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Agriculture

Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
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Indiana  
Conservation Tillage  
Initiative  
Technical  
Note No.4

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This is the fourth note  
in a series of Soil  
Agronomy-No-Till  
Management technical  
notes on the  
Management  
techniques for  
successful adoption of  
No-Till Cropping  
systems. This  
information is applicable  
to most Indiana soils  
and cropping conditions  
and covers broad  
application.

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# AGRONOMY

## Technical Note No.4

# No-Till Management- Basics for No-Till

## Top Fifteen Basics for No-Till Corn Success

**In a No-Till system there are no *minor* details. The following is a list of “must do’s” if your goal is successful No-Till Corn.**

1. No-Till works best with earthworms. Using cover crops, legume rotations, high quality lime, and drainage can increase numbers if populations are low.
2. Adjust the combine to spread crop residue evenly across the full width of your grain head.
3. When no-tilling into a sod . . . kill the sod in the fall.
4. Weeds and other pest pressures will not necessarily get worse, but they will change. Scouting for weeds and other pests is the heart of your Integrated Pest Management System.
5. Fall application of herbicide is needed if heavy winter annual and perennial weed populations are present.
6. Use starter fertilizer, placed in a “2 x 2 band”, which contains 20-40 pounds of nitrogen. (i.e., 2” beside the seed and 2” deeper than the seed)
7. Use seed treatment, if no insecticide is planned.
8. Inject at least half of the nitrogen below-surface residues. If side-dressing, go as early as possible.
9. The planter is the heart of the system. Proper maintenance and adjustments are critical.
10. Equip your planter with a wavy coulter (not a bubble coulter) and/or some form of a row cleaner.
11. Monitor pH and calcium levels in the top two inches of soil. Apply high calcium lime at “half as much, twice as often” schedule. If the soil test calls for high magnesium lime, it should be incorporated. This addresses soil quality as well as pH.
12. Plant according to soil conditions, not the calendar.
13. Select high yielding, high seedling vigor, and disease resistant hybrids.
14. Plant slowly, five-mph or less.

15. Seek advice and recommendations from others who are successful at no-till, not from those who have tried it. Using conventional farming management and methods can lead to disappointment under no-till systems.

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