 miles. Turn hard left north on Hwy 246 (toward Warner Robins). Go 1.2 miles to Learning Center on left.

From I-75 traveling north- take exit 101, Hwy. 257 to Hawkinsville.

From Hawkinsville - travel north on US 341. From traffic light at 341 and GA 26 continue north for 1.7 miles on 341 to GA 247. Turn right on Hwy 247 (toward Warner Robins). Go 1.2 miles to Learning Center on left.

From Macon - follow Hwy 247 south through Warner Robins and Kathleen toward Hawkinsville. Learning Center is located on the right ½ mile from Southern Hills Golf Club.

The cost to attend the annual meeting is included with your GCTA dues. Dues to the state alliance are \$15/year. If you are a member of a local alliance, GCTA dues are included with your local dues. You may pay your GCTA dues at the annual meeting registration. If you are not attending the annual meeting, you may send your dues to:

Jim Donaldson, GCTA Treasurer
764 Sam's Creek Church Road
Metter, GA 30439



Using Broiler Litter for Your Summer Crops



Georgia
Conservation
Tillage
Alliance

As the price of fertilizer skyrockets, farmers are looking for alternative fertility

sources. Many farmers have found success using broiler litter in their conservation tillage systems. Broiler litter has several advantages in that it contains N, P, K, and many other micronutrients. It helps to build soil organic matter, and can also help suppress root-feeding nematodes. Here are some tips to help you utilize this fertility source.

- Have the litter analyzed. On average, one ton of broiler litter contains 60 lb/A of N, 60 lb/A of P_2O_5 and 40 lb/A of K_2O . Due to variability in N-P-K content, it is best to have the litter analyzed for nutrients by a reputable laboratory before application rates are determined.
- Recognize litter acts as a slow release fertilizer because most of the nutrients in broiler litter are in an organic form and have to be mineralized before a plant can use them. For example, only 10 to 15% of the nitrogen in broiler litter is nitrate or ammonium that is immediately available for crops to use. The rest is organic nitrogen that is slowly released over time. Consequently, the exact timing of the nitrogen release from broiler litter is difficult to predict.
- Account for nitrogen losses. As you are well aware, nitrogen can be lost to the air, to leaching, or tied up in organic matter; consequently, not all of the nitrogen you apply in the boiler litter will be available to your crop over the growing season. With

surface application of poultry litter in conservation tillage systems, only 50% of the total nitrogen applied is available for the crop to use. This is only about 10% more than if you incorporated the broiler litter.

- Manage the potential for excess phosphorus. Broiler litter contains a relatively high phosphorus content. Most plants need a ratio of approximately 4-1-2 in N- P_2O_5 - K_2O . Because broiler litter contains N-P-K in the ratio of 3-3-2, if poultry litter is applied at rates to meet the N needs of the crop, then excess P is applied. Over time, this can lead to a build up of soil test P, which may result in pollution of streams and other water bodies.
- Use a nutrient management plan. The best way to apply broiler litter is to base the application rate on the crop need, soil test results, and the specific nutrient content of the litter being applied. An alternative is applying poultry litter as a base fertilizer, and supplementing with commercial nitrogen. For most crops grown in Georgia, two tons/A of poultry litter is a good base rate. For row crops this should be applied preplant. The two tons/A rate usually provides most if not all of the P and K needed by the crop and a good portion of N to get the crop started. The need for additional P, K and other nutrients will depend on the initial soil test levels.

For more information on this article, contact:

Julia Gaskin, jgaskin@engr.uga.edu,

Glen Harris, gharris@uga.edu, or

Harry Schomberg, Harry.Schomberg@ars.usda.gov

Conservation Tillage Alliances

Georgia Conservation Tillage Alliance
Coffee County Conservation 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

GCTA Board Members

Lamar Black, Millen
Ronnie Barentine, Hawkinsville
Jimmy Dean, Athens
Jim Donaldson, Metter
Glen Harris, Tifton
Bob Rawlins, Rebecca
Don Register, Chula
Steve Spooner, Sylvester
Robert Thompson, Kathleen

Why Conservation Tillage?

Conservation tillage systems, coupled with the use of cover crops, increase infiltration of water by as much as 30 to 45 percent compared to conventional tillage systems for loamy sand and sandy loam soils. This means more efficient use of rainfall and irrigation water as well as less water carrying sediment and agrochemicals running off fields into waterways.

From the UGA Extension publication C916, available at <http://pubs.caes.uga.edu/caespubs/pubcd/C916/C916.htm>

*See you at the
annual meeting in
Hawkinsville!*



Schomberg
155 Canterbury Drive
Athens, GA 30606-3101

